

***Good Word Schedule***  
**“Life Everlasting: On Death, Dying and the Future Hope”**  
**October, November, December 2022**

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**Theme:** “Rebellion in a Perfect Universe”

**Leading Question:** “Why does the Old Testament tell us so little about the Great Adversary?”

**Biblical Names for the Great Adversary.** When we explore the teaching of the Bible on the Great Adversary, we are tantalized by the nature of the evidence. In the order in which they appear in Scripture, here are the key names with brief comments about each one:

**Serpent.** When the serpent is first introduced in Scripture in Genesis 3:1, the NRSV describes it simply as being “more crafty than any other wild creature that the LORD God had made.” One senses that the serpent is God’s adversary, but that is not explicit in Scripture.

But note that its adversarial role is somewhat veiled. It was simply a creature that the LORD had made. The name “satan” (= “adversary”) is not linked with the serpent until Revelation 12, and there the adversarial names explode: (great) dragon, (ancient) serpent, Devil, and Satan (Rev. 12:7-9).

The English word “devil” is most closely linked to the Greek word *diabolos* and is thus not found in the Hebrew Old Testament. The Hebrew word for “Satan” (adversary) is transliterated as *satan* in the Old Testament and is also often transliterated as Satan in the New Testament. In the OT, it can refer to any opponent, human or “super” human. But only in three Old Testament contexts does it clearly refer to a supernatural being opposed to God: Job 1-2, 1 Chron. 21, and Zechariah 3:1. All three passages were either written or canonized toward the end of the OT.

**Lucifer.** This title from Isaiah 14 is based on the Latin for “light bearer” (Isaiah 14:12.) The NRSV renders it as “Day Star, Son of Dawn.” All this is described in terms of the “King of Babylon.” The language is clearly mythological, and it explicitly describes Lucifer’s sin as arrogance or pride.

**Anointed Cherub.** Ezekiel 28 is a kind of companion passage to Isaiah 14. Here, under the heading of the “Prince of Tyre” (Ezek. 28:1) or “King of Tyre” (Ezek. 28:12) a glorious and arrogant creature was found in Eden, perfect until iniquity was found in him and then was cast out (Ezek. 28:12-19).

The question of the origin of evil is a tantalizing one and the tendency of devout conservatives to blend all passages and aspects together complicates the task of interpreting specific passages. The rare appearance of Satan in the Old Testament is no doubt linked to the danger in the OT that Satan would be worshiped as another deity.

On balance, what is clear from the passages (taken together) are these three ideas: war in heaven, the sin of pride and arrogance, and the desire of evil to take divine prerogative to itself.

**Question:** What are the major contributions of each of the following passages to our understanding the origin and dominance of evil?

Genesis 3

Job 1-2; 1 Chron. 21;1; Zech. 3

Isaiah 14

Ezekiel 28

Revelation 12

**Note:** One important insight from Revelation 12 is that the war in heaven is clearly delineated only in Revelation 12 and shows that it culminated at the cross. (Rev. 12:7-12). That correlates NT Cosmology with the cosmology of Job. In short, after the resurrection, Satan no longer had access to the courts of heaven.

**GOOD WORD 2022.4**  
**Lesson #2 - October 8**

**“Life Everlasting: On Death, Dying, and the Future Hope”**  
**Gen. 3; Rom. 5:12**  
– prepared by Alden Thompson, School of Theology, WWU

**Theme:** “Death in a Sinful World”

**Leading Question:** “How does the Bible explain the entrance of rebellion and death into a perfect world?”

**Question:** The title of our lesson talks about death in a sinful world. Is that an easier question to address than the one that asks about death in a perfect world? Are both of them mysteries or only one?

The official study guide points out that God’s warning to the first couple indicates the existence of free will (why warn if there was no danger of falling?), a theme that is important to Adventists. But the caution from Gordon Fee and Douglas Stuart is worth noting:

Fee, Gordon and Douglas Stuart on Calvinists and Arminians  
from *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth* (Zondervan, 2003), 74

For many in the Arminian tradition, who emphasize the believer’s free will and responsibility, texts like Romans 8:30; 9:18-24; Galatians 1:15; and Ephesians 1:4-5 are something of an embarrassment. Likewise many Calvinists have their own ways of getting around 1 Corinthians 10:1-13; 2 Peter 2:20-22; and Hebrews 6:4-6. Indeed our experience as teachers is that students from these traditions seldom ask what these texts mean; they want to know “how to get around” these texts!

To be blunt, the tension between the two traditions cannot be tidily resolved. Somehow, both perspectives are needed for balance in the church.

**Question:** The official study guide claims that some things we are better off not knowing. Our questions are: Which, when, and how? Are we not better off questioning virtually everything?

**Question:** In the light of Genesis 3:1-7, are there iron-clad rules than can keep us from slipping into sin?

**Question:** How does one get a messianic prophecy out of Genesis 3:15? Two points should be made about this passage. First, we have no evidence before the close of the canon that this verse was applied to a messianic figure. All the speculation and application was after the resurrection. Second, the evidence is also clear that no one believed Jesus was God incarnate until after the resurrection. So we should be cautious about making early application.

**Theme:** “Understanding human nature”

**Leading question:** “For you, what is most puzzling about human nature, the most difficult to explain?”

The official study guides defines the point of this week’s lesson as two fold: “This week we will consider how the Old Testament defines human nature and the condition of human beings at death”

To do that we have to make some comparisons between Genesis 1 and 2. I was drawn to this comparison by a question from an elderly Adventist pastor who was beginning to see things in the Bible that he hadn’t see before. Initially I didn’t understand the point of his question. But gradually the light began to dawn.

He was puzzled by the contrast between the story of creation in Genesis 1 and the description of how God created the first man in Genes 2:7. In Genesis 1, God didn’t touch anyone or anything: He just spoke things into existence (“Look, ma – no hands!”)

But in Genesis 2 God actively shapes the clay into a living being. Suddenly, some pieces fell together for me: “In Genesis , it was important to keep the distance between God and his creation. God did not touch anything or anyone.’

But the resulting picture of God was austere, and impersonal. So Scripture includes another story where God is personal and hands on. The pictures contrast with each other, but complement each other. We need both to make the scene complete

**Question:** Does the human being have a soul? Or is he a soul? The answer to that question is a hearty “yes!” The biblical words (Hebrew in the OT, Greek in the NT) for the parts of the human being are clear but puzzling.

In Genesis 1:2, the Hebrew word *ruach* is translated by the KJV as “spirit”: “The spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.” The NRSV reads the “wind of God” as do several other translations. But the third meaning of *ruach*, “breath,” is vividly illustrated in the story of the crossing of the Red Sea. In the more historical narrative of the Exodus in Exod. 14:21, “The LORD drove the sea back by a strong east wind (*ruach*).” But in the poetic chapter, Exodus 15:8, the text speaks of the “blast (*ruach*) of your nostrils.”

In short, *ruach* simply refers to air in motion: wind, breath, or spirit. In the Greek NT the word *pneuma* (*pneuma*) covers the same ground: breath, spirit, wind.

The same applies to the word for soul. The Hebrew is *nephesh*, the Greek word is *psyche*, which English-speaking readers link with the word *psychology*, the study of the *psyche*. The KJV interprets the word most frequently as “life” (40x) or “soul” (58x). Where this becomes particularly interesting for our lessons this quarter is the use of these words to refer to the “immortal soul” or “spirit.” And when the Bible talks about the “spirit” returning to God who gave it, (Eccl. 12:7), it means nothing more than life! Never in Scripture is there something called the spirit or soul that has a conscious existence apart from the body!

Thus, in Ezek. 18:4, the soul (or person) that sins shall die! In the Bible we don't have immortal souls we have dead souls! Ecclesiastes 9:5 gives us one of the most pointed statements about the human condition in death: "The living know that they will die, but the dead know nothing" (NRSV).

