

The
**Biblical
Story**
A Study Guide



Seventh-day
Adventist[®] Church

INTRODUCTION



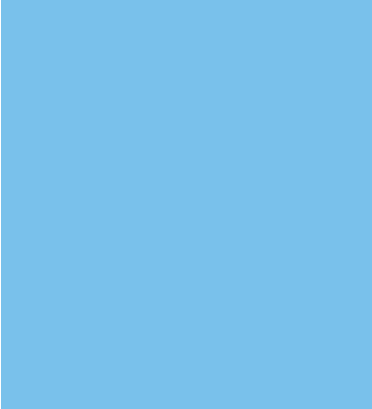
Zlatko Musija
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Trans-European
Division

When I look back at my journey of faith, I can identify several decisive ways in which God worked to bring me closer to Him. Firstly, I grew up in a church environment where young people were fully embraced and involved in the life and mission of the Church. Secondly, as a group of young boys, we had wonderful friendships within the church. Thirdly, the Bible played a significant role in my family, and in my local church. I still remember receiving a new copy of the Bible as a gift. Our group of 7-10 year-old boys became fascinated with it. Somehow, the Bible became our preoccupation; our main game. We would spend hours and hours reading it, and then testing each other's knowledge. I fell in love with the Bible and its interesting details. Later, I found something more in the Bible - a very attractive portrait of God as a loving and caring Father. I realised that the Bible is not so much about small human stories, but about one big story of God and His mission to bring us back to Him. I fell in love with the great Hero of the Bible and that completely transformed my journey of faith.

This Bible study guide has been developed to help you fall in love with the Bible and to read it as one big story of God's love. We will not primarily be exploring the main teachings of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, although we will cover those things. We'll look at how the Bible's big story, and some of the smaller stories are relevant in our lives today, and then try to find our place in this great story.

Our study will not simply be about reading a few verses here and there, but we will be looking at entire Biblical books. It is not enough to know "what we believe." In fact, that is irrelevant if it does not link us to "who we believe in." It is all about a personal, living relationship with Jesus. Perhaps there are many who do not find the Church meaningful because our focus on doctrine and lifestyle issues has overshadowed 'who' it is all about. It must be more about explaining who God is and less about who we are.

Many young people do not know how to read their Bible. Perhaps you are one of them. You need tools that you can use for the rest of your life. Our desire is to help you understand the great Biblical story, so that you can better understand your own story and fall in love with a loving God.



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page	3	Introduction
	7	Study Plan – Methodology
	9	Study Plan – Who Is Jesus?
	10	Study Plan – The Biblical Story
	12	Presentation – The Seventh-day Adventist Church
	14	Overview – A Bible Study Guide
	18	Lesson 1 – Paradise – God’s Original Plan and the World Today
	22	Lesson 2 – Faith
	25	Lesson 3 – God’s People and God’s Law
	28	Lesson 4 – The Kingdom of Israel – A Man After God’s Own Heart
	31	Lesson 5 – Prophecy and the Coming Messiah
	37	Lesson 6 – Discipleship – Part 1
	40	Lesson 7 – Discipleship – Part 2
	44	Lesson 8 – Discipleship – Part 3
	48	Lesson 9 – The Church and the Holy Spirit
	51	Lesson 10 – The Church and the Individual
	54	Lesson 11 – The Sanctuary
	57	Lesson 12 – The Second Coming of Christ
	62	Lesson 13 – The Righteousness of God
	65	Lesson 14 – Paradise Restored
	70	The Seventh-day Adventist Movement
	72	Lesson 15 – Ellen White
	76	Lesson 16 – Healthy Living
	80	Lesson 17 – Family
	84	Additional Resources
	85	Seventh-day Adventist Beliefs
	97	Baptismal Vows



STUDY PLAN

METHODOLOGY

Reading the Bible as a grand story is not a new concept within the Seventh-day Adventist Church, nor outside of it for that matter. In particular, the idea of an overarching theme is very present in the books written by Ellen White. The “Conflict of the Ages”-series, beginning with “Patriarchs and Prophets” and concluding with “The Great Controversy,” are frequently referenced. However, our fundamental beliefs came into existence primarily as a reaction. We have done our best to ensure that our beliefs are centred around the character of God, yet sometimes we risk focusing on the details in our presentations. We forget about the big picture.

Imagine, for a moment, that our beliefs are like fence posts that surround a field. They mark the borders of the field, just like our fundamental beliefs mark the framework of our understanding of the Bible. “Patriarchs and Prophets” begins with three words, “God is love” and “The Great Controversy” concludes with the same three words, “God is love.”

The Bible begins with the words, ‘In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth.’ (Genesis 1:1). It concludes with the words of John, ‘The one who testifies to these things says, ‘Surely I am coming soon.’ Amen. Come, Lord Jesus! The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all the saints. Amen.’ (Revelation 22:21-22)

God created the world with a meaningful beginning. It is going to have a meaningful end, and in the meantime, He will be with us. God is our creator. God is love. We hope you will reach this conclusion during these studies of the Bible – the greatest revelation and the primary authority for us today.

These studies have been set up in a way that encourages you to read larger portions of Scripture before participating in your study group or meeting with your pastor. We've created spaces where you can write down your questions during these readings, but we will also supply questions in advance that can help you understand what you are reading.

Keep a pencil or a pen close to you when you are reading. Underline the important things. Highlight the things you don't understand, so you can raise a question about it.

There's no set timeframe for how long this series should take. Though we've created 17 lessons, some of them may require more time than just one evening. It also depends on your age, your familiarity with Christianity, the Bible and your cultural background. Adapt, as you see fit.

This material is not "only" meant for baptism preparation, though we trust it will be useful in such settings.

Prayer, Bible study and Service are some of the subjects that will help you in your lifelong relationship with God. Hopefully, this series will equip you so you will continue studying even after you've finished these lessons.

This series includes video presentations, which can be useful for both teacher and student. This book is meant to be a catalyst for the Bible study, with questions, reflections and appeals that may help you in your search for meaning and purpose in life; in your search to get to know Jesus.

WHO IS JESUS?

It is when we ask this question that we find purpose in our lives.

- Who is Jesus?
- What did He do?
- What is He doing now?
- What is He going to do in the future?
- How does it impact the world?
- How does it impact me?

This series is based on the model of “The Biblical Story” as presented by Gunnar Pedersen (ThD, Andrews University), retired pastor of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Denmark and former head of Department of Theology at Newbold College in England. (See next page)

The goal of this series is three-fold:

1. Discipleship – what does it mean to follow Jesus?
2. The Bible – what does it teach? How do I read it?
3. Seventh-day Adventists – what should I know before I join this movement?

Most of the studies are based on the various stages of the Biblical story. You will also find three subject-based lessons that can be studied in any order you see fit, or perhaps as the conclusion of the series. On pages 70-71 you can read more about the selection of these subjects.

THE BIBLICAL STORY

The illustration shows a timeline of the Biblical Story. It is divided into seven stages that help you see the big picture of God's plan of redemption – for the world, and for you!

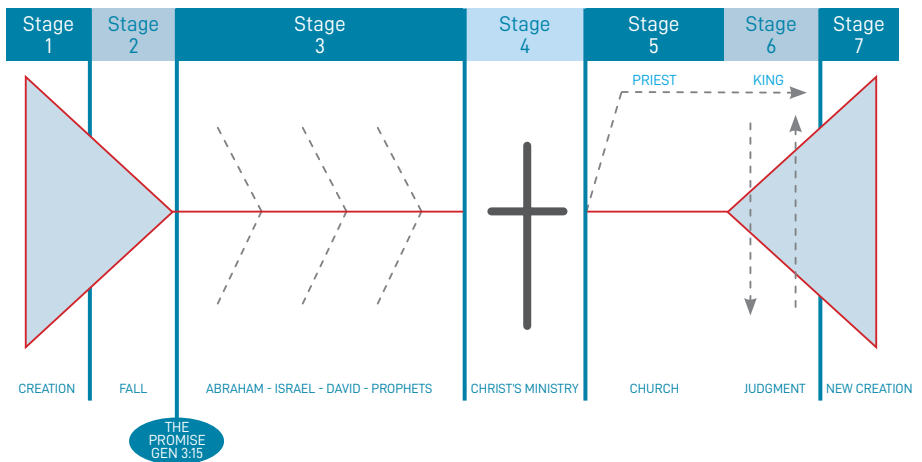
Theologically, the seven stages of the Biblical Story make up the core of Seventh-day Adventist Biblical beliefs. It includes the following:

1. First, God's sovereignty as creator and sustainer of His good creation, which He finished on the Seventh Day, the Sabbath. A reality that all creatures are dependent on (Paradise Created).
2. Second, the fall of humankind from a perfect communion with God to an evil condition of heart and mind. The result of this is an evil world order that keeps creation under a divine curse.
3. Third, the divine and prophetic promise and the obligation of the covenant to save humankind and restore creation; a plan God has promised to follow through, which is what the whole Bible is about.
4. Fourth, the personal identity of Christ as the saving representative in the lost world. He is the one person to live through the Divine judgment over human sin, break the curse and execute God's plan (Paradise Won).
5. Fifth, the priestly function of Christ, being "the right hand of God" after His ascension. Now, His task is to lead people to repentance, give them forgiveness and send the Holy Spirit in His place to restore the broken relationship between humanity and God.

6. Sixth, the conviction that the concluding chapter of the Biblical Story, "The Lord's Day", has come; an era in which Christ will execute His royal authority. As judge He will justify the believers, reveal His kingdom at His glorious advent, and destroy the regime of evil. Thereby, He will glorify those who are saved.
7. Seventh, the conviction that this concluding chapter and the goal of the story of redemption will reach its climax in the creation of the new heavens and the new earth. The curse has been lifted, death is no more, and God will live with His people (Paradise Restored).

"We have nothing to fear for the future, except as we shall forget the way the Lord has led us, and His teaching in our past history." *Ellen White, Life Sketches, p. 196*

THE BIBLICAL STORY





PRESENTATION OF THE Seventh-day Adventist Church

TRIVIA ABOUT US

Seventh-day Adventists are a world-wide family of Christian believers. Like other Protestant churches we base our beliefs on the Bible. Thus, we believe Jesus Christ is God and that He died for our sins. In Europe we number almost 350,000 members. We meet every week to worship God and enjoy our fellowship. Globally, we have approximately 22 million members, but even more people come to our churches which are open to everyone, including you.

Even though there are not that many Adventists in Europe compared to the size of the population, it's not implausible that you may have met one of us, or seen one of our church buildings. Our impact on society has been made in varying ways. For instance, we run many private schools where many students, are not from an Adventist background.

Were you aware that Desmond Doss the WW2 conscientious objector who saved 75 lives at Hacksaw Ridge was an Adventist? John Harvey Kellogg, American physician and health-food pioneer, was also an Adventist for most of his life. We try to make an impact by caring for the basic needs of people world-wide (ADRA), by improving their holistic well-being (health ministry) and by supporting religious freedom around the world.

Of course, if you want to know more about us, the best way is to visit us. Everyone is welcome.

WHO ARE WE?

What does it mean to be a "Seventh-day Adventist"? Well, the name consists of two elements.

The Seventh day is a reference to the Sabbath. When God created the world, He made the seventh day holy. That's why we attend church on that day and worship God as a way of reminding ourselves that He is our creator.

“Advent” you probably recognise from the Sundays leading up to Christmas Eve. It means “coming”, and during Christmas we look forward to the coming of the baby Jesus. However, when we speak of the “advent” in our churches, it is about His Second Coming rather than His first. One day, Jesus will return to establish His kingdom, and we look forward to this.

In effect, “Seventh-day Adventist” refers to the beginning and the end, Creation and Restoration. Jesus says about himself that He is the beginning and the end (Revelation 22:13). Seventh-day Adventism is about Jesus more than anything else – He created the world, and He will restore it.

THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH LOGO

The logo reflects some of our core values. The Bible is the foundation. In the logo you will notice an open book, because its message is meant to be read and practiced. Central to this message is the cross, which is at the centre of the logo. Above the cross and the open Bible, you will see the burning flame of the Holy Spirit. Without the power of the Spirit we can neither understand the Bible or the cross.

The lines in the top of the design indicate an upward movement. It symbolises our resurrection and ascension to heaven at the Second Coming of Christ, the ultimate focus of our faith.

The Open Bible

The Bible forms the base of the design and represents the Bible as the foundation of our beliefs. It is portrayed in a fully open position suggesting a full acceptance of God's word.



The Flame

This is the shape formed by three lines encircling an implied sphere. The lines represent the three angels of Revelation 14 circling the globe and our commission to take the gospel to the entire world. The overall shape forms a flame which signifies the Holy Spirit.

The Cross

The symbol of the cross represents the gospel of salvation. It is placed in the middle to emphasise the sacrifice of Christ as the central theme of our faith.

OVERVIEW

A BIBLE STUDY GUIDE

The lessons are ordered both by topic, title and within which part of the Biblical account they belong.

Lesson 1 – Creation, the Fall, the Promise (*stages 1+2*)

Bible Passages: Genesis 1-3

Topic: Paradise – God’s Original Plan and the World Today

Lesson 2 – Abraham (*stage 3 – part 1*)

Bible Passages: Genesis 12-25, Romans 4, Hebrews 11

Topic: Faith

Lesson 3 – Israel (*stage 3 – part 2*)

Bible Passages: Exodus 1-3, 11-12, 14-20, 24:1–25:9, 31-34, Deuteronomy 30, 34, Joshua 1

Topic: God’s People and God’s Law

Lesson 4 – David (*stage 3 – part 3*)

Bible Passages: Ruth 1-4, 1 Samuel 8, 2 Samuel 1-24, 1 Kings 1-2, 11

Topic: The Kingdom of Israel – A Man After God’s Own Heart

Lesson 5 – The Prophets (*stage 3 – part 4*)

Bible Passages: Micah 5, Psalm 55, Zachariah 11, Psalm 22, Isaiah 53

Additional Bible Passages: Jeremiah 31:27-40, Daniel 1-12, Isaiah 1, 42, 43, 52:13–53:12, 65-66, Malachi 1-3

Topic: Prophecy and the Coming Messiah

Lesson 6 – Christ’s Ministry (*stage 4 – part 1*)

Bible Passages: Matthew 5-7 (Sermon on the Mount)

Topic: Discipleship

- Following Jesus
- Loving Your Neighbour
- Prayer

Lesson 7 – Christ’s Ministry (*stage 4 – part 2*)

Bible Passages: John 1-11

Topic: Discipleship

- The Life of Jesus
- The Resurrection

Lesson 8 – Christ’s Ministry (*stage 4 – part 3*)

Bible Passages: John 12-21, Acts 1-2

Topic: Discipleship

- Baptism
- The Cross
- Communion
- Mission

Lesson 9 – The Church (*stage 5 – part 1*)

Bible Passages: Matthew 28:18-20, Acts, Romans 10

Topic: The Church and the Holy Spirit

Lesson 10 – The Church (*stage 5 – part 2*)

Bible Passages: 1 Corinthians 1-2, 13-16,
Ephesians, Jacob

Topic: The Church and the Individual

Lesson 11 – The Judgment (*stage 6 – part 1*)

Bible Passages: Leviticus 16, 1 Kings 8, Matthew 27:45-56, Hebrews

Topic: The Sanctuary

Lesson 12 – The Judgment (*stage 6 – part 2*)

Bible Passages: Matthew 25:31-46, Romans, 1 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians

Topic: The Second Coming of Christ

Lesson 13 – The Judgment (*stage 6 – part 3*)

Bible Passages: Ezekiel 28:11-19, Romans 3, Revelation 12

Topic: The Righteousness of God

Lessons 11-13 can also be done as one study depending on the age of the students.

Lesson 14 – New Creation (*stage 7*)

Bible Passages: Revelation

Topic: Paradise Restored

The Seventh-day Adventist Movement

(Lessons 15-17)

Lesson 15 – Ellen White

Bible Passages: Genesis 5-6, 11-24, Exodus 12:40-42; Jeremiah 29, Daniel 8-9, Amos 3:7, Mark 1, Revelation 10

Lesson 16 – Healthy Living (*Lifestyle – part 1*)

Bible Passages: Numbers 6:1-21, Matthew 22, 34-40,
Romans 14, 1 Peter 2:9-10

Topic: – What we abstain from
– What we discourage
– What we recommend

Lesson 17 – Family (*Lifestyle – part 2*)

Bible Passages: Genesis 1-3, Ephesians 5:21-33,
1 Corinthians 6:12-20

Topic: – Marriage
– Sex
– Cohabitation
– Choosing a spouse

Suggestions for additional studies:

Lesson 18 – Forgiveness

Lesson 19 – Devotional Life

Lesson 20 – Prayer

Lesson 21 – Witnessing

1

A vertical splash of water with several bubbles rising from it, positioned on the left side of the page.

PARADISE – God's Original Plan and the World Today

Creation Sin

STAGES 1+2

THE PROMISE

BIBLE PASSAGES:

Genesis 1-3

QUESTIONS

- How did it all begin?
- Why was the tree of the knowledge of good and evil placed in the Garden of Eden?
- What happened at the fall?
- What does God promise will be the solution for all sin?
- How does Genesis 1-3 fit with life as we know it today?

THOUGHTS

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."

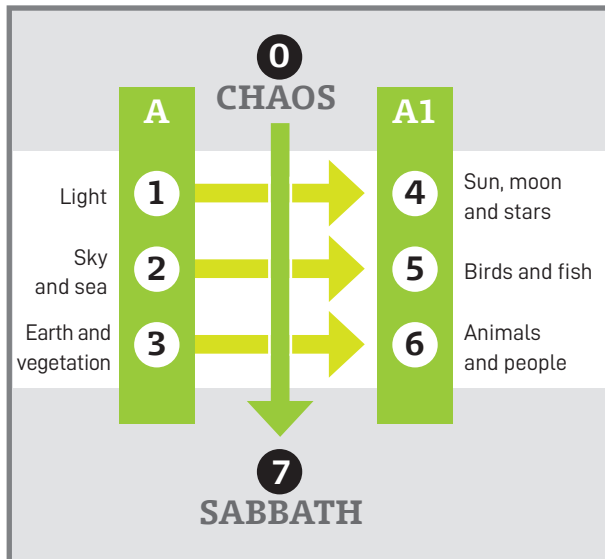
- What does that mean?
- Who is dependent on whom?
- Can the creation exist without the creator?

THE CREATOR

CREATION

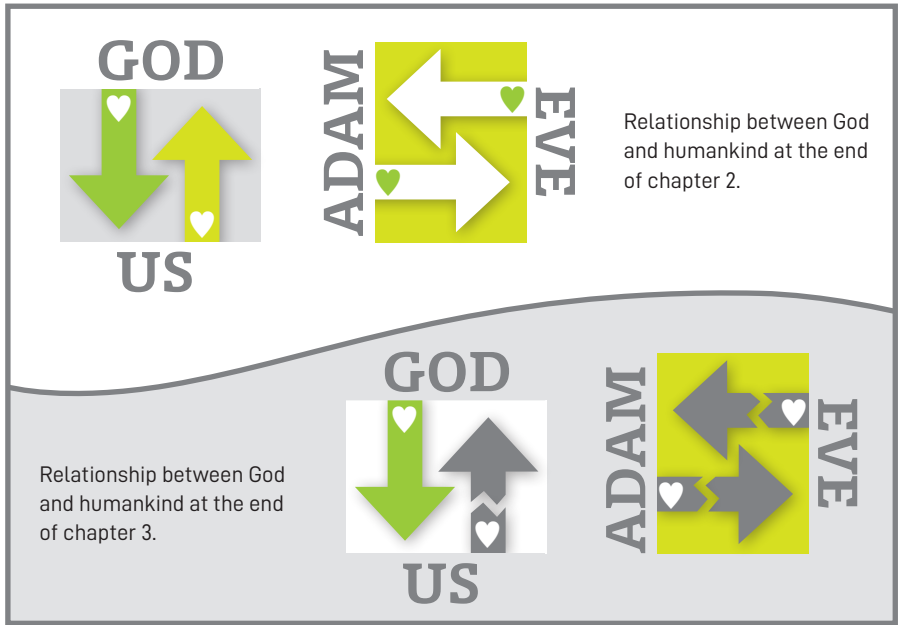
In the creation account (chapter 1-2) God initiates three things. What are they?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____



When we tell stories today, there is often something important in the middle of the story. When we watch a movie, the climax often comes towards the end, but there is a soft landing, where "the good guys" have won and "the bad" have lost.

When the Hebrews told stories, the climax comes at the end, and often there are repetitions (see the illustration). Notice the last few verses at the beginning of chapter 2. What is the climax? What is the main point?



Notes

CONCLUSION

Depending on who you believe God is, it will be a curse or a blessing that God is your creator. If God is good, it is amazing that He is our creator!

APPEAL

What do you believe about God? Will you believe in Him as your Creator?

2



Faita



BIBLE PASSAGES:

Genesis 12-25
Romans 4
Hebrews 11

QUESTIONS

- What is faith?
- How does Abraham's faith develop during his life?
- How does the "covenant", that is, the agreement between God and Abraham, change Abraham? What difference does it make?
- What difference does baptism make?
- What's the function of tithing in your relationship with God?
- What conclusions should we draw from the fact that Abraham returned tithing?
- Why is it important that he returns tithing before he enters a covenant with God?

Abraham's Life

● "Tell them you're my sister"

★ Covenant with God

☞ Take your son

12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25



You can read the story of Abraham in Genesis 12-25.

THOUGHTS

- Abraham journeys in faith – but his doubts remain
- He believes in God's promises and is counted as righteous
- He makes a covenant with God, but still he stumbles
- He shows that despite his failures he wants to follow God.

READ

2 Timothy 4:6-8


CONCLUSION

Paul has assurance of salvation because he knows the story of Abraham and knows that God has not changed. God remains the same today. Therefore, you can also be assured of your salvation.

APPEAL

Do you believe that God wants to save you? What difference does it make in your life?

Notes

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GOD'S people and GOD'S law

BIBLE PASSAGES:

Exodus 1-3, 11-12, 14-20,
24:1-15, 31-34
Deuteronomy 30, 34
Joshua 1

QUESTIONS

- Why is the story of the Exodus so important?
- What is the significance of Passover for the Jews?
- Why does God reveal Himself to Israel on Mount Sinai in this way?
- What do the Ten Commandments signify?
- What does it mean to fear God? (Look at Proverbs 8:13)
- How is the story relevant to us even though we're not a part of the covenant God made with Israel?



THOUGHTS

- God liberates Israel from Egypt – then He gives them the law
- God wishes to bless Israel
- God wishes to bless others through Israel
- What are Israel's two options?
- What would you choose?

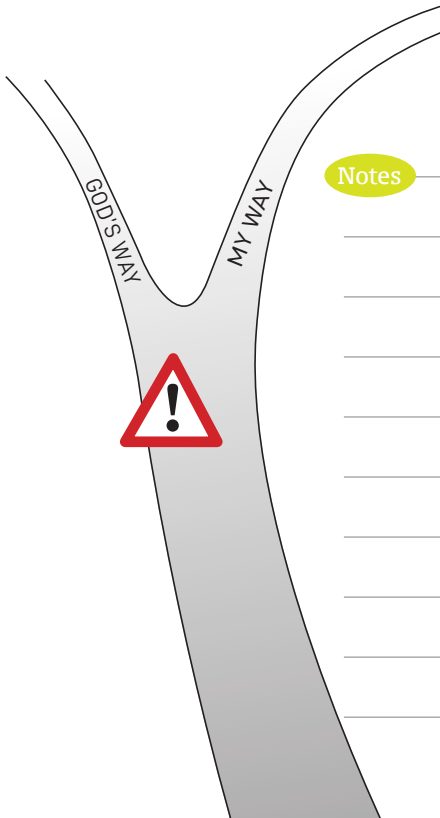
READ
Deuteronomy 30

CONCLUSION

God wants the Israelites to live long and prosper – and the way they do this is by being together with Him

APPEAL

Which way will you choose? God's way or your own?
Do you wish to live your life with God?



Notes

4

A vertical splash of water with several bubbles rising from the bottom left towards the top left of the page.

The Kingdom of Israel – The Man After God's Own Heart

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PSALM 51

DAVID'S PRAYER

- 1 Repentance
- 2 Forgiveness from God
- 3 Prayer for restoration
- 4 I will help others
- 5 Prayer for restoration of others

BACKGROUND

- What happens in Joshua 24?
- How does the Book of Judges conclude? Which way did they choose?
- Who are they rejecting in 1 Samuel 8?

REFLECTION

- What happens in 2 Samuel 11-12?
- How does David react afterwards? Read Psalm 51.
- Why is Jesus called the Son of David? Read Matthew 21.

CONCLUSION

Jesus is called the Son of David. You are also a son or a daughter of Christ.

APPEAL

Would you like to be a man or woman after God's own heart?

Notes

A dynamic splash of water with several droplets and bubbles, positioned in the upper right quadrant of the page.

MESSIAH and the Coming PROPHECY

THE PROPHETS

STAGE 3 – PART 4

BIBLE PASSAGES:

Basic:

Micah 5, Psalm 55,
Zachariah 11, Psalm 22,
Isaiah 53

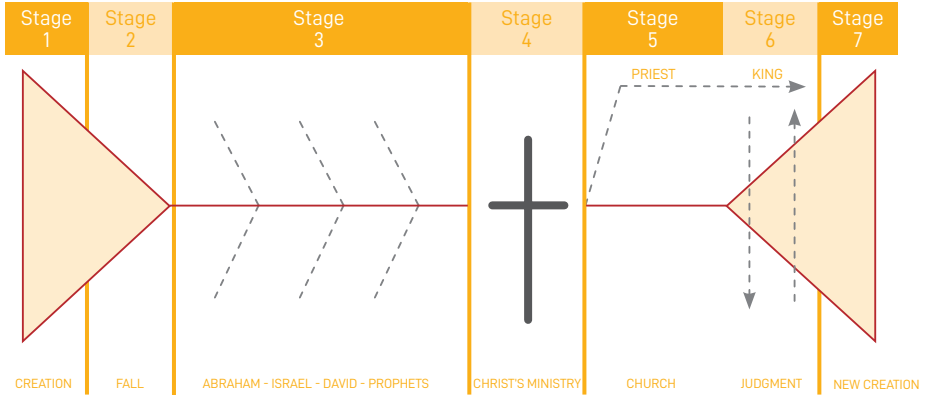
Extended:

Jeremiah 31:27-40,
Daniel 1-12, Isaiah 1,
42, 43, 52:13–53:12,
65-66, Malachi 1-3

QUESTIONS

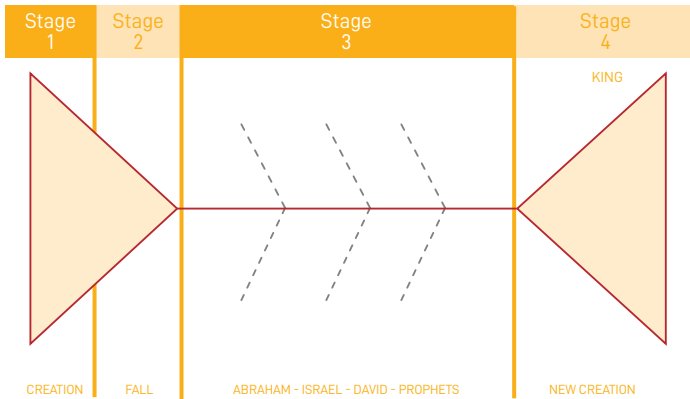
- How did the Jews misunderstand the prophecies of Jesus, and how do we avoid doing likewise?
- How can we see that the prophecies point to Jesus?
- What difference does it make, living after the time of Jesus and knowing that there will be a Second Coming?

THE BIBLICAL STORY



THE
PROMISE
GEN 3:15

Biblical Understanding



THE
PROMISE
GEN 3:15

Jewish Understanding

THOUGHTS

The prophets predict:

- The Messiah will die
- He will be betrayed
- The Messiah will save us
- We will be healed by His wounds

They also predict:

- Paradise will be restored
- There will be a new heaven and a new earth
- There will be joy everlasting
- Evil will disappear forever

CONCLUSION

The promises point to the Messiah. All of history points towards Jesus Christ. God is in control of history – the beginning and the end.

APPEAL

Do you have the courage to believe that God is in control?

Notes

EXTENDED

BACKGROUND

After King David things go well under King Solomon's rule, but after some time he returns to the worship of false gods.

Following the death of King Solomon Israel is split into two kingdoms:

1. Israel (the Northern kingdom)
2. Judah (the Southern kingdom)

Then, after repeated rebellion and openly rejecting God, Israel is scattered among other nations.

Ultimately, after a final warning by the prophet Jeremiah, the people of Judah are taken captive and brought to Babylon.

The rebellion leads to exile – the temple is destroyed – the people are separated from God.

STUDY

Read Isaiah 1:1-17

What is the situation among the Jews before the exile? Why is God angry with them? How are they treating each other?

Read Daniel 2

Which kingdoms is this concerning? What do you think the Jews made of this vision? What did the great rock symbolise from their point of view?

EXTENDED

COMPARE

Read both chapter 2 and chapter 7 in the Book of Daniel

What part of the first vision is explained in greater detail in chapter 7?

What part of the legs of iron is still present today?

What is significant about the little horn?

REFLECTION

Think of who the solution is in chapter 7.

Think of how the Jews are likely to have interpreted it in the time of Jesus.

What difference does it make to our understanding that we are living after the first coming of Jesus?

A vertical graphic on the right side of the page showing a splash of water with several droplets and bubbles rising upwards.

DISCIPLE- SHIP

THE MINISTRY OF CHRIST

STAGE 4 – PART 1

BIBLE PASSAGES:

Matthew 5-7

QUESTIONS

- What does it mean to pray? How do you do it?
- What does it mean to love your neighbour?
- What does it mean to follow Jesus?

THOUGHTS

- Prayer changes you. God knows what you need.
- Prayer affects God. He is listening and is active on our behalf.
- To love your neighbour means to take responsibility for others, not just your own life.
- To be a disciple means to follow.

Write a prayer to God:

CONCLUSION

Jesus calls us to a life with Him. The message is not just "good advice", it's a message about what He's done for us and what He wants to do.

APPEAL

Do you accept Jesus Christ as your personal Saviour and do you wish to follow Him as Lord of your life?

7



DISCIPLE

THE MINISTRY OF CHRIST

STAGE 4 – PART 2

BIBLE PASSAGES:

John 1-11

QUESTIONS

- What does Jesus spend time on? Who does He spend time with?
- How does Jesus reveal Himself as Creator and Saviour?
- What does Jesus say about Himself?

SHIP

THOUGHTS

- Jesus spends His time on the marginalised of society
- Jesus is in conflict with the Jewish leaders
- Jesus helps, heals and teaches

Find the instances in the Gospel of John where Jesus says "I am":

A Chapter 1:1-5

- a In the beginning (existed before)
- b With God (relationship to God)
- c Was God
- d Creator
- e Sustainer
- f Life and light
- g Defeats darkness

B Chapter 1:6-8.15

- a Sets the historical timeframe
- b John is not the light
- c John is a witness to verses 1-5
- d He is mentioned as a witness to what follows

JOHN 1:1-18

WHO

CONCLUSION

Jesus is everything for us. He is the Creator and the Saviour of the world.

APPEAL

Who is Jesus to you? How can you get to know Him better?

Notes

C

Chapter 1:9-13

- a He was in the world
- b The world came into being through Him
- c He came to His own
- d His own did not welcome Him
- e FAITH >> right to be called children of God

D

Chapter 1:14.16-18

- a The Word became flesh (God became man)
- b Seen His glory
- c Received grace
- d Law from Moses
- e Grace and truth from Jesus Christ
- f Nobody has seen God
- g The Son has revealed the Father

IS JESUS?

8



DISCIPLE- SHIP

THE MINISTRY OF CHRIST

STAGE 4 – PART 3

BIBLE PASSAGES:

John 12-21
Acts 1-2

QUESTIONS

- Why was Jesus baptised?
- What does Jesus demonstrate when He washes the disciples' feet?
- What does the baptism signify?

COMPARE

Read about the death of Jesus on the cross in

- a** John 19:17-37
- b** Luke 23:26-49
- c** Mark 15:21-41
- d** Matthew 27:32-56

Describe what happened on the cross. Why is it so important?

READ
Acts 1-2

THOUGHTS

After the crucifixion, the resurrection and the ascension, we notice how faith in Jesus affects the first Christians.

- What is the concluding message of Peter? (Read Acts 2:36)
- What is the people's response to his sermon in Acts 2:14-36?

Peter gives the following answer:

1. Repent.
2. Be baptised in the name of Jesus Christ and be forgiven of your sins.
3. You will receive the Holy Spirit as a gift.
4. The promise is for ALL people.

REFLECTION

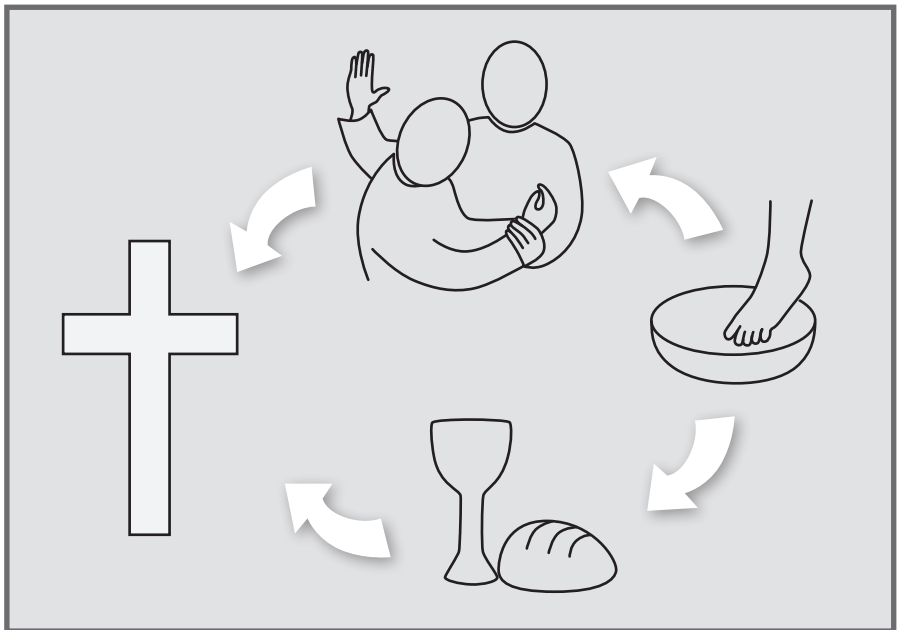
Think about your own response. How will you answer?

CONCLUSION

Jesus showed us what it means to be a servant. He bore our sin and died in order that we may live. Jesus was willing to perish so that we could inherit eternal life. Jesus rose again. He has defeated death.

APPEAL

How can you serve others the same way that you serve Jesus?