**Question:** Where do people go when they die? Downstairs! Into the basement! The Hebrew word is *sheol*. In poetry, the picture of *sheol* is vivid. A good example is provided in Isaiah 14:9-11 as it describes the fate of the king of Babylon arriving in *sheol*. The translation here is CEV where *sheol* is translated as "the world of the dead":

The world of the dead (= *sheol*)  
eagerly waits for you.  
With great excitement,  
the spirits of ancient rulers  
hear about your coming.  
10 Each one of them will say,  
"Now you are just as weak  
as any of us!  
11 Your pride and your music  
have ended here  
in the world of the dead (= *sheol*)  
Worms are your blanket,  
maggots are your bed."

**Question:** Why are the OT patriarchs described as resting with their forefathers when they die?

The death and burial of Abraham (Gen. 25:8) is a classic OT description of the death of the aged and ties in with the picture of *sheol*.

Abraham breathed his last and died in a good old age, an old man and full of years, and was gathered to his people. (ESV)

**Theme:** The Old Testament Hope

**Leading question:** How is an Old Testament Hope different from a New Testament Hope?

This will be a challenging lesson for those who want a more open approach to the exegesis of Scripture. For those who want a more thorough and open discussion of the topic, three of my books will provide insight. *Who’s Afraid of the Old Testament God?* addresses the OT/NT divide. But in so doing, adopts what could be described as a “radical accommodationist” approach to Scripture. The late David Wright, the left-of-center Evangelical historian at the University of Edinburgh who helped me get *Who’s Afraid?* published by Paternoster, UK, and then Zondervan, US, told me that InterVarsity UK would never touch the book because the note of accommodation in it was far too strong. *Who’s Afraid?* is currently published by Energion.

One can sense that note of accommodation in several of the WA chapter titles: “Behold it was very good, and then it all turned sour” and “Strange people need strange laws.”

My book *Inspiration: Hard Questions, Honest Answers* (RH, 1991; Energion, 2016) develops that note of accommodation in a more thorough-going manner. Finally, *Beyond Common Ground: Why Liberals and Conservatives Need Each Other* (PPPA, 2009) addresses the topics that were omitted from *Inspiration* because they were potentially too volatile: diversity an eschatology. Those topics come into play in this study guide because eschatology plays a key role in these lessons. My main “practical” argument is that one should lay the passages of Scripture side-by-side, not attempting to impose them on top of each other. That enables us to compare the differing passages of Scripture as they appear in their respective contexts without having to choose one or the other.

In my experience the two most difficult concepts for devout conservatives to address are diversity and change. And we get plenty of both in this quarter’s lessons.

**Question:** How can two different hopes be the same when they are different?

Restoration is the common ground on which both testaments stand. Isaiah’s vision of God’s vegetarian kingdom is a wonderful vision a restored world which on one has ever seen but which has to be true if there is a good God:

**Isaiah 11:6** The wolf shall live with the lamb;  
the leopard shall lie down with the kid;  
the calf and the lion will feed together,  
and a little child shall lead them.  
7 The cow and the bear shall graze;  
their young shall lie down together;  
and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.

8 The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp,  
and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's den.  
9 They will not hurt or destroy  
on all my holy mountain,  
for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord  
as the waters cover the sea.

**Question:** When Job mentions that he will “see God” (Job 19:25-27), he refers to the “Redeemer” in this famous passage. Who is this “Redeemer”?

**Job 19:25-27** (KJV): 25 For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: 26 And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: 27 Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me.

**Comment:** The *goel* is a word with very vivid, even violent roots. A more literal translation would be “the near-kinsman who comes to the rescue of the family name, honor, and property.”

In the story of Ruth, Boaz is the one who comes to “rescue” the family property. In the Levitical marriage law (Deut. 25:5-10) it was the husband's brother who was obligated to carry on the family name. But it is the Cities of Refuge scheme that reflects the violence. Numbers 35 describes the tradition in all its violence.

Many scholars interpret Job in terms of the *goel* whom Job is summoning to defend him. They would see the figure of Jesus having nothing to do with it. The narrative easily moves that direction in a secondary application. But it is not the first meaning of the text.

**Question:** Is rescuing from *sheol* the same as resurrection?

Both Psalm 49:15 and Psalm 71:20 would be understood in the Old Testament as restoration from *sheol*, though in the light of Jesus' resurrection they are very easily applied to resurrection and eternal life. After all, as we have already seen, the Old Testament believers were looking forward to being gathered to their fathers, not to resurrection. Old Testament believers don't need to believe in everything we believe in for it to be true.

**Question:** How does Job explain all the parallels with the New Testament in Isaiah 24-27?

**Comment:** Scholars have called Isaiah 24-27 “The Little Apocalypse” because it has so many elements that parallel the other apocalyptic passages in Scripture. But it is as though the New Testament writers were simply using this part of Isaiah as a treasure chest for many of the ideas that appear in a more organized manner in the New Testament. In particular, Isaiah 25:8-10 points to restoration and Isaiah 26:19 talks of resurrection. These were not ideas that were “precious” to OT people as they are to those you live in the new. But they are a resource from which the New Testament writers drew:

**Isaiah 25:8-9** He will swallow up death forever.  
The Sovereign Lord will wipe away the tears  
from all faces;  
he will remove his people's disgrace  
from all the earth.  
The Lord has spoken.

9 In that day they will say,  
"Surely this is our God;  
we trusted in him, and he saved us.  
This is the Lord, we trusted in him;  
let us rejoice and be glad in his salvation."

**Isaiah 26:19** (NIV): But your dead will live, Lord;  
their bodies will rise—  
let those who dwell in the dust  
wake up and shout for joy—  
your dew is like the dew of the morning;  
the earth will give birth to her dead.

**Comment:** Finally a resurrection at the end of time! In Daniel 12:2 we have the first reference in Scripture to a resurrection at the end of time. But note how his passage differs from NT passages. Only some are raised to everlasting life and some to everlasting contempt. The eschatology that one finds in the Book of Revelation is just a bit tidier.

**GOOD WORD 2022.4**

**“Life Everlasting: On Death, Dying, and the Future Hope”**

**1 Kings 17:8-24; 2 Kings 4:18-37; Mark 5:35-43; Luke 7:11-17; John 11:1-44**

**Lesson #5 - October 29**

**– prepared by Alden Thompson, School of Theology, WWU**

**Theme:** “Resurrections Before the Cross”

**Leading question:** “What would lead the Sabbath School lesson editors to include a lesson on ‘resurrections before the cross’ in this quarter’s line-up?”

This is a wonderful collection of stories. I was powerfully moved as I read through them. I think it would be helpful and interesting simply to read them and comment on what we found particularly helpful, moving, inspiring, or intriguing.

**Moses:** Deut. 34:5-7, Jude 9; Luke 9: 28-36

**Deut. 34:5-7** (NIV) And Moses the servant of the Lord died there in Moab, as the Lord had said. 6 He buried him in Moab, in the valley opposite Beth Peor, but to this day no one knows where his grave is. 7 Moses was a hundred and twenty years old when he died, yet his eyes were not weak nor his strength gone.

**Luke 8:28-36** (NIV) 28 About eight days after Jesus said this, he took Peter, John and James with him and went up onto a mountain to pray. 29 As he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became as bright as a flash of lightning. 30 Two men, Moses and Elijah, appeared in glorious splendor, talking with Jesus. 31 They spoke about his departure,[a] which he was about to bring to fulfillment at Jerusalem. 32 Peter and his companions were very sleepy, but when they became fully awake, they saw his glory and the two men standing with him. 33 As the men were leaving Jesus, Peter said to him, “Master, it is good for us to be here. Let us put up three shelters—one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah.” (He did not know what he was saying.)

34 While he was speaking, a cloud appeared and covered them, and they were afraid as they entered the cloud. 35 A voice came from the cloud, saying, “This is my Son, whom I have chosen; listen to him.” 36 When the voice had spoken, they found that Jesus was alone. The disciples kept this to themselves and did not tell anyone at that time what they had seen.

**Widow of Zarephath: 1 Kings 17:8-24** (NIV) Then the word of the Lord came to him: 9 “Go at once to Zarephath in the region of Sidon and stay there. I have directed a widow there to supply you with food.” 10 So he went to Zarephath. When he came to the town gate, a widow was there gathering sticks. He called to her and asked, “Would you bring me a little water in a jar so I may have a drink?” 11 As she was going to get it, he called, “And bring me, please, a piece of bread.”

12 “As surely as the Lord your God lives,” she replied, “I don’t have any bread—only a handful of flour in a jar and a little olive oil in a jug. I am gathering a few sticks to take home and make a meal for myself and my son, that we may eat it—and die.”

13 Elijah said to her, “Don’t be afraid. Go home and do as you have said. But first make a small loaf of bread for me from what you have and bring it to me, and then make something for yourself and your son. 14 For this is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: ‘The jar of flour will not be used up and the jug of oil will not run dry until the day the Lord sends rain on the land.’”

15 She went away and did as Elijah had told her. So there was food every day for Elijah and for the woman and her family. 16 For the jar of flour was not used up and the jug of oil did not run dry, in keeping with the word of the Lord spoken by Elijah.

17 Some time later the son of the woman who owned the house became ill. He grew worse and worse, and finally stopped breathing. 18 She said to Elijah, “What do you have against me, man of God? Did you come to remind me of my sin and kill my son?”

19 “Give me your son,” Elijah replied. He took him from her arms, carried him to the upper room where he was staying, and laid him on his bed. 20 Then he cried out to the Lord, “Lord my God, have you brought tragedy even on this widow I am staying with, by causing her son to die?” 21 Then he stretched himself out on the boy three times and cried out to the Lord, “Lord my God, let this boy’s life return to him!”

22 The Lord heard Elijah’s cry, and the boy’s life returned to him, and he lived. 23 Elijah picked up the child and carried him down from the room into the house. He gave him to his mother and said, “Look, your son is alive!”

24 Then the woman said to Elijah, “Now I know that you are a man of God and that the word of the Lord from your mouth is the truth.”

**Shunammite Woman: 2 Kings 4:18-37:** 18 The child grew, and one day he went out to his father, who was with the reapers. 19 He said to his father, “My head! My head!”

His father told a servant, “Carry him to his mother.” 20 After the servant had lifted him up and carried him to his mother, the boy sat on her lap until noon, and then he died. 21 She went up and laid him on the bed of the man of God, then shut the door and went out.

22 She called her husband and said, “Please send me one of the servants and a donkey so I can go to the man of God quickly and return.”

23 “Why go to him today?” he asked. “It’s not the New Moon or the Sabbath.” “That’s all right,” she said.

24 She saddled the donkey and said to her servant, “Lead on; don’t slow down for me unless I tell you.” 25 So she set out and came to the man of God at Mount Carmel.

When he saw her in the distance, the man of God said to his servant Gehazi, “Look! There’s the Shunammite! 26 Run to meet her and ask her, ‘Are you all right? Is your husband all right? Is your child all right?’”

“Everything is all right,” she said.

27 When she reached the man of God at the mountain, she took hold of his feet. Gehazi came over to push her away, but the man of God said, “Leave her alone! She is in bitter distress, but the Lord has hidden it from me and has not told me why.”

28 “Did I ask you for a son, my lord?” she said. “Didn’t I tell you, ‘Don’t raise my hopes’?”

29 Elisha said to Gehazi, “Tuck your cloak into your belt, take my staff in your hand and run. Don’t greet anyone you meet, and if anyone greets you, do not answer. Lay my staff on the boy’s face.”

30 But the child’s mother said, “As surely as the Lord lives and as you live, I will not leave you.” So he got up and followed her.

31 Gehazi went on ahead and laid the staff on the boy’s face, but there was no sound or response. So Gehazi went back to meet Elisha and told him, “The boy has not awakened.”

32 When Elisha reached the house, there was the boy lying dead on his couch. 33 He went in, shut the door on the two of them and prayed to the Lord. 34 Then he got on the bed and lay on the boy, mouth to mouth, eyes to eyes, hands to hands. As he stretched himself out on him, the boy’s body grew warm. 35 Elisha turned away and walked back and forth in the room and then got on the bed and stretched out on him once more. The boy sneezed seven times and opened his eyes.

36 Elisha summoned Gehazi and said, “Call the Shunammite.” And he did. When she came, he said, “Take your son.” 37 She came in, fell at his feet and bowed to the ground. Then she took her son and went out.

**The Son of the Widow of Nain: Luke 7:11** Soon afterward, Jesus went to a town called Nain, and his disciples and a large crowd went along with him. 12 As he approached the town gate, a dead person was being carried out—the only son of his mother, and she was a widow. And a large crowd from the town was with her. 13 When the Lord saw her, his heart went out to her and he said, “Don’t cry.”

14 Then he went up and touched the bier they were carrying him on, and the bearers stood still. He said, “Young man, I say to you, get up!” 15 The dead man sat up and began to talk, and Jesus gave him back to his mother.

16 They were all filled with awe and praised God. “A great prophet has appeared among us,” they said. “God has come to help his people.” 17 This news about Jesus spread throughout Judea and the surrounding country.

**Jairus’s Daughter: Mark 5:** 35 While Jesus was still speaking, some people came from the house of Jairus, the synagogue leader. “Your daughter is dead,” they said. “Why bother the teacher anymore?”

36 Overhearing what they said, Jesus told him, “Don’t be afraid; just believe.”

37 He did not let anyone follow him except Peter, James and John the brother of James. 38 When they came to the home of the synagogue leader, Jesus saw a commotion, with people crying and wailing loudly. 39 He went in and said to them, “Why all this commotion and wailing? The child is not dead but asleep.” 40 But they laughed at him.

After he put them all out, he took the child’s father and mother and the disciples who were with him, and went in where the child was. 41 He took her by the hand and said to her, “Talitha koum!” (which means “Little girl, I say to you, get up!”). 42 Immediately the girl stood up and began to walk around (she was twelve years old). At this they were completely

astonished. 43 He gave strict orders not to let anyone know about this, and told them to give her something to eat.

**John 11:1-44:** Now a man named Lazarus was sick. He was from Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. 2 (This Mary, whose brother Lazarus now lay sick, was the same one who poured perfume on the Lord and wiped his feet with her hair.) 3 So the sisters sent word to Jesus, “Lord, the one you love is sick.”

4 When he heard this, Jesus said, “This sickness will not end in death. No, it is for God’s glory so that God’s Son may be glorified through it.” 5 Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. 6 So when he heard that Lazarus was sick, he stayed where he was two more days, 7 and then he said to his disciples, “Let us go back to Judea.”

8 “But Rabbi,” they said, “a short while ago the Jews there tried to stone you, and yet you are going back?”

9 Jesus answered, “Are there not twelve hours of daylight? Anyone who walks in the daytime will not stumble, for they see by this world’s light. 10 It is when a person walks at night that they stumble, for they have no light.”

11 After he had said this, he went on to tell them, “Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep; but I am going there to wake him up.”

12 His disciples replied, “Lord, if he sleeps, he will get better.” 13 Jesus had been speaking of his death, but his disciples thought he meant natural sleep.

14 So then he told them plainly, “Lazarus is dead, 15 and for your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him.”

16 Then Thomas (also known as Didymus) said to the rest of the disciples, “Let us also go, that we may die with him.”

17 On his arrival, Jesus found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days. 18 Now Bethany was less than two miles from Jerusalem, 19 and many Jews had come to Martha and Mary to comfort them in the loss of their brother. 20 When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went out to meet him, but Mary stayed at home.

21 “Lord,” Martha said to Jesus, “if you had been here, my brother would not have died. 22 But I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask.”

23 Jesus said to her, “Your brother will rise again.”

24 Martha answered, “I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day.”

25 Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; 26 and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?”

27 “Yes, Lord,” she replied, “I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, who is to come into the world.”

28 After she had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary aside. “The Teacher is here,” she said, “and is asking for you.” 29 When Mary heard this, she got up quickly and went to him. 30 Now Jesus had not yet entered the village, but was still at the place where Martha had met him. 31 When the Jews who had been with Mary in the house, comforting her, noticed how quickly she got up and went out, they followed her, supposing she was going to the tomb to mourn there.