Notes



THE CHURCH & THE HOLY SPIRIT

THE CHURCH

STAGE 5 – PART 1

BIBLE PASSAGES:

Matthew 28:18-20
Acts
Romans 10

QUESTIONS

- What is the role of the church today? And throughout history?
- What was the first church like?
- What is foundational for the existence of the Christian church?
- What is the purpose of the Christian Community? For others? And for us?
- What role does the Holy Spirit have?
- What is going on in Heaven in this part of the story? What is Jesus doing?

READ

Acts 2

THOUGHTS

What characterises the first Christian church?

What did they consider important? (verses 42-47)

a _____

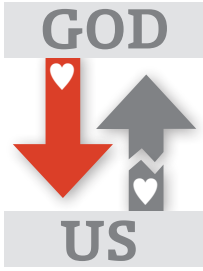
b _____

c _____

d _____

REFLECTION

Think of your congregation. Think of our church. What are we doing for ourselves? What are we doing for others?



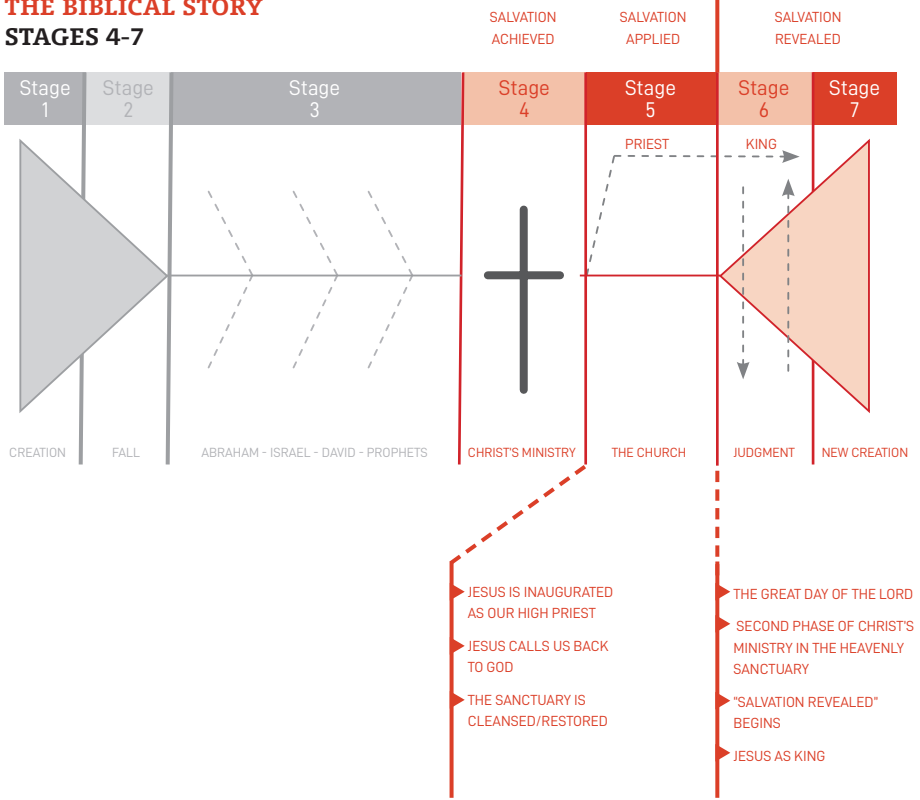
CONCLUSION

Jesus is ministering in the heavenly sanctuary in order to call us back to God. He must bring us back to God before He can bring us to glory (Paradise). In the meantime, our role is to answer that calling by telling other people about Him and help them answer the call.

APPEAL

Will you say "YES" to God's call to serve other people?
How will you do so?

THE BIBLICAL STORY
STAGES 4-7



THE CHURCH & THE INDIVIDUAL

THE CHURCH

STAGE 5 – PART 2

BIBLE PASSAGES:

1 Corinthians 1-2;
13-16
Ephesians
James

QUESTIONS

- What is your role in the church?
- What is the church's role in your life?
- What are the different roles that exist in the church?
- What are spiritual gifts?
- What is the difference between the wisdom of God and the wisdom of the world? Is there a conflict between them? How is that a comfort, but also a challenge to us?
- What is your role in the lives of other people outside the church?

STUDY

What spiritual gifts are described in the Bible Passages for this lesson? (Read Ephesians 4)

Mention some of them:

- 1 _____
- 2 _____
- 3 _____
- 4 _____
- 5 _____

REFLECTION

- What spiritual gifts do you think God has given to you?
- What do other people say that you are good at?
- What motivates you?
- What are you passionate about?
- When do you experience that God helps you?
- How do you think God can use you?

COMMUNITY

What is your responsibility in the church?

What is your responsibility in your local community?

What spiritual fellowship is Jesus sending you to?

Where do you feel like you belong?

Where do you want to take part?

MISSION

What opportunities do you have in your daily life to tell others about Jesus?

Who can you tell about Jesus?

How can you direct your friends towards Jesus – both through words and action?

CONCLUSION

You cannot be a Christian on your own – that's what church is for. We're here to support one another. We're here to build each other up. We're here to tell the world about Jesus.

APPEAL

How can you help strengthen other people's faith? Both those inside and outside the church?

Who do you know who doesn't know Jesus yet? What can you do about it?



11



THE SANCTUARY

THE JUDGMENT

STAGE 6 – PART 1

BIBLE PASSAGES

Exodus 25:1-9

Leviticus 16

1 Kings 8

Matthew 27:45-56

Hebrews

QUESTIONS

- What is the purpose of the sanctuary?
- What has the sanctuary meant historically?
- What is Jesus doing now?
- What does it mean that Jesus is our High Priest?
- Why is Jesus capable of being our High Priest?

STUDY

Read about the Day of Atonement in Leviticus 16.

Why does it matter? How did the sanctuary service work in the days of Moses? What does this teach us?

READ about the dedication of the temple in 1 Kings 8.

What does this story convey about the meaning of the sanctuary? How did it affect or contribute to the relationship between God and His people?

READ

Matthew 27:45-56

THOUGHTS

- What happened in the temple when Jesus died on the cross?
- What happened to the tombs?

Through the death of Jesus, we have direct access to God.

Christ’s ministry in the heavenly sanctuary is about calling us back to God (Acts 2:39).

READ about Jesus in Hebrews

REFLECTION

What does it signify in our relationship with Jesus that He is our High Priest?

CONCLUSION

Jesus is our High Priest, and He is advocating our case in the heavenly sanctuary. As long as we are separated from God, the sanctuary is necessary. With Jesus as our creator, priest, judge, advocate and friend, we have nothing to fear.

APPEAL

Will you let Jesus be in charge of your case?

Notes

THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

THE JUDGMENT

BIBLE PASSAGES:

Matthew 25:31-46

Romans

1 Thessalonians

2 Thessalonians

QUESTIONS

- What happens when we die? And what doesn't happen?
- What is a soul?
- What is the Second Coming?
- Why is the resurrection significant?
- What are we anticipating?
- When will Jesus return?
- What will happen when He does?

STUDY

What do people in the world imagine will happen when we die? Name some examples.

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

4 _____

READ
1 Thessalonians
4:13-18

What is the Christian hope? What is it that Paul doesn't want them to be ignorant of? Why?

READ
Romans

What does God promise will happen before the Second Coming (now)? What does God promise will happen at the Second Coming (later)?

Try filling in the blanks: (There are probably more items than spaces...)

NOW:

1 Faith

2 Repentance

3 Justification

4 Sanctification

5 _____

6 _____

LATER:

- 1 New body
- 2 Resurrection
- 3 Justification
- 4 _____
- 5 _____
- 6 _____

THOUGHTS

The Bible describes death as a sleep

The Bible teaches us that the human being is a living soul

The Bible teaches us that we cannot live without God

The Bible teaches us that the Great Day of the Lord has begun

The Bible teaches us about things that will happen before the Second Coming

The Bible teaches us about things that will happen at the Second Coming

The Bible teaches us about things that will happen after the Second Coming

The Bible does not give us the time or date for the Second Coming – only that it is soon

REFLECTION

If we don't have an immortal soul, what possibilities are there?

If we do have an immortal soul, what alternative to Heaven, must exist?

What are the possibilities for an everlasting Paradise if there must also be an everlasting Hell?

Much time has passed. How do we feel about Him coming soon?

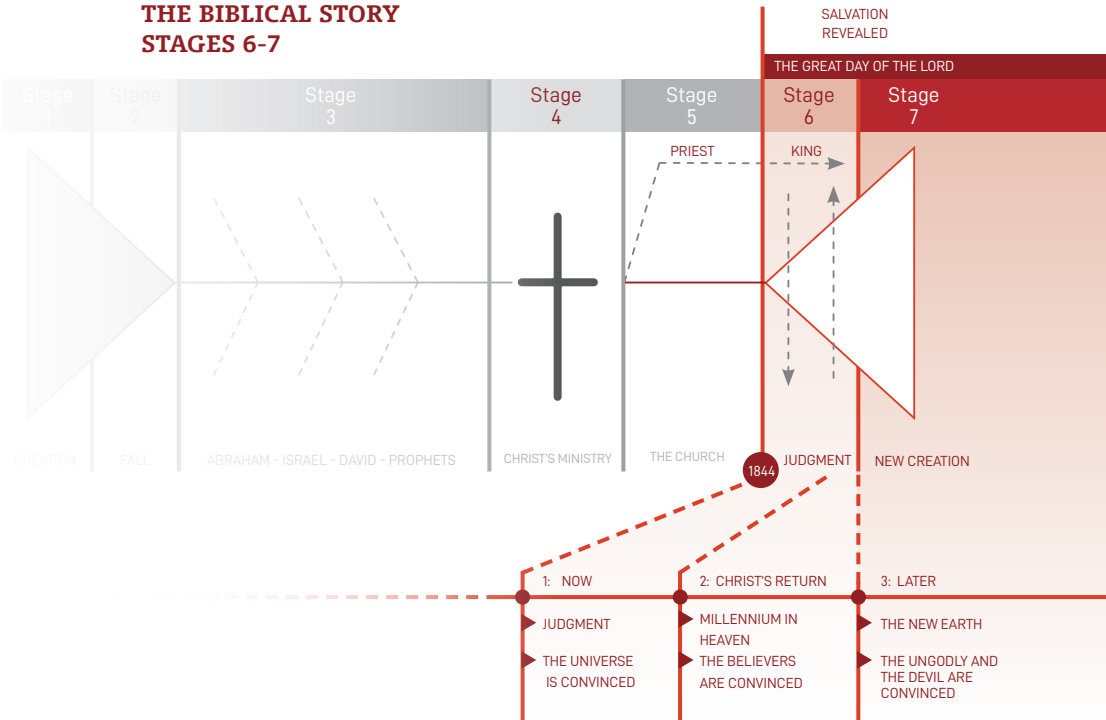
CONCLUSION

Jesus will return soon. We do not know when, but we look forward to His coming with joy as we long to meet our Saviour. Those who are dead in Christ are asleep and are waiting for the final resurrection when we will all meet Jesus in the air.

APPEAL

Do you hope Jesus will return soon? Why/Why not?

THE BIBLICAL STORY STAGES 6-7



13



THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD

THE JUDGMENT

BIBLE PASSAGES:

Ezekiel 28:11-19

Romans 3

Revelation 12

QUESTIONS

- What is the purpose of the judgment?
- What is Jesus doing now?
- What is God's challenge?
- What happened in Heaven before the world was created?
- Why is it even necessary that God be investigated and evaluated?
- What are we waiting for?
- Why is it important to believe that the Devil exists?

THOUGHTS

Through the death of Jesus on the cross...

1. God's love is fully revealed
2. Satan's wickedness is fully revealed
3. We are asked whom to believe in: The one who dies? Or the one who kills Him?