32 When Mary reached the place where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet and said, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died."

33 When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come along with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled. 34 "Where have you laid him?" he asked.

"Come and see, Lord," they replied.

35 Jesus wept.

36 Then the Jews said, "See how he loved him!"

37 But some of them said, "Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?"

38 Jesus, once more deeply moved, came to the tomb. It was a cave with a stone laid across the entrance. 39 "Take away the stone," he said.

"But, Lord," said Martha, the sister of the dead man, "by this time there is a bad odor, for he has been there four days."

40 Then Jesus said, "Did I not tell you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God?"

41 So they took away the stone. Then Jesus looked up and said, "Father, I thank you that you have heard me. 42 I knew that you always hear me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that you sent me."

43 When he had said this, Jesus called in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" 44 The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face.

Jesus said to them, "Take off the grave clothes and let him go."

**Conclusion:** In both testaments and before the final resurrection at the end of time, Jesus had the power to raise sinners from the dead. Is there anything too difficult for the Lord?

**GOOD WORD 2022.4**

**“Life Everlasting: On Death, Dying, and the Future Hope”**

Isaiah 52:13 - 53:12; Philippians 2:5-11

**Lesson #6 - November 5**

– prepared by Alden Thompson, School of Theology, WWU

**Theme:** “He Died for Us”

**Leading Question:** Why would that simple title, “He Died for US” be so important for a lesson quarterly entitled, “Life Everlasting: on Death, Dying, and the Future Hope”?

**Comment:** I would like to organize our discussion around two famous passages of Scripture, one coming before the cross, the “Song of the Suffering Servant” (Isaiah 52:13 - 53:23), the other coming after the cross ( Philippians 2:5-11), also referred to as a hymn.

We can place these two hymns within the life of the believing community, asking crucial questions:

What is their devotional value? Prophetic value? Predictive value? Doctrinal value?  
Experiential value?

In addition , we can think of the predictive function of key symbols and phrases: Messiah, passover lamb and the puzzlement of passages like Psalm 2:2 that speaks of Yahweh and his anointed one (messiah). Instead of Yahweh being the anointed one, Yahweh is accompanied by his anointed one.

Here are the two “hymns”:

**The Suffering Servant: Isaiah 52:13 - 53:12:** See, my servant will act wisely[;

he will be raised and lifted up and highly exalted.

14 Just as there were many who were appalled at him—

his appearance was so disfigured beyond that of any human being  
and his form marred beyond human likeness—

15 so he will sprinkle many nations,

and kings will shut their mouths because of him.

For what they were not told, they will see,

and what they have not heard, they will understand.

1 Who has believed our message

and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?

2 He grew up before him like a tender shoot,

and like a root out of dry ground.

He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him,

nothing in his appearance that we should desire him.

3 He was despised and rejected by mankind,

a man of suffering, and familiar with pain.

Like one from whom people hide their faces  
he was despised, and we held him in low esteem.  
4 Surely he took up our pain  
and bore our suffering,  
yet we considered him punished by God,  
stricken by him, and afflicted.  
5 But he was pierced for our transgressions,  
he was crushed for our iniquities;  
the punishment that brought us peace was on him,  
and by his wounds we are healed.  
6 We all, like sheep, have gone astray,  
each of us has turned to our own way;  
and the Lord has laid on him  
the iniquity of us all.  
7 He was oppressed and afflicted,  
yet he did not open his mouth;  
he was led like a lamb to the slaughter,  
and as a sheep before its shearers is silent,  
so he did not open his mouth.  
8 By oppression and judgment he was taken away.  
Yet who of his generation protested?  
For he was cut off from the land of the living;  
for the transgression of my people he was punished.  
9 He was assigned a grave with the wicked,  
and with the rich in his death,  
though he had done no violence,  
nor was any deceit in his mouth.  
10 Yet it was the Lord's will to crush him and cause him to suffer,  
and though the Lord makes his life an offering for sin,  
he will see his offspring and prolong his days,  
and the will of the Lord will prosper in his hand.  
11 After he has suffered,  
he will see the light of life and be satisfied;  
by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many,  
and he will bear their iniquities.  
12 Therefore I will give him a portion among the great,  
and he will divide the spoils with the strong,  
because he poured out his life unto death  
and was numbered with the transgressors.  
For he bore the sin of many,  
and made intercession for the transgressors.

## **The Hymn of the One Who Emptied Himself: Philippians 2:5-11**

5 In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:  
6 Who, being in very nature God,  
    did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage;  
7 rather, he made himself nothing  
    by taking the very nature of a servant,  
    being made in human likeness.  
8 And being found in appearance as a man,  
    he humbled himself  
    by becoming obedient to death—  
    even death on a cross!  
9 Therefore God exalted him to the highest place  
    and gave him the name that is above every name,  
10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,  
    in heaven and on earth and under the earth,  
11 and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord,  
    to the glory of God the Father.

**Question:** Which aspect of these two hymns has the greatest potential for nurturing the devotional life?

**Theme:** “Christ’s Victory Over Death”

**Leading question:** The Title, “Christ’s Victory over Death” suggests that through his death, Christ vanquished death forever. If that is a biblical statement, does that make it true for all time?

**Comment:** Revelation 21:4 offers believers a definite promise: “He will wipe every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more.” If that is a statement in Scripture, shouldn’t that be something we can trust?

This week’s lessons addresses all the efforts that the forces of evil employed to keep Jesus locked in the tomb.

**Question:** Did the efforts that the Jewish leaders put forth to keep Jesus locked in the tomb, strengthen or weaken the arguments in favor of the resurrection? Note Matthew’s description of how secure the Jewish leaders tried to make the tomb:

**Matthew 27:62-66:** 62 The next day, the one after Preparation Day, the chief priests and the Pharisees went to Pilate. 63 “Sir,” they said, “we remember that while he was still alive that deceiver said, ‘After three days I will rise again.’ 64 So give the order for the tomb to be made secure until the third day. Otherwise, his disciples may come and steal the body and tell the people that he has been raised from the dead. This last deception will be worse than the first.”

65 “Take a guard,” Pilate answered. “Go, make the tomb as secure as you know how.” 66 So they went and made the tomb secure by putting a seal on the stone and posting the guard.

**Question:** Is there any clue as to whether Pilate thought they could keep Jesus in the tomb? Is there perhaps a hidden sneer in Pilate’s remarks? This quote from the official study guide is suggestive:

“If nothing else, their actions revealed just how afraid the chief priests were of Jesus, even after He died. Perhaps, deep down, did they fear that He just might be resurrected, after all.”

**Comment: The exploding tomb.** The first ten verses of Matthew 28 show just how explosive the resurrection actually was:

**Matt. 28:1-10:** (NIV): After the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb.<sup>2</sup> There was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and, going to

the tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it. 3 His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow. 4 The guards were so afraid of him that they shook and became like dead men.

5 The angel said to the women, “Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. 6 He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay. 7 Then go quickly and tell his disciples: ‘He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him.’ Now I have told you.”

8 So the women hurried away from the tomb, afraid yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples. 9 Suddenly Jesus met them. “Greetings,” he said. They came to him, clasped his feet and worshiped him. 10 Then Jesus said to them, “Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me.”

**Comment:** The official study guide contains an insightful comment about the first people to see the risen Lord:

“Some scoff at the idea that the first people to see Christ resurrected were Romans. Why? In what ways is this truth symbolic of what was to come: the gospel going to the Gentiles, as well?”

**Comment: Many witnesses:** A mighty earthquake marked the crucifixion and the resurrection. And in this resurrection a number of the saints were raised, as witnesses (Matt. 27:51-53). But that wasn't all. We can make a list of all the witnesses:

Roman soldiers (Matt. 28:4, 11)  
The women (Matt. 28:1, 5-7; Mark 16:1-7; Luke 23:55; Luke 24:1-11; John 20:11-29)  
Those raised with Jesus (Matt. 27:51-53)  
Cephas (Peter) 1 Cor. 15:5)  
The Twelve (1 Cor.15:5)  
More than 500 (1 Cor.15:6)  
James (1 Cor. 15:7)  
All the apostles (1 Cor. 15:7)  
Two disciples on the road to Emmaus (Mark 16:12; Luke 24:13-35)  
Disciples on the sea of Galilee for breakfast (John 21:1-23)  
Thomas with the other disciples (John 20:26-29)

**Jesus commendation for those who believe without seeing:** Some worry that if they have doubts they cannot be saved. But Jesus' words to Thomas should be both a great encouragement, as well as a mild rebuke:

**John 20:26-29 (NIV):** 26 A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you!” 27 Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here;

see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe.”  
28 Thomas said to him, “My Lord and my God!”