Through the resurrection Jesus demonstrates that this is "not just another good story." All the prophets spoke the truth, and because Jesus rose from the grave we can be confident in all He said during His life.

- A The righteousness of God is under attack, but through the revelation of His love on the cross all doubt is removed – salvation is achieved
- B This salvation is applied through Jesus' ministry as High Priest in the heavenly sanctuary.
- C This salvation is slowly revealed in the beginning of the second phase of His ministry in the heavenly sanctuary beginning in 1844 (e.g. read Daniel 8:14)

READ
Revelation 12:7-18

REFLECTION
What is the Devil doing here? Try to describe it:

READ
Ezekiel 28:11-19

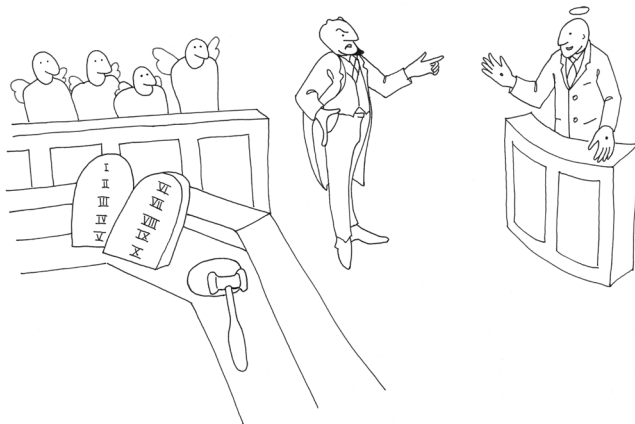
How did evil come into existence? And where?

CONCLUSION

We find ourselves in an unjust world – caught in a battle between God and Satan. But through the death of Jesus and His resurrection we can know that God has won, and evil will be destroyed in the end. This is our hope for the future and our comfort and joy in the present.

READ
Romans 3:1-4

APPEAL
God is on your side. Do you want to be on His side?
What possible winners are there? It is God who will be judged.



PARADISE RESTORED



NEW CREATION

BIBLE PASSAGES:

Revelation

QUESTIONS

- What will happen after the Second Coming?
- What are we going to do in Heaven? When will we return home?
- Why are we saved?
- What are the three angels' messages and what do they mean to us?
- Why do we focus so much on the End Times as Seventh-day Adventists?
- What will happen when Paradise is restored?
- What is the relationship between the first creation and the new creation at the end of the story?

READ

Revelation 4

STUDY

Who is the central character? Why is He being worshipped? (See verse 11)

READ

Revelation 5

Who is worthy to open the scroll? Why?

READ
Revelation 14:6-13

What is the everlasting gospel? Try to describe it in your own words:

THOUGHTS

- Jesus is the one who saves
- The creator is also the re-creator
- God promises that Paradise will be restored
- God promises that evil will be annihilated

THE FIRST ANGEL proclaims God is the creator

THE SECOND ANGEL proclaims that there is confusion and exposes the wrong ideas about God among Christians

THE THIRD ANGEL proclaims a message of warning and comfort for the last days

READ AGAIN
Revelation 14:6-13

REFLECTION

These verses had a special meaning for the first Sabbatarian Adventists. What do they mean today?

READ
Revelation 20-22

See if you can create an overview of the last events after the Second Coming of Christ? What will happen?

1. To those who believe?
2. To those who do not believe?
3. To the Devil?
4. To God?

What is the promise at the end of the book? What does that mean for you today?

What is life going to be like on the New Earth?

CONCLUSION

God is creator. There is a meaningful beginning, and we see a meaningful end: Paradise restored. Jesus is the answer. In Him we find meaning, hope and comfort. We are saved through God's grace.

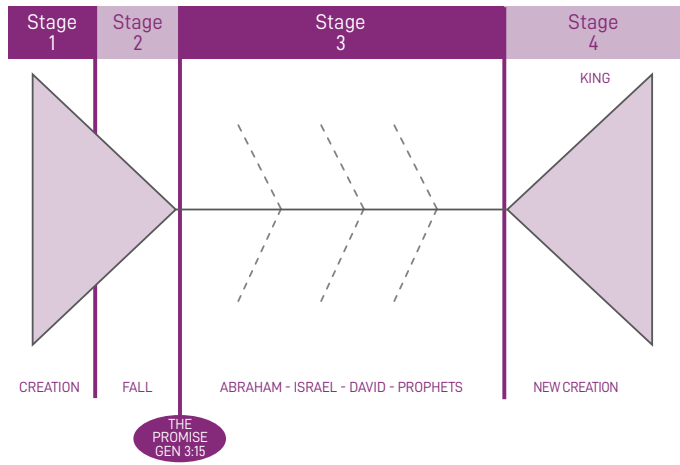
APPEAL

Do you desire a good end to the cosmic conflict? Do you want to live on the New Earth?

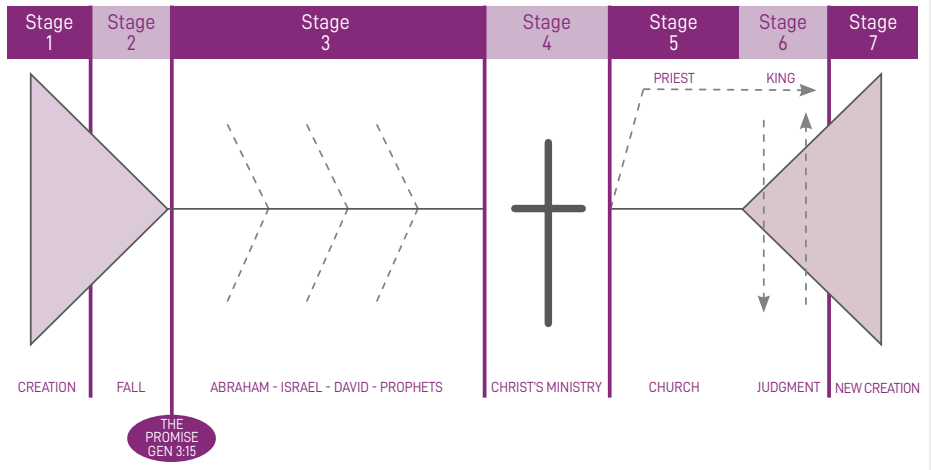
Do you believe that Jesus will return soon, and is it your desire to prepare the world for that day?

THE BIBLICAL STORY

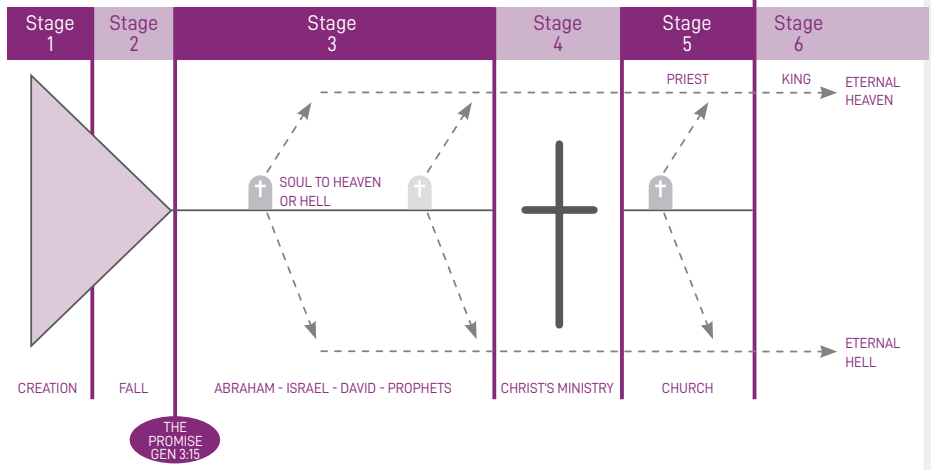
Jewish Understanding



Biblical Understanding



Roman Catholic Understanding





THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST MOVEMENT

ELLEN WHITE – HEALTHY LIVING – FAMILY

The last three lessons have been chosen for various reasons, and even though they are not presented the same way as the rest of the lessons, they are still part of the story. It is important to investigate some of the things that you will “discover” or be introduced to up-front – perhaps this has already happened.

These three lessons are placed in the end of the series, not because they are insignificant, but because the message about who God is must be presented before we speak of the practical implications for our lives.

PERSPECTIVE

1. We do not want you to become a member only to be surprised and think that “if only somebody had told you about...”
2. The Seventh-day Adventist Church focuses a lot on health and family because we believe that the different parts of our lives are connected. That’s why healthy living and healthy families are important when it comes to our relationship with God.
3. It has been a long time since the last book of the Bible was written, but we do not believe that God has withdrawn from us since then. We believe He is active in the world, and we believe that He used a woman named Ellen White to help us understand the Bible better.

In the first lesson, we already noticed that God is involved with people. He’s interested in their well-being – their relationship with the world, the animals and each other. These three topics can therefore be viewed as “things we now return to” in more detail.

15



ELLEN WHITE

BIBLE PASSAGES:

Genesis 5-6, 11-24

Exodus 12:40-42

Jeremiah 29

Daniel 8-9

Amos 3:7

Mark 1

Revelation 10

QUESTIONS

- Why do Seventh-day Adventists believe that Ellen White was a prophet?
- How are we to understand her writings?
- What is Ellen White trying to tell us?
- What do we see in the Bible when it comes to time prophecies?
- How do we relate to Ellen White as an authority without considering her equal with the Bible?

BACKGROUND

Ellen White was born on November 26, 1827 and died July 16, 1915.

She wrote more than 5,000 articles and 40 books during her lifetime and is one of the most published authors.

She lived most of her life in the United States, but she travelled a lot, spending time in Europe as well as several years in Australia.

She was married to James White and was the mother of four boys.

She spoke of herself as “the small light” in comparison to the Bible, which she called “the great light”.

She called herself “the messenger of the Lord” and was reluctant to using the word “prophet” to describe herself.

THOUGHTS

- God reveals what He plans to do through His prophets
- There is a greater difference between our time and the times of Ellen White than people take into consideration
- Ellen White was inspired the same way as the other prophets
- The Bible’s authority is primary – the role of Ellen White is to lead people to the Bible
- Ellen White had an affirmative role – not a normative one – she is not the foundation of our beliefs

REFLECTION

Ellen White wrote many books. The best “evidence” in favour of Ellen White is to read what she has written, e.g.:

- Steps to Christ
- The Desire of the Ages
- Patriarchs and Prophets
- The Great Controversy
- Ministry of Healing

“New” Ellen White books are still being published. They are often compilations of quotes that have been assembled many years after her death, published with a particular topic in mind. We advise you to begin with the books that she wrote when she was still alive. Also, for youth there are several good paraphrased versions of her books that can be a blessing to read, e.g. *Messiah* by Jerry D. Thomas.

CONSIDER

The belief in Ellen White as a prophet is one for which the Seventh-day Adventist Church is often criticised. Particularly due to the fact that Ellen White wrote about many controversial topics. For more information and answers to these questions, go to

www.whiteestate.org or www.egwwritings.org

CONCLUSION

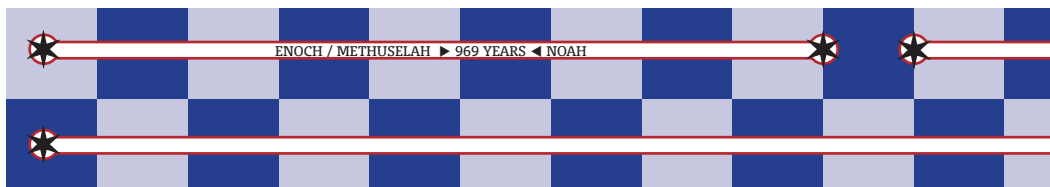
Patriarchs and Prophets begins with the words, “God is love”, and *The Great Controversy* ends with the words, “God is love”. This is the framework of her main message, and everything else should be seen in light of this.