29 Then Jesus told him, “Because you have seen me, you have believed;  
blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”

**In short: There is room in God’s kingdom for those who find that belief is difficult.**

**Theme:** “The New Testament Hope.”

**Leading Question:** “ In the middle of history, what does it mean to switch from one hope to another? Can’t God make up his mind which hope is right?”

**Comment:** The New Testament hope is clearer, more focused, than the OT hope and there is a difference between the two, yet both are part of God’s master plan. And lurking in the background of this week’s lesson, indeed of all the lessons this quarter, is non-biblical teaching of the immortal soul concept.

The official study guide notes a crucial point from Hebrews 11:39, 40. After citing all the hopeful and faithful believers, Hebrews makes this statement:

**Hebrews 11:39-40:** (NIV): These were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised, 40 since God had planned something better for us so that only together with us would they be made perfect.

In addition to making the point that all those who die in Jesus will receive their reward at a particular point in time, the official study guide cites 1 John 5:11, 12:

**1 John 5:11-12** (NIV): And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. 12 Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.

In short, only in Jesus is there eternal life. From a biblical perspective there is no such thing as “natural” immortality. Only in Jesus Christ is eternal life possible, and that life is not granted as soon as a person dies, but at the resurrection at the end of time (John 6:40).

**Question:** The language in 1 Thess. 4:13-18 could suggest that Jesus will “bring with him” from heaven those who have died. How does a believer address that conclusion?

**Answer :** The official study guide gives this quote from a non-SDA author:

The reason why the Thessalonian Christians can have hope as they grieve for the dead members of their church is that God ‘will bring’ them, that is, he will resurrect these deceased believers and cause them to be present at Christ’s return, such that they will be ‘with him.’ The implication is that these deceased believers will be ‘with him’ in such a way that they share equally with living believers in the glory associated with his return.” – Jeffrey Weima, *1-2 Thessalonians*, Baker

Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2014, p. 319.

**Summary:** At least three New Testament passages point clearly to the idea of the non-immortality of the soul:

Hebrews 11:39-40 – all receive the reward at the same time

1 John 5:11-12 – only those who have the son, have life

1 Thess. 4:13-18 – Jesus will bring with him the resurrected ones

For someone who takes seriously the words of the New Testament, how is it possible to read these passages and still hold to the immortal soul concept?

**The Question of Delay:** One of the favorite New Testament passages for believers is found in John 14:1-3:

**John 14:1-3** (NIV) “Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. 2 My Father’s house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.

**Comment:** It has already been over 2000 years since Jesus gave that promise to his followers. How long is too long? When do we give up?

**Theme:** “Contrary Passages”

**Leading question:** “Many of our lessons this quarter deal with “contrary passages.” Why can’t we just talk about the truth and not worry about ‘contrary passages’?”

**Comment:** Sometimes error is so deeply rooted that it is necessary to confront it directly. In this lesson we will look at several key passages that seem to support the idea of immortal soul (and an eternally burning hell). First on the list is promise Jesus made to the thief on the cross. All 79 translations listed in Bible Gateway translate Luke 23:43 with the same sense as KJV: “And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise.” And this in spite of the fact that Jesus did not go to Paradise that day. John 20:17 quotes Jesus as saying on the first day of the week: “I have not yet ascended to the Father.”

In short, it is an important work to address error.

**The Rich Man and Lazarus: Luke 16:19-31 (NIV).**

**Luke 16:19-31 (NIV):** “There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and lived in luxury every day. 20 At his gate was laid a beggar named Lazarus, covered with sores 21 and longing to eat what fell from the rich man’s table. Even the dogs came and licked his sores.

22 “The time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham’s side. The rich man also died and was buried. 23 In Hades, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side. 24 So he called to him, ‘Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire.’

25 “But Abraham replied, ‘Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, while Lazarus received bad things, but now he is comforted here and you are in agony. 26 And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been set in place, so that those who want to go from here to you cannot, nor can anyone cross over from there to us.’

27 “He answered, ‘Then I beg you, father, send Lazarus to my family, 28 for I have five brothers. Let him warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment.’

29 “Abraham replied, ‘They have Moses and the Prophets; let them listen to them.’

30 ““No, father Abraham,’ he said, ‘but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent.’

31 “He said to him, ‘If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.’”

### **Departing and Being with Christ:**

**Phil. 1:21-24** (NIV): For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. 22 If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labor for me. Yet what shall I choose? I do not know! 23 I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far; 24 but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body.

**Comment:** The English translations of this passage suggest that Paul wishes to depart and be with Christ. But a fascinating use of the Greek preposition *ek* is overlooked by virtually all English translation. The normal meaning for *ek* is “out of” or “away from.” In other words, Paul is saying that he does not like either alternative. Instead of saying (as most translations do) “I am torn between the two,” he is actually saying, “I am torn away from either alternative, preferring a third option, namely, to depart and be with Christ.

In short a literal translation of the Greek, solves the problem.

### **Preaching to the Spirits in Prison:**

**1 Peter 3:13-20** (NIV): Who is going to harm you if you are eager to do good? 14 But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed. “Do not fear their threats; do not be frightened.” 15 But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, 16 keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander. 17 For it is better, if it is God’s will, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil. 18 For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive in the Spirit. 19 After being made alive, he went and made proclamation to the imprisoned spirits— 20 to those who were disobedient long ago when God waited patiently in the days of Noah while the ark was being built. In it only a few people, eight in all, were saved through water,

**Comment:** Seeking to find the doctrine of an immortal soul in this passage runs up against several obstacle. First, Scripture nowhere teaches the doctrine of a second chance. Secondly, why would Christ preach only to the antedeluvians “in prison” where there not others in hell who could also “benefit” from the preaching?

## **Souls crying out under the altar**

**Rev. 6:9-11** (NIV): 9 When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God and the testimony they had maintained. 10 They called out in a loud voice, “How long, Sovereign Lord, holy and true, until you judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge our blood?” 11 Then each of them was given a white robe, and they were told to wait a little longer, until the full number of their fellow servants, their brothers and sisters, were killed just as they had been.

The official study guide quotes George Eldon Ladd, a non-SDA on this passage, indicating that it has nothing to do with the state of the dead:

“The fact that John saw the souls of the martyrs under the altar has nothing to do with the state of the dead or their situation in the intermediate state; it is merely a vivid way of picturing the fact that they had been martyred in the name of their God” – *A Commentary on the Revelation of John* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1972, p. 103

**The simple forceful use of John 3:16:** One of the clearest passage of what happens after death is found in John 3:16:

**John 3:16** (KJV): For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

**Comment:** Those believe in Jesus live. Those who do not, perish. The meaning of the word “perish” is quite clear in English!

GOOD WORD 2022.4

“Life Everlasting: On Death, Dying, and the Future Hope”

Mark 9:42-48; Isa. 66:24; Rev. 20

Lesson #10 - December 3

– prepared by Alden Thompson, School of Theology, WWU

**Theme:** “The Fires of Hell”

**Leading question:** “Typically Seventh-day Adventists do not believe in an eternally burning hell, yet they do believe in hell. What’s the difference?”

**Comment:** From a biblical point of view, the word hell either translates as the word grave or *sheol*. In the Old Testament everyone who died went down to *sheol*. That’s the “cold” hell. The dead are gathered to their fathers in this cold hell of *Sheol*. They are cut off from God and very everything living.