APPEAL

Would you like to read one of the books written by Ellen White? Which one would you like to begin with?



TIME PROPHECIES IN THE BIBLE



16



HEALTHY LIVING

LIFESTYLE

PART 1

BIBLE PASSAGES:

Numbers 6:1-21

Matthew 22, 34-40

Romans 14

1 Peter 2:9-10

QUESTIONS

- What are some Biblical principles for healthy living?
- What is most important?
- Why do Seventh-day Adventists focus on harmful stimulants like alcohol and drugs?
- What other things are harmful to our health?
- What does it mean to be a Nazarite?

BACKGROUND

In terms of theology, one of the characteristics that make Seventh-day Adventists unique, is our belief in a non-immortal soul. This theological understanding has influenced our understanding of what it means to be human, thus placing a greater emphasis on the well-being of the body than has been done previously.

Adventism began in the United States in mid-1800s while a great deal of gambling and drinking occurred throughout the country. There were many other health problems due to common ignorance of basic health advice and practices. These were some of the problems that caused Seventh-day Adventists to respond.

Traditionally, Seventh-day Adventists have thought of themselves as a Nazarite people. To be a "Nazarite" means being "set aside" for special service. The priests and prophets in the Old Testament were entrusted with the task of preparing Israel for the coming of the Messiah. Likewise, our task is to prepare people for His Second Coming. Just like John the Baptist lived right before the first advent, so we believe that we are living in the time right before the Second Advent.

STUDY

Read Matthew 22:34-40

Which “parts” of a person are mentioned?

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

READ Romans 14

Our spiritual, mental, and physical well-being cannot be separated as easily as we sometimes would like. They all interact; affect each other, and how we treat our bodies influences our relationship with God.

What does Paul explain in this chapter?

What principles can you deduce from this?

What is your responsibility towards your neighbour?

THOUGHTS

When it comes to health it is beneficial to divide it into three categories.

1. What we abstain from
2. What we discourage
3. What we recommend

Often, the discussion revolves around categories one and two rather than the real focus, which should be on category 3. For instance, this category recommends getting enough sunlight, water, sleep and eating a varied diet.

We recommend moderation in everything that is good and abstain from everything that is harmful.

REFLECTION

In many situations, particularly when the congregation is together, one will experience the health habits of many Seventh-day Adventists. This can be abstinence from alcohol, tobacco and caffeine – healthy, varied foods without unclean meat and often vegetarianism or plant-based diet.

Which things in life would you put in each category?

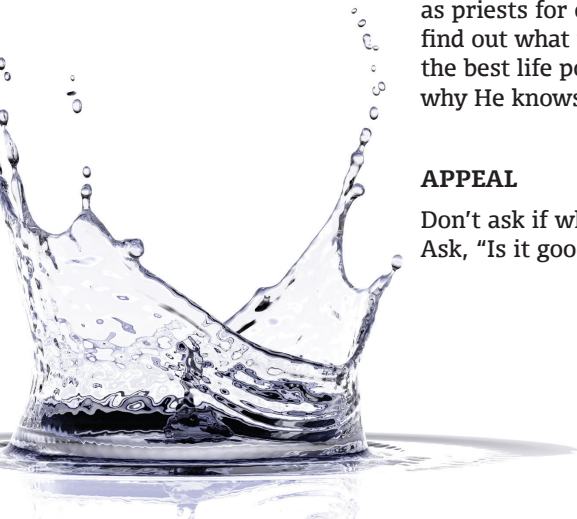
Why?

CONCLUSION

If love is central, and if we take upon ourselves the role as priests for our fellow human beings, it is easier to find out what things in life to abstain from. God wants the best life possible for you. He created you. That is why He knows best.

APPEAL

Don't ask if what you're doing is okay for you. Ask, "Is it good for the people around me?"



17



FAMILY

LIFESTYLE

PART 2

BIBLE PASSAGES:

Genesis 1-3

Ephesians 5:21-33

1 Corinthians 6:12-20

QUESTIONS

- What was God's original plan for marriage and family?
- What is the problem after the fall?
- How can we fight against our own sinful nature?
- What does it mean that the husband is the head? Who's in charge?
- How can we become better servants?
- What is the role of the church?
- What is important in the beginning of a relationship?
- What does it mean that our body is a temple for the Holy Spirit?

READ

Genesis 2

PREPARATION

Describe the marriage ideal:

READ
Genesis 3

Notice verses 16-19. What is the meaning of these consequences?

READ
Genesis 1

THOUGHTS

From the beginning we were created equal – both man and woman is created in the image of God.

Our sinful nature influences our love for each other

- The man wants to rule over the woman
- The woman desires her husband, even though he treats her badly
- The man listens to the woman rather than God

Our sinful nature has influenced our relationship with nature – God's creation

- We are consumers rather than stewards

READ
Ephesians
5:15-33

STUDY

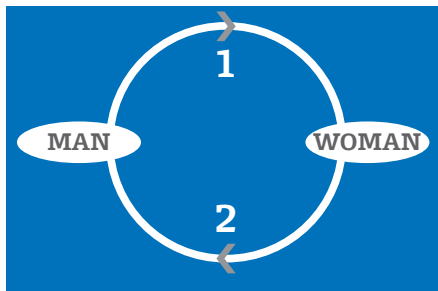
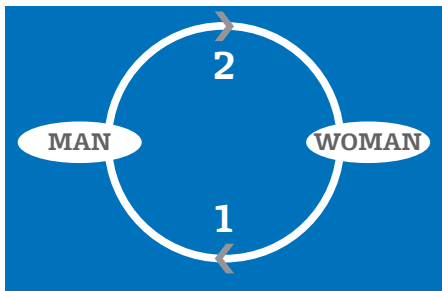
What does it mean to be filled with the Spirit? (See verse 19-21)

What is described in verse 21 about mutuality and equality?

What is the role of the woman?

What is the role of the man?

Consider how you can be somebody that another person will love. How do you want other people to be?



REFLECTION

Look at the illustration – when you think of the consequences of sin, what works better? If the man serves first, or if the woman does?

If you are married someday, what would you like your future spouse to have “tried already”?

Think of your body as a temple for the Holy Spirit. How can you protect it, both before and during marriage?

Sex is a gift of God, but so is marriage. If you want to enjoy both gifts for all they’re worth, they belong together.

What do you want to tell your children about God?

Think of what you need to have in common with your spouse for this to be possible.

Marriage is one of the first gifts God gives to humanity. We are meant to be one, just as God is one. It is a picture of God. Perhaps that is why divorce is so difficult – because it is so far from God’s ideal for us.

CONCLUSION

Remember that God is bigger than all our mistakes. We all do things we wish we could change, but God can forgive us. God is the one who created us; therefore, He knows what is in our best interest. Your feelings are important, but first and foremost listen to God.

APPEAL

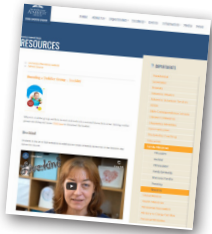
What decision are you going to make concerning your body?

What decision are you going to make concerning God and your family?

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

In addition to this study guide on The Biblical Story we recommend the following websites that among other things contain resources on stewardship, healthy living, family, and Ellen White.

www.egwwritings.org



ted.adventist.org/family-ministries/resources

www.stewardship.adventist.org



ted.adventist.org/youth-ministries/resources



icor.church



A vertical graphic on the right side of the page showing a splash of water with several bubbles rising from it. The splash is positioned in the upper right quadrant of the page.

SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST BELIEFS

OUR PRESENT UNDERSTANDING

Seventh-day Adventists accept the Bible as their only creed and hold certain fundamental beliefs to be the teaching of the Holy Scriptures. These beliefs, as set forth here, constitute the church's understanding and expression of the teaching of Scripture. Revision of these statements may be expected at a General Conference Session when the church is led by the Holy Spirit to a fuller understanding of Bible truth or finds better language in which to express the teachings of God's Holy Word.

1. The Holy Scriptures

The Holy Scriptures, Old and New Testaments, are the written Word of God, given by divine inspiration. The inspired authors spoke and wrote as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. In this Word, God has committed to humanity the knowledge necessary for salvation. The Holy Scriptures are the supreme, authoritative, and the infallible revelation of His will. They are the standard of character, the test of experience, the definitive revealer of doctrines, and the trustworthy record of God's acts in history. (Ps 119:105; Prov 30:5, 6; Isa 8:20; John 17:17; 1 Thess 2:13; 2 Tim 3:16, 17; Heb 4:12; 2 Peter 1:20, 21.)

2. The Trinity

There is one God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, a unity of three coeternal Persons. God is immortal, all-powerful, all-knowing, above all, and ever present. He is infinite and beyond human comprehension, yet known through His self-revelation. God, who is love, is forever worthy of worship, adoration, and service by the whole creation. (Gen 1:26; Deut 6:4; Isa. 6:8; Matt 28:19; John 3:16 2 Cor 1:21, 22; 13:14; Eph 4:4-6; 1 Peter 1:2.)

3. The Father

God the eternal Father is the Creator, Source, Sustainer, and Sovereign of all creation. He is just and holy, merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness. The qualities and powers exhibited in the Son and the Holy Spirit are also those of the Father. (Gen 1:1; Deut 4:35; Ps. 110:1, 4; John 3:16; 14:9; 1 Cor 15:28; 1 Tim 1:17; 1 John 4:8; Rev 4:11.)

4. The Son

God the eternal Son became incarnate in Jesus Christ. Through Him all things were created, the character of God is revealed, the salvation of humanity is accomplished, and the world is judged. Forever truly God, He became also truly human, Jesus the Christ. He was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He lived and experienced temptation as a human being, but perfectly exemplified the righteousness and love of God. By His miracles He manifested God's power and was attested as God's promised Messiah. He suffered and died voluntarily on the cross for our sins and in our place, was raised from the dead, and ascended to heaven to minister in the heavenly sanctuary in our behalf. He will come again in glory for the final deliverance of His people and the restoration of all things. (Isa 53:4-6; Dan 9:25-27; Luke 1:35; John 1:1-3, 14; 5:22; 10:30; 14:1-3, 9, 13; Rom 6:23; 1 Cor 15:3, 4; 2 Cor 3:18; 5:17-19; Phil 2:5-11; Col 1:15-19; Heb 2:9-18; 8:1, 2.)

5. The Holy Spirit

God the eternal Spirit was active with the Father and the Son in Creation, incarnation, and redemption. He is as much a person as are the Father and the Son. He inspired the writers of Scripture. He filled Christ's life with power. He draws and convicts human beings; and those who respond He renews and transforms into the image of God. Sent by the Father and the Son to be always with His children, He extends spiritual gifts to the church, empowers it to bear witness to Christ, and in harmony with the Scriptures leads it into all truth. (Gen 1:1, 2; 2 Sam 23:2; Ps 51:11; Isa 61:1; Luke 1:35; 4:18; John 14:16-18, 26; 15:26; 16:7-13; Acts 1:8; 5:3; 10:38; Rom 5:5; 1 Cor 12:7-11; 2 Cor 3:18; 2 Peter 1:21.)

6. Creation

God has revealed in Scripture the authentic and historical account of His creative activity. He created the universe, and in a recent six-day creation the Lord made "the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them" and rested on the seventh day. Thus, He established the Sabbath as a perpetual memorial of the work He performed and completed during six literal days that together with the Sabbath constituted the same unit of time that we call a week today. The first man and woman were made in the image of God as the crowning work of Creation, given dominion over the world, and charged with responsibility to care for it. When the world was finished it was "very good," declaring the glory of God. (Gen 1-2; 5; 11; Exod 20:8-11; Ps 19:1-6; 33:6, 9; 104; Isa 45:12, 18; Acts 17:24; Col 1:16; Heb 1:2; 11:3; Rev 10:6; 14:7.)