In the New Testament the “hot” hell is depicted as a lake of fire in Revelation 20. Vivid imagery is used to describe that lake of fire. These are the entities that end up in the lake of fire:

Devil

beast

false prophet

death

Hades

anyone whose name is not in the lamb’s book of life

**Immortal Worms:** Mark 9:42-48 and Isaiah 66:24;

**Mark 9:42-48** (NIV): “If anyone causes one of these little ones—those who believe in me—to stumble, it would be better for them if a large millstone were hung around their neck and they were thrown into the sea. 43 If your hand causes you to stumble, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life maimed than with two hands to go into hell, where the fire never goes out. [44] 45 And if your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life crippled than to have two feet and be thrown into hell. [46] 47 And if your eye causes you to stumble, pluck it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into hell, 48 where

“the worms that eat them do not die,  
and the fire is not quenched.”

**Isaiah 66:24** (NIV): “And they will go out and look on the dead bodies of those who rebelled against me; the worms that eat them will not die, the fire that burns them will not be quenched, and they will be loathsome to all mankind.”

**Comment:** Both in Mark and Isaiah (which Mark quotes) the worm is not a symbol for eternal life, but of destruction. Just like “eternal” fire burns until there is nothing left, so the worm devours until there is nothing left.

**Eternal fire that consumes and destroys:**

**Mal. 4:1** (NIV): “Surely the day is coming; it will burn like a furnace. All the arrogant and every evildoer will be stubble, and the day that is coming will set them on fire,” says the Lord Almighty. “Not a root or a branch will be left to them.

**Jude 7** (NIV): In a similar way, Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding towns gave themselves up to sexual immorality and perversion. They serve as an example of those who suffer the punishment of eternal fire.

**Comment:** Like the worm that is an agent of destruction, the fire consumes until the fuel is burned up. That’s the way the fires of hell are. They do not last forever, but only as long as the fuel remains unconsumed.

**Saints in Purgatory. A Second Chance?** The doctrine of purgatory teaches that after a person has died, a cleansing or a purging is possible so that one can advance to heaven. Several passages of Scripture show that such a teaching is not in harmony with God’s word. Ecclesiastes 9:10 teaches that once a person dies it is all over; Ezekiel 18:20-22 declares that sin is strictly an individual matter; and Hebrews 9:27 indicates that judgment follows death with no intermediate state:

**Ecc. 9:10** (NIV): Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might, for in the realm of the dead, where you are going, there is neither working nor planning nor knowledge nor wisdom.

**Ezek. 18:20-22** (NIV): The one who sins is the one who will die. The child will not share the guilt of the parent, nor will the parent share the guilt of the child. The righteousness of the righteous will be credited to them, and the wickedness of the wicked will be charged against them.

21 “But if a wicked person turns away from all the sins they have committed and keeps all my decrees and does what is just and right, that person will surely live; they will not die. 22 None of the offenses they have committed will be remembered against them. Because of the righteous things they have done, they will live.

**Heb. 9:27** (NIV): People are destined to die once, and after that to face judgment . . . .

**Eternal Life Only Through Christ.** In the New Testament, 1 John 5:12 makes it clear that eternal life is not “natural,” but only comes as a gift of God.

**1 John 5:12** (NIV): “Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.”

**Theme:** “End-time Deceptions”

**Leading Question:** If neither you nor I like to be deceived, why doesn’t God just waive his magic wand and get rid of all deceptions?

**Comment:** No one likes to be deceived. Why couldn’t God take a more active hand in preventing deception?

This weeks addresses a number of deceptions that are not specifically identified in Scripture. We will look at those, but first we should document the ones that are found in Scripture. We should also note that a great Deceiver constantly stalks our world.

**Question:** When you think of the great Deceiver, what incident stands out for you? Does anything stand out more vividly than his behavior in the Garden of Eden?

**Question:** James 4:7, declares: “Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.” What kind of freedom does “fleeing” from the devil give us?

These are the deceptions addressed in this week’s lesson:

Mysticism

Near-death experiences

Reincarnation

Necromancy and Ancestor Worship.

(Demonic) Personations and Other Appearances of the Dead.

When I say that I don’t find these to be a danger to me, am I at risk? in danger of being deceived?

Only one of the “deceptions” listed above is featured in this lesson. It is Saul’s “necromancy” experience with the witch of Endor: 1 Sam 28:3-25:

**1 Sam. 28:3-25** (NIV): Now Samuel was dead, and all Israel had mourned for him and buried him in his own town of Ramah. Saul had expelled the mediums and spiritists from the land.

4 The Philistines assembled and came and set up camp at Shunem, while Saul gathered all Israel and set up camp at Gilboa. 5 When Saul saw the Philistine army, he was afraid; terror filled his heart. 6 He inquired of the Lord, but the Lord did not answer him by dreams or Urim or prophets. 7 Saul then said to his attendants, “Find me a woman who is a medium, so I may go and inquire of her.”

“There is one in Endor,” they said.

8 So Saul disguised himself, putting on other clothes, and at night he and two men went to the woman. “Consult a spirit for me,” he said, “and bring up for me the one I name.”

9 But the woman said to him, “Surely you know what Saul has done. He has cut off the mediums and spiritists from the land. Why have you set a trap for my life to bring about my death?”

10 Saul swore to her by the Lord, “As surely as the Lord lives, you will not be punished for this.”

11 Then the woman asked, “Whom shall I bring up for you?”

“Bring up Samuel,” he said.

12 When the woman saw Samuel, she cried out at the top of her voice and said to Saul, “Why have you deceived me? You are Saul!”

13 The king said to her, “Don’t be afraid. What do you see?”

The woman said, “I see a ghostly figure coming up out of the earth.”

14 “What does he look like?” he asked.

“An old man wearing a robe is coming up,” she said.

Then Saul knew it was Samuel, and he bowed down and prostrated himself with his face to the ground.

15 Samuel said to Saul, “Why have you disturbed me by bringing me up?” “I am in great distress,” Saul said. “The Philistines are fighting against me, and God has departed from me. He no longer answers me, either by prophets or by dreams. So I have called on you to tell me what to do.”

16 Samuel said, “Why do you consult me, now that the Lord has departed from you and become your enemy? 17 The Lord has done what he predicted through me. The Lord has torn the kingdom out of your hands and given it to one of your neighbors—to David. 18 Because you did not obey the Lord or carry out his fierce wrath against the Amalekites, the Lord has done this to you today. 19 The Lord will deliver both Israel and you into the hands of the Philistines, and tomorrow you and your sons will be with me. The Lord will also give the army of Israel into the hands of the Philistines.”

20 Immediately Saul fell full length on the ground, filled with fear because of Samuel’s words. His strength was gone, for he had eaten nothing all that day and all that night.

21 When the woman came to Saul and saw that he was greatly shaken, she said, “Look, your servant has obeyed you. I took my life in my hands and did what you told me to do. 22 Now please listen to your servant and let me give you some food so you may eat and have the strength to go on your way.”

23 He refused and said, “I will not eat.”

But his men joined the woman in urging him, and he listened to them. He got up from the ground and sat on the couch.

24 The woman had a fattened calf at the house, which she butchered at once. She took some flour, kneaded it and baked bread without yeast. 25 Then she set it before Saul and his men, and they ate. That same night they got up and left.

**Question:** How much of this story actually happened? If we say it did not happen, are we denying the reality of the devil?

**Theme:** “The Biblical World View”

**Leading Question:** If there is a biblical “World View,” where did the other one come from? Or is there more than one?

As the word suggests, “world view” is a way of looking at the world. There are many different world views, but our lesson this week simply focuses on the Christian world view as seen in Jesus and those who follow him. Initially, the lesson looks at the formative years of Jesus’ childhood, quoting Luke 2:52 (NIV): “And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.”

The official study guide notes how these four aspects cover “all the basic dimensions of human existence”: wisdom (mentally), stature (physically), in favor with God (spiritually) and man (socially). Then the official study guide moves on to Matthew 4:23 and asks how Jesus’ three-fold ministry (teach, preach, heal) can be carried on by Jesus’ followers today. That’s a tall order! And the official study guide continues to stress the importance of our example, citing 1 Corinthians 6:19, 20 (“your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit”) and 1 Cor. 10:31 (NIV): “So whether you eat or drink, or what ever you do, do everything for the glory of God.” In short, the official study guide is emphasizing not so much world view as personal holiness!