7. The Nature of Humanity

Man and woman were made in the image of God with individuality, the power and freedom to think and to do. Though created free beings, each is an indivisible unity of body, mind, and spirit, dependent upon God for life and breath and all else. When our first parents disobeyed God, they denied their dependence upon Him and fell from their high position. The image of God in them was marred and they became subject to death. Their descendants share this fallen nature and its consequences. They are born with weaknesses and tendencies to evil. But God in Christ reconciled the world to Himself and by His Spirit restores in penitent mortals the image of their Maker. Created for the glory of God, they are called to love Him and one another, and to care for their environment. (Gen 1:26-28; 2:7, 15; 3; Ps 8:4-8; 51:5, 10; 58:3; Jer 17:9; Acts 17:24-28; Rom 5:12-17; 2 Cor 5:19, 20; Eph 2:3; 1 Thess 5:23; 1 John 3:4; 4:7, 8, 11, 20.)

8. The Great Controversy

All humanity is now involved in a great controversy between Christ and Satan regarding the character of God, His law, and His sovereignty over the universe. This conflict originated in heaven when a created being, endowed with freedom of choice, in self-exaltation became Satan, God's adversary, and led into rebellion a portion of the angels. He introduced the spirit of rebellion into this world when he led Adam and Eve into sin. This human sin resulted in the distortion of the image of God in humanity, the disordering of the created world, and its eventual devastation at the time of the global flood, as presented in the historical account of Genesis 1-11. Observed by the whole creation, this world became the arena of the universal conflict, out of which the God of love will ultimately be vindicated. To assist His people in this controversy, Christ sends the Holy Spirit and the loyal angels to guide, protect, and sustain them in the way of salvation. (Gen 3; 6-8; Job 1:6-12; Isa 14:12-14; Ezek 28:12-18; Rom 1:19-32; 3:4; 5:12-21; 8:19-22; 1 Cor 4:9; Heb 1:14; 1 Peter 5:8; 2 Peter 3:6; Rev 12:4-9.)

9. The Life, Death and Resurrection of Christ

In Christ's life of perfect obedience to God's will, His suffering, death, and resurrection, God provided the only means of atonement for human sin, so that those who by faith accept this atonement may have eternal life, and the whole creation may better understand the infinite and holy love of the Creator. This perfect atonement vindicates the righteousness of God's law and the graciousness of

His character; for it both condemns our sin and provides for our forgiveness. The death of Christ is substitutionary and expiatory, reconciling and transforming. The bodily resurrection of Christ proclaims God's triumph over the forces of evil, and for those who accept the atonement assures their final victory over sin and death. It declares the Lordship of Jesus Christ, before whom every knee in heaven and on earth will bow. (Gen 3:15; Ps 22:1; Isa 53; John 3:16; 14:30; Rom 1:4; 3:25; 4:25; 8:3, 4; 1 Cor 15:3, 4, 20-22; 2 Cor 5:14, 15, 19-21; Phil 2:6-11; Col 2:15; 1 Peter 2:21, 22; 1 John 2:2; 4:10.)

10. The Experience of Salvation

In infinite love and mercy God made Christ, who knew no sin, to be sin for us, so that in Him we might be made the righteousness of God. Led by the Holy Spirit we sense our need, acknowledge our sinfulness, repent of our transgressions, and exercise faith in Jesus as Saviour and Lord, Substitute and Example. This saving faith comes through the divine power of the Word and is the gift of God's grace. Through Christ we are justified, adopted as God's sons and daughters, and delivered from the lordship of sin. Through the Spirit we are born again and sanctified; the Spirit renews our minds, writes God's law of love in our hearts, and we are given the power to live a holy life. Abiding in Him we become partakers of the divine nature and have the assurance of salvation now and in the judgment. (Gen 3:15; Isa 45:22; 53; Jer 31:31-34; Ezek 33:11; 36:25-27; Hab 2:4; Mark 9:23, 24; John 3:3-8, 16; 16:8; Rom 3:21-26; 8:1-4, 14-17; 5:6-10; 10:17; 12:2; 2 Cor 5:17-21; Gal 1:4; 3:13, 14, 26; 4:4-7; Eph 2:4-10; Col 1:13, 14; Titus 3:3-7; Heb 8:7-12; 1 Peter 1:23; 2:21, 22; 2 Peter 1:3, 4; Rev 13:8.)

11. The Growing in Christ

By His death on the cross Jesus triumphed over the forces of evil. He who subjugated the demonic spirits during His earthly ministry has broken their power and made certain their ultimate doom. Jesus' victory gives us victory over the evil forces that still seek to control us, as we walk with Him in peace, joy, and assurance of His love. Now the Holy Spirit dwells within us and empowers us. Continually committed to Jesus as our Saviour and Lord, we are set free from the burden of our past deeds. No longer do we live in the darkness, fear of evil powers, ignorance, and meaninglessness of our former way of life. In this new freedom in Jesus, we are called to grow into the likeness of His character, communing with Him daily in prayer, feeding on His Word, meditating on it and on His providence, singing His praises, gathering together for worship, and participating in the mission of the Church. We

are also called to follow Christ's example by compassionately ministering to the physical, mental, social, emotional, and spiritual needs of humanity. As we give ourselves in loving service to those around us and in witnessing to His salvation, His constant presence with us through the Spirit transforms every moment and every task into a spiritual experience. (1 Chron 29:11; Ps 1:1, 2; 23:4; 77:11, 12; Matt 20:25-28; 25:31-46; Luke 10:17-20; John 20:21; Rom 8:38, 39; 2 Cor 3:17, 18; Gal 5:22-25; Eph 5:19, 20; 6:12-18; Phil 3:7-14; Col 1:13, 14; 2:6, 14, 15; 1 Thess 5:16-18, 23; Heb 10:25; James 1:27; 2 Peter 2:9; 3:18; 1 John 4:4.)

12. The Church

The church is the community of believers who confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. In continuity with the people of God in Old Testament times, we are called out from the world; and we join together for worship, for fellowship, for instruction in the Word, for the celebration of the Lord's Supper, for service to humanity, and for the worldwide proclamation of the gospel. The church derives its authority from Christ, who is the incarnate Word revealed in the Scriptures. The church is God's family; adopted by Him as children, its members live on the basis of the new covenant. The church is the body of Christ, a community of faith of which Christ Himself is the Head. The church is the bride for whom Christ died that He might sanctify and cleanse her. At His return in triumph, He will present her to Himself a glorious church, the faithful of all the ages, the purchase of His blood, not having spot or wrinkle, but holy and without blemish. (Gen 12:1-3; Exod 19:3-7; Matt 16:13-20; 18:18; 28:19, 20; Acts 2:38-42; 7:38; 1 Cor 1:2; Eph 1:22, 23; 2:19-22; 3:8-11; 5:23-27; Col 1:17, 18; 1 Peter 2:9.)

13. The Remnant and Its Mission

The universal church is composed of all who truly believe in Christ, but in the last days, a time of widespread apostasy, a remnant has been called out to keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. This remnant announces the arrival of the judgment hour, proclaims salvation through Christ, and heralds the approach of His second advent. This proclamation is symbolized by the three angels of Revelation 14; it coincides with the work of judgment in heaven and results in a work of repentance and reform on earth. Every believer is called to have a personal part in this worldwide witness. (Dan 7:9-14; Isa 1:9; 11:11; Jer 23:3; Mic 2:12; 2 Cor 5:10; 1 Peter 1:16-19; 4:17; 2 Peter 3:10-14; Jude 3, 14; Rev 12:17; 14:6-12; 18:1-4.)

14. Unity in the Body of Christ

The church is one body with many members, called from every nation, kindred, tongue, and people. In Christ we are a new creation; distinctions of race, culture, learning, and nationality, and differences between high and low, rich and poor, male and female, must not be divisive among us. We are all equal in Christ, who by one Spirit has bonded us into one fellowship with Him and with one another; we are to serve and be served without partiality or reservation. Through the revelation of Jesus Christ in the Scriptures we share the same faith and hope, and reach out in one witness to all. This unity has its source in the oneness of the triune God, who has adopted us as His children. (Ps 133:1; Matt 28:19, 20; John 17:20-23; Acts 17:26, 27; Rom 12:4, 5; 1 Cor 12:12-14; 2 Cor 5:16, 17; Gal 3:27-29; Eph 2:13-16; 4:3-6, 11-16; Col 3:10-15.)

15. Baptism

By baptism we confess our faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and testify of our death to sin and of our purpose to walk in newness of life. Thus we acknowledge Christ as Lord and Saviour, become His people, and are received as members by His church. Baptism is a symbol of our union with Christ, the forgiveness of our sins, and our reception of the Holy Spirit. It is by immersion in water and is contingent on an affirmation of faith in Jesus and evidence of repentance of sin. It follows instruction in the Holy Scriptures and acceptance of their teachings. (Matt 28:19, 20; Acts 2:38; 16:30-33; 22:16; Rom 6:1-6; Gal 3:27; Col 2:12, 13.)

16. The Lord's Supper

The Lord's Supper is a participation in the emblems of the body and blood of Jesus as an expression of faith in Him, our Lord and Saviour. In this experience of communion Christ is present to meet and strengthen His people. As we partake, we joyfully proclaim the Lord's death until He comes again. Preparation for the Supper includes self-examination, repentance, and confession. The Master ordained the service of foot-washing to signify renewed cleansing, to express a willingness to serve one another in Christlike humility, and to unite our hearts in love. The communion service is open to all believing Christians. (Matt 26:17-30; John 6:48-63; 13:1-17; 1 Cor 10:16, 17; 11:23-30; Rev 3:20.)

17. Spiritual Gifts and Ministries

God bestows upon all members of His church in every age spiritual gifts that each member is to employ in loving ministry for the common good of the church and of humanity. Given by the agency of the Holy Spirit, who apportions to each member as He wills, the gifts provide all abilities and ministries needed by the church to fulfil its divinely ordained functions. According to the Scriptures, these gifts include such ministries as faith, healing, prophecy, proclamation, teaching, administration, reconciliation, compassion, and self-sacrificing service and charity for the help and encouragement of people. Some members are called of God and endowed by the Spirit for functions recognized by the church in pastoral, evangelistic, and teaching ministries particularly needed to equip the members for service, to build up the church to spiritual maturity, and to foster unity of the faith and knowledge of God. When members employ these spiritual gifts as faithful stewards of God's varied grace, the church is protected from the destructive influence of false doctrine, grows with a growth that is from God, and is built up in faith and love. (Acts 6:1-7; Rom 12:4-8; 1 Cor 12:7-11, 27, 28; Eph 4:8, 11-16; 1 Tim 3:1-13; 1 Peter 4:10, 11.)

18. The Gift of Prophecy

The Scriptures testify that one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit is prophecy. This gift is an identifying mark of the remnant church and we believe it was manifested in the ministry of Ellen G. White. Her writings speak with prophetic authority and provide comfort, guidance, instruction, and correction to the church. They also make clear that the Bible is the standard by which all teaching and experience must be tested. (Num 12:6; 2 Chron 20:20; Amos 3:7; Joel 2:28, 29; Acts 2:14-21; 2 Tim 3:16, 17; Heb 1:1-3; Rev. 12:17; 19:10; 22:8, 9.)

19. The Law of God

The great principles of God's law are embodied in the Ten Commandments and exemplified in the life of Christ. They express God's love, will, and purposes concerning human conduct and relationships and are binding upon all people in every age. These precepts are the basis of God's covenant with His people and the standard in God's judgment. Through the agency of the Holy Spirit they point out sin and awaken a sense of need for a Saviour. Salvation is all of grace and not of works, and its fruit is obedience to the Commandments. This obedience develops Christian character and results in a sense of well-being. It is evidence of our love for the Lord and our concern for our

fellow human beings. The obedience of faith demonstrates the power of Christ to transform lives, and therefore strengthens Christian witness. (Exod 20:1-17; Deut 28:1-14; Ps 19:7-14; 40:7, 8; Matt 5:17-20; 22:36-40; John 14:15; 15:7-10; Rom 8:3, 4; Eph 2:8-10; Heb 8:8-10; 1 John 2:3; 5:3; Rev 12:17; 14:12.)