### **Manipulating the Spirit.**

Acts 8:4-24 relates a remarkable story of how a “reformed” sorcerer attempted to manipulate the Spirit of God:

**Acts 8:4-24** (NIV): A man named Simon had practiced sorcery in the city and amazed all the people of Samaria. He boasted that he was someone great, 10 and all the people, both high and low, gave him their attention and exclaimed, “This man is rightly called the Great Power of God.” 11 They followed him because he had amazed them for a long time with his sorcery. 12 But when they believed Philip as he proclaimed the good news of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. 13 Simon himself believed and was baptized. And he followed Philip everywhere, astonished by the great signs and miracles he saw.

14 When the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent Peter and John to Samaria. 15 When they arrived, they prayed for the new believers there that they might receive the Holy Spirit, 16 because the Holy Spirit had not yet come on any of them; they had simply been

baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. 17 Then Peter and John placed their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.

18 When Simon saw that the Spirit was given at the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money 19 and said, "Give me also this ability so that everyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit."

20 Peter answered: "May your money perish with you, because you thought you could buy the gift of God with money! 21 You have no part or share in this ministry, because your heart is not right before God. 22 Repent of this wickedness and pray to the Lord in the hope that he may forgive you for having such a thought in your heart. 23 For I see that you are full of bitterness and captive to sin."

24 Then Simon answered, "Pray to the Lord for me so that nothing you have said may happen to me."

**Comment:** Scripture doesn't say what actually happened to Simon. The story ends with his request for prayer that the stark judgments threatened by Peter not come to pass.

**Preparing vs. being prepared for Jesus' return.** The official study guide poses an important question about the difference between preparing and being prepared. The quarterly's response is worth quoting: "Often the notion of an ongoing preparation for the Second Coming becomes an excuse for procrastination. This notion can easily lead one to relax under the evil servant's assumption, 'My master is delaying his coming' (Matt. 24:48)."

**Theme:** “The Judging Process”

**Leading question:** How can we make the idea of judgment good news? Or will it always have to have a touch of bad news too?

**Comment:** If there are two concepts that are difficult for devout conservatives to appreciate (diversity and change). So there are two biblical ideas that are very troublesome for sensitive, conscientious people (law and judgment). Quoting the official study guide, this week’s lesson considers “the end-time judgment process with its three main phases: the pre-advent judgment, the millennial judgment, and the executive judgment.”

I do not want to deny the truth or the reality of those three aspects, but I do think they must be handled very careful lest they drive the wrong people away from God. There is a real danger that the wrong people will be kept away from worshiping with God’s people.

### **“It’s the law”**

Have you ever heard anyway say “It’s the law” with a smile on their face? It’s almost impossible! I like to list seat belt signs from gentle to tough. Here there are in order;

- “Buckle up. We love you.” Nice and gentle, but it doesn’t work.
- “Buckle up. It’s our law.” Note the softening result of “our.”
- “Buckle up. It’s the law.” True, but not always helpful.
- “Click it or ticket it.” That the one that is most effective.

The apostle Paul new about the differences. As he wrote to the Corinthian church: “Shall I come to you with a stick or with love in the spirit of gentleness?” 1 Cor. 4:21.

The reality is that some people only respond to the stick. In the classroom, if I come up to a student who hasn’t been turning work in, asking them about the choice between the stick or love in a spirit of gentleness, about 70% say, “No stick Thompson. I’ll get it in!” But about 30% say, “Bring on the stick. I need a stick.” And one of our graduates once quipped, “And probably half of those who say they don’t want the stick really do need it!”

Different teachers will use different methods, too. Once, in the same class, I had two students sitting right across the aisle from each other describe quite different methods from their piano teachers when it came to the challenge of keeping the wrists up. One teacher used candy bars and dollar bills, another used tacks along the key board.

Even in my own experience, it was the tougher teachers who got results out of me, not the too-gentle ones.

Now if everyone in the world was like my gentle wife, we would need no policemen, no courts. She tells the story of when she was very young and used some crayons to scribble on the

wall. She got spanked for it. Her comment: “I don’t know why I got a spanking. All they needed to do was tell me not to do it and I wouldn’t do it!

Even though I sometimes needed the stick, the biblical passages that really touched my heart were Deut. 4:5-8 and Jer. 31:33-34. Deuteronomy celebrates law as Gospel; Jeremiah 31 celebrates a time when no one will tell anyone what to do because the law will be written on the heart. And note that this new covenant promise comes first in the OT!

**Deut. 4:5-8** (NRSV): “See, just as the Lord my God has charged me, I now teach you statutes and ordinances for you to observe in the land that you are about to enter and occupy. 6 You must observe them and perform them, for this will show your wisdom and discernment to the peoples, who, when they hear all these statutes, will say, ‘Surely this great nation is a wise and discerning people!’ 7 For what other great nation has a god so near to it as the Lord our God is whenever we call to him? 8 And what other great nation has statutes and ordinances as just as this entire law that I am setting before you today?”

**Jer. 31:33-34** (NRSV): But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. 34 No longer shall they teach one another or say to each other, “Know the Lord,” for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the Lord, for I will forgive their iniquity and remember their sin no more.

### **Grace Triumphs Over Judgment**

Two important passages declare the triumph of grace over judgment: Romans 8:1 and John 3:16-17:

**Rom. 8:1** (NRSV): “Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.”

**John 3:16-17** (NRSV): “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. 17 Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world but in order that the world might be saved through him.”

In case there is any question as to whether God adapts his messages to the needs of particular people, this passage from *Ministry of Healing* should banish all doubt:

Every association of life calls for the exercise of self-control, forbearance, and sympathy. We differ so widely in disposition, habits, education, that our ways of looking at things vary. We judge differently. Our understanding of truth, our ideas in regard to the conduct of life, are not in all respects the same. There are no

two whose experience is alike in every particular. The trials of one are not the trials of another. The duties that one finds light are to another most difficult and perplexing.

So frail, so ignorant, so liable to misconception is human nature, that each should be careful in the estimate he places upon another. We little know the bearing of our acts upon the experience of others. What we do or say may seem to us of little moment, when, could our eyes be opened, we should see that upon it depended the most important results for good or for evil. (MH 483)

**Theme:** “All Things New”

**Leading Question:** Our title suggests a clean slate. But is that actually possible? Can we actually understand salvation if we have no memory of what we have been saved from.

**Comment:** Many things about the transition from old to new we cannot understand. What stands outmost vividly in the OT view is the continuance of death. There will still be death – but no premature death. And we should note that the new heaven and new earth is viewed as something that happens on earth. Three passages are particularly important, two from the OT (Isaiah 65:17-25, Isaiah 66: 22, 23) and Revelation 21:1-5 from the NT:

**Isa. 65:17-25** (NRSV): 17 For I am about to create new heavens  
and a new earth;  
the former things shall not be remembered  
or come to mind.  
18 But be glad and rejoice forever  
in what I am creating,  
for I am about to create Jerusalem as a joy  
and its people as a delight.  
19 I will rejoice in Jerusalem  
and delight in my people;  
no more shall the sound of weeping be heard in it  
or the cry of distress.  
20 No more shall there be in it  
an infant who lives but a few days  
or an old person who does not live out a lifetime,  
for one who dies at a hundred years will be considered a youth,  
and one who falls short of a hundred will be considered accursed.  
21 They shall build houses and inhabit them;  
they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit.  
22 They shall not build and another inhabit;  
they shall not plant and another eat,  
for like the days of a tree shall the days of my people be,  
and my chosen shall long enjoy the work of their hands.  
23 They shall not labor in vain  
or bear children for calamity,  
for they shall be offspring blessed by the Lord—  
and their descendants as well.  
24 Before they call I will answer,  
while they are yet speaking I will hear.  
25 The wolf and the lamb shall feed together;  
the lion shall eat straw like the ox,

but the serpent—its food shall be dust!  
They shall not hurt or destroy  
on all my holy mountain,  
says the Lord.

**Isa. 66:22, 23** (NRSV): For as the new heavens and the new earth,  
which I will make,  
shall remain before me, says the Lord,  
so shall your descendants and your name remain.  
23 From new moon to new moon  
and from Sabbath to Sabbath,  
all flesh shall come to worship before me,  
says the Lord.

**Rev. 21:1-5** (NRSV): “See, the home of God is among mortals.  
He will dwell with them;  
they will be his peoples,  
and God himself will be with them and be their God;  
4 he will wipe every tear from their eyes.  
Death will be no more;  
mourning and crying and pain will be no more,  
for the first things have passed away.”

### **Not only differences between OT and NT, but between differing passages in the NT**

For those who have a hard time imagining the worship of God without a place, Revelation 7:9-15 is for them. But those of a more abstract bent can point to Revelation 21:22 where John speaks of seeing “no temple.”

**Rev. 7:9-15** (NRSV): After this I looked, and there was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, robed in white, with palm branches in their hands. 10 They cried out in a loud voice, saying,  
“Salvation belongs to our God who is seated on the throne and to the Lamb!”  
11 And all the angels stood around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, 12 singing,  
“Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom  
and thanksgiving and honor  
and power and might  
be to our God forever and ever! Amen.”  
13 Then one of the elders addressed me, saying, “Who are these, robed in white, and where have they come from?” 14 I said to him, “Sir, you are the one who knows.” Then he said to me, “These are they who have come out of the great ordeal; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

15 For this reason they are before the throne of God  
and worship him day and night within his temple,  
and the one who is seated on the throne will shelter them.

**Rev. 21:22-27** (NRSV): I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. 23 And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God is its light, and its lamp is the Lamb. 24 The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it. 25 Its gates will never be shut by day—and there will be no night there. 26 People will bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations. 27 But nothing unclean will enter it, nor anyone who practices abomination or falsehood, but only those who are written in the Lamb’s book of life.

### **Seeing God Without Fear or Guilt**

At least two passages in Scripture indicate that sinful humans cannot see God:

**1 Tim. 6:16** (NRSV): “It is he alone who has immortality and dwells in unapproachable light, whom no one has ever seen or can see; to him be honor and eternal dominion. Amen.”

**Exod. 33:18-23** (NRSV): “Moses said, “Please show me your glory.” 19 And he said, “I will make all my goodness pass before you and will proclaim before you the name, ‘The Lord,’ and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy. 20 But,” he said, “you cannot see my face, for no one shall see me and live.” 21 And the Lord continued, “See, there is a place by me where you shall stand on the rock, 22 and while my glory passes by I will put you in a cleft of the rock, and I will cover you with my hand until I have passed by; 23 then I will take away my hand, and you shall see my back, but my face shall not be seen.”

But at least three other passages indicate that men have seen God – but at the same time are haunted by guilt and fear:

**Genesis 32:22-32** (NRSV) The same night he got up and took his two wives, his two maids, and his eleven children and crossed the ford of the Jabbok. 23 He took them and sent them across the stream, and likewise everything that he had. 24 Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him until daybreak. 25 When the man saw that he did not prevail against Jacob, he struck him on the hip socket, and Jacob’s hip was put out of joint as he wrestled with him. 26 Then he said, “Let me go, for the day is breaking.” But Jacob said, “I will not let you go, unless you bless me.” 27 So he said to him, “What is your name?” And he said, “Jacob.” 28 Then the man said, You shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel, for you have striven with God and with humans and have prevailed.” 29 Then Jacob asked him, “Please tell me your name.” But he said, “Why is it that you ask my name?”

And there he blessed him. 30 So Jacob called the place Peniel, saying, “For I have seen God face to face, yet my life is preserved.”

**Exodus 24:9-11** (NRSV): “Then Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel went up, 10 and they saw the God of Israel. Under his feet there was something like a pavement of sapphire stone, like the very heaven for clearness. 11 God did not lay his hand on the chief men of the Israelites; they beheld God, and they ate and drank.

**Judges 13:21-23** (NIV): 21 When the angel of the Lord did not show himself again to Manoah and his wife, Manoah realized that it was the angel of the Lord.

22 “We are doomed to die!” he said to his wife. “We have seen God!”

23 But his wife answered, “If the Lord had meant to kill us, he would not have accepted a burnt offering and grain offering from our hands, nor shown us all these things or now told us this.”

### **A New World without Death or Tears**

Even the OT affirms a world without death:

**Isaiah 25:8** (NRSV): He will swallow up death forever.  
Then the Lord God will wipe away the tears from all faces,  
and the disgrace of his people he will take away from all the earth,  
for the Lord has spoken.

### **His Name on Our Foreheads**

The fact that we belong to God is attested by the promise that his name will be in our foreheads:

**Revelation 22:3-5** (NRSV): Nothing accursed will be found there any more. But the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him; 4 they will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. 5 And there will be no more night; they need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever.

### **Finally, Two Favorite New Earth Passages**

C. S. Lewis and Ellen White have each contributed a favorite quotation focusing on the restored earth:

**C. S. Lewis**

*Letters to Malcolm* (pp. 121, 124)

What the soul cries out for is the resurrection of the senses” (p. 121).

Then the new earth and sky, the same yet not the same as these, will rise in us as we have risen in Christ. And once again, after who knows what aeons of the silence and the dark, the birds will sing and the waters flow, and light and shadows move across the hills, and the faces of our friends laugh upon us with amazed recognition.

Guesses, of course, only guesses. If they are not true, something better will be. For ‘we know that we shall be made like Him, for we shall see Him as He is’ [1 Jn. 3:2] (p. 124).

### **Ellen White**

#### *The Great Controversy, 677-678*

There the redeemed shall know, even as also they are known. The loves and sympathies which God Himself has planted in the soul shall there find truest and sweetest exercise. The pure communion with holy beings, the harmonious social life with the blessed angels and with the faithful ones of all ages who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb, the sacred ties that bind together “the whole family in heaven and earth” (Ephesians 3:15) – these help to constitute the happiness of the redeemed. – GC 677

There, immortal minds will contemplate with never-failing delight the wonders of creative power, the mysteries of redeeming love. There will be no cruel, deceiving foe to tempt to forgetfulness of God. Every faculty will be developed, every capacity increased. The acquirement of knowledge will not weary the mind or exhaust the energies. There the grandest enterprises may be carried forward, the loftiest aspirations reached, the highest ambitions realized; and still there will arise new heights to surmount, new wonders to admire, new truths to comprehend, fresh objects to call forth the powers of mind and soul and body. – GC 677

All the treasures of the universe will be open to the study of God’s redeemed. Unfettered by mortality, they wing their tireless flight to worlds afar – worlds that thrilled with sorrow at the spectacle of human woe and rang with songs of gladness at the tidings of a ransomed soul. With unutterable delight the children of earth enter into the joy and the wisdom of unfallen beings. They share the treasures of knowledge and understanding gained through ages upon ages in contemplation of God’s handiwork. With undimmed vision they gaze upon the glory of creation – suns and stars and systems, all in their appointed order circling the throne [677/678] of Deity. Upon all things, from the least to the greatest, the Creator’s name is written, and in all are the riches of His power displayed. – GC 677/678

And the years of eternity, as they roll, will bring richer and still more glorious revelations of God and of Christ. As knowledge is progressive, so will love, reverence, and happiness increase. The more men learn of God, the greater will be their admiration of His character. As Jesus opens before them the riches of redemption and the amazing achievements in the great controversy with Satan, the hearts of the ransomed thrill with more fervent devotion, and with more rapturous joy they sweep the harps of gold; and ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands of voices unite to swell the

mighty chorus of praise. – GC 678

And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.”– Rev. 5:13. – GC 678

The great controversy is ended. Sin and sinners are no more. The entire universe is clean. One pulse of harmony and gladness beats through the vast creation. From Him who created all, flow life and light and gladness, throughout the realms of illimitable space. From the minutest atom to the greatest world, all things, animate and inanimate, in their perfect joy, declare that God is love. – GC 678.3