20. The Sabbath

The gracious Creator, after the six days of Creation, rested on the seventh day and instituted the Sabbath for all people as a memorial of Creation. The fourth commandment of God's unchangeable law requires the observance of this seventh-day Sabbath as the day of rest, worship, and ministry in harmony with the teaching and practice of Jesus, the Lord of the Sabbath. The Sabbath is a day of delightful communion with God and one another. It is a symbol of our redemption in Christ, a sign of our sanctification, a token of our allegiance, and a foretaste of our eternal future in God's kingdom. The Sabbath is God's perpetual sign of His eternal covenant between Him and His people. Joyful observance of this holy time from evening to evening, sunset to sunset, is a celebration of God's creative and redemptive acts. (Gen 2:1-3; Exod 20:8-11; 31:13-17; Lev 23:32; Deut 5:12-15; Isa 56:5, 6; 58:13, 14; Ezek 20:12, 20; Matt 12:1-12; Mark 1:32; Luke 4:16; Heb 4:1-11.)

21. Stewardship

We are God's stewards, entrusted by Him with time and opportunities, abilities and possessions, and the blessings of the earth and its resources. We are responsible to Him for their proper use. We acknowledge God's ownership by faithful service to Him and our fellow human beings, and by returning tithe and giving offerings for the proclamation of His gospel and the support and growth of His church. Stewardship is a privilege given to us by God for nurture in love and the victory over selfishness and covetousness. Stewards rejoice in the blessings that come to others as a result of their faithfulness. (Gen 1:26-28; 2:15; 1 Chron 29:14; Haggai 1:3-11; Mal 3:8-12; Matt 23:23; Rom 15:26, 27; 1 Cor 9:9-14; 2 Cor 8:1-15; 9:7.)

22. Christian Behaviour

We are called to be a godly people who think, feel, and act in harmony with biblical principles in all aspects of personal and social life. For the Spirit to recreate in us the character of our Lord we involve ourselves only in those things that will produce Christlike purity, health, and joy in our lives. This means that our amusement and entertainment

should meet the highest standards of Christian taste and beauty. While recognizing cultural differences, our dress is to be simple, modest, and neat, befitting those whose true beauty does not consist of outward adornment but in the imperishable ornament of a gentle and quiet spirit. It also means that because our bodies are the temples of the Holy Spirit, we are to care for them intelligently. Along with adequate exercise and rest, we are to adopt the most healthful diet possible and abstain from the unclean foods identified in the Scriptures. Since alcoholic beverages, tobacco, and the irresponsible use of drugs and narcotics are harmful to our bodies, we are to abstain from them as well. Instead, we are to engage in whatever brings our thoughts and bodies into the discipline of Christ, who desires our wholesomeness, joy, and goodness. (Gen 7:2; Exod 20:15; Lev 11:1-47; Ps 106:3; Rom 12:1, 2; 1 Cor 6:19, 20; 10:31; 2 Cor 6:14-7:1; 10:5; Eph 5:1-21; Phil 2:4; 4:8; 1 Tim 2:9, 10; Titus 2:11, 12; 1 Peter 3:1-4; 1 John 2:6; 3 John 2.)

23. Marriage and the Family

Marriage was divinely established in Eden and affirmed by Jesus to be a lifelong union between a man and a woman in loving companionship. For the Christian a marriage commitment is to God as well as to the spouse, and should be entered into only between a man and a woman who share a common faith. Mutual love, honour, respect, and responsibility are the fabric of this relationship, which is to reflect the love, sanctity, closeness, and permanence of the relationship between Christ and His church. Regarding divorce, Jesus taught that the person who divorces a spouse, except for fornication, and marries another, commits adultery. Although some family relationships may fall short of the ideal, a man and a woman who fully commit themselves to each other in Christ through marriage may achieve loving unity through the guidance of the Spirit and the nurture of the church. God blesses the family and intends that its members shall assist each other toward complete maturity. Increasing family closeness is one of the earmarks of the final gospel message. Parents are to bring up their children to love and obey the Lord. By their example and their words, they are to teach them that Christ is a loving, tender, and caring guide who wants them to become members of His body, the family of God which embraces both single and married persons. (Gen 2:18-25; Exod 20:12; Deut 6:5-9; Prov 22:6; Mal 4:5, 6; Matt 5:31, 32; 19:3-9, 12; Mark 10:11, 12; John 2:1-11; 1 Cor 7:7, 10, 11; 2 Cor 6:14; Eph 5:21-33; 6:1-4.)

24. Christ's Ministry in the Heavenly Sanctuary

There is a sanctuary in heaven, the true tabernacle that the Lord set up and not humans. In it Christ ministers on our behalf, making available to believers the benefits of His atoning sacrifice offered once for all on the cross. At His ascension, He was inaugurated as our great High Priest and, began His intercessory ministry, which was typified by the work of the high priest in the holy place of the earthly sanctuary. In 1844, at the end of the prophetic period of 2300 days, He entered the second and last phase of His atoning ministry, which was typified by the work of the high priest in the most holy place of the earthly sanctuary. It is a work of investigative judgment which is part of the ultimate disposition of all sin, typified by the cleansing of the ancient Hebrew sanctuary on the Day of Atonement. In that typical service the sanctuary was cleansed with the blood of animal sacrifices, but the heavenly things are purified with the perfect sacrifice of the blood of Jesus. The investigative judgment reveals to heavenly intelligences who among the dead are asleep in Christ and therefore, in Him, are deemed worthy to have part in the first resurrection. It also makes manifest who among the living are abiding in Christ, keeping the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, and in Him, therefore, are ready for translation into His everlasting kingdom. This judgment vindicates the justice of God in saving those who believe in Jesus. It declares that those who have remained loyal to God shall receive the kingdom. The completion of this ministry of Christ will mark the close of human probation before the Second Advent. (Lev 16; Num 14:34; Ezek 4:6; Dan 7:9-27; 8:13, 14; 9:24-27; Heb 1:3; 2:16, 17; 4:14-16; 8:1-5; 9:11-28; 10:19-22; Rev 8:3-5; 11:19; 14:6, 7; 20:12; 14:12; 22:11, 12.)

25. The Second Coming of Christ

The second coming of Christ is the blessed hope of the church, the grand climax of the gospel. The Saviour's coming will be literal, personal, visible, and worldwide. When He returns, the righteous dead will be resurrected, and together with the righteous living will be glorified and taken to heaven, but the unrighteous will die. The almost complete fulfilment of most lines of prophecy, together with the present condition of the world, indicates that Christ's coming is near. The time of that event has not been revealed, and we are therefore exhorted to be ready at all times. (Matt 24; Mark 13; Luke 21; John 14:1-3; Acts 1:9-11; 1 Cor 15:51-54; 1 Thess 4:13-18; 5:1-6; 2 Thess 1:7-10; 2:8; 2 Tim 3:1-5; Titus 2:13; Heb 9:28; Rev 1:7; 14:14-20; 19:11-21.)

26. Death and Resurrection

The wages of sin is death. But God, who alone is immortal, will grant eternal life to His redeemed. Until that day death is an unconscious state for all people. When Christ, who is our life, appears, the resurrected righteous and the living righteous will be glorified and caught up to meet their Lord. The second resurrection, the resurrection of the unrighteous, will take place a thousand years later. (Job 19:25-27; Ps 146:3, 4; Eccl 9:5, 6, 10; Dan 12:2, 13; Isa 25:8; John 5:28, 29; 11:11-14; Rom 6:23; 6:16; 1 Cor 15:51-54; Col 3:4; 1 Thess 4:13-17; 1 Tim 6:15; Rev 20:1-10.)

27. The Millennium and the End of Sin

The millennium is the thousand-year reign of Christ with His saints in heaven between the first and second resurrections. During this time the wicked dead will be judged; the earth will be utterly desolate, without living human inhabitants, but occupied by Satan and his angels. At its close, Christ with His saints and the Holy City will descend from heaven to earth. The unrighteous dead will then be resurrected, and with Satan and his angels will surround the city; but fire from God will consume them and cleanse the earth. The universe will thus be freed of sin and sinners forever. (Rev 20; 1 Cor 6:2, 3; Jer 4:23-26; Rev 21:1-5; Mal 4:1; Eze 28:18, 19.)

28. The New Earth

On the new earth, in which righteousness dwells, God will provide an eternal home for the redeemed and a perfect environment for everlasting life, love, joy, and learning in His presence. For here God Himself will dwell with His people, and suffering and death will have passed away. The great controversy will be ended, and sin will be no more. All things, animate and inanimate, will declare that God is love; and He shall reign forever. Amen. (Isa 35; 65:17-25; Matt 5:5; 2 Peter 3:13; Rev 11:15; 21:1-7; 22:1-5.)

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BAPTISMAL VOWS

OUR

A baptism is always a special occasion, but there is not a certain formula that must be followed for it to be a correct service. It is also not at a certain age or at a certain time during this study series where you “ought” to be baptised. As Seventh-day Adventists we do not practice infant or adult baptism. Rather, we have baptism by immersion as a public expression of faith. It is not the end of your journey with God, but it is also not the beginning. It is the end of the beginning where you have gotten to know God well enough to trust Him and that you want to live your life according to His will.

In the church manual there are two suggested baptismal vows. One can also chose to tell a personal testimony. Often it can be advantageous for the church family, and the visitors to outline the pillars of our faith at the baptismal service. Choosing a baptismal vow is not about finding a way to say yes to as little as possible. It is about choosing a description that makes the most sense for the baptismal candidate, and the church. At the same time, it is important to be loyal to what Scripture reveals about God. The message is the same. The packaging may vary.

The following is a summary of our faith and subsequently a suggested baptismal vow. On the preceding pages you can also read the 28 fundamental beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church (2020).

OUR BELIEFS

- We believe in one Godhead: Father, Son and Holy Spirit – Creator and Sustainer of all things.
- We believe that Jesus died on the cross in our place so that we may receive forgiveness and eternal life.
- We believe that Jesus is our high priest and king, and that He is our intercessor in the heavenly sanctuary.
- We believe that Jesus will soon return. We do not know when, but we long for the day when our Saviour will appear in the clouds.



BELIEFS

- We believe that the Bible is inspired by God and that it is the authority on which we should base our Christian beliefs and lifestyle.
- We believe that the Holy Spirit convicts us of sin, righteousness and judgment and that we thereby receive power to live our lives together with Christ.
- We believe that God gave us the Sabbath at creation. Therefore, we keep it holy as a reminder of His love for us and for our fellow brothers and sisters.
- We believe that life is a gift from God that we cherish by living healthy and responsible lives in accordance with Biblical principles.
- We believe that the Church is established by God so that the everlasting gospel of Christ and the advent message of His soon return can be kept and proclaimed. Therefore, we all share in the responsibility of supporting the Church with the abilities, opportunities and means that God has given us.

BAPTISMAL VOW

1. Have you accepted Jesus Christ as your personal Saviour and is it your desire to follow Him as your Lord in all things?
2. Do you believe that the Bible is the authority on which we should base our Christian beliefs and lifestyle? And are you willing to live your life according to its teaching?
3. Jesus calls us away from a self centred life. To follow Him means to see other people and their needs. Will you – based on your circumstances – and to the best of your ability serve God, His Church and the people around you?
4. Is it your desire to be baptised as a public expression of your faith in Jesus Christ?
5. You have been taught what the Seventh-day Adventist Church stands for and teaches. Do you wish to become a part of our community of faith?



Notes

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Seventh-day
Adventist Church

TRANS-EUROPEAN
DIVISION