

*Comments on the Adult
Sabbath School
Bible Study Guide*

*Glances
of Our
God*

**Part 2
Lessons 6–9**

The January through March 2012 issue of the *Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide (ASSBSG)* is entitled *Glimpses of Our God*. The principal contributor for the adult Bible study guide is Dr. Jo Ann Davidson, professor of theology at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary at Andrews University. However, it should be remembered that the *principal contributor* is a *contributor* and not, in the strictest sense, the author of the lessons as they are printed. According to Dr. Davidson, her manuscript was heavily edited. In an email response, she noted:

The quarterly was almost entirely rewritten, and even the order of the weekly lessons completely rearranged.

This comments booklet will give brief comments on Lessons 6 through 9.

Lesson 6 — God the Lawgiver

“The law of God is as sacred as God Himself. It is a revelation of His will, a transcript of His character, the expression of divine love and wisdom” (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 52). The Bible speaks of God’s Ten Commandment law using the same descriptive superlatives that it uses to describe God and his character. For example, God’s law is “holy, and just, and good” (Romans 7:12). God’s law is “perfect” (Psalm 19:7) and “righteousness” (Psalm 119:172). God is also “holy” (Isaiah 6:3; Revelation 4:8); “just” (Romans 3:26; Revelation 15:3); “good” (Psalm 119:68); “perfect” (Matthew 5:48), and “righteous” (Revelation 16:5).

So far from making arbitrary requirements, God’s law is given to men as a hedge, a shield. Whoever accepts its principles is preserved from evil. Fidelity to God involves fidelity to man. Thus the law guards the rights, the individuality, of every human being. It restrains the superior from oppression, and the subordinate from disobedience. It ensures man’s well-being, both for this world and for the world to come. To the obedient it is the pledge of eternal life, for it expresses the principles that endure forever. (*Education*, pp. 76, 77)

Sunday, February 5: Inspiration declares the law to belong to and originate from God the Father. Note, for example:

If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father’s commandments, and abide in his love. (John 15:10)

So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God. (Romans 7:25)

Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. (Romans 8:7)

The claim that Christ by His death abolished His Father's law is without foundation. (*The Great Controversy*, p. 466)

Through the grace of Christ they may be enabled to render obedience to the Father's law. (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 338)

In the introduction to *The Great Controversy*, Ellen White states the following, concerning the speaking of the law of God at Sinai:

The Ten Commandments were spoken by God Himself, and were written by His own hand. (*The Great Controversy*, p. v)

However, she also notes:

All the communion between heaven and the fallen race has been through Christ. It was the Son of God that gave to our first parents the promise of redemption. It was He who revealed Himself to the patriarchs. Adam, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Moses understood the gospel. They looked for salvation through man's Substitute and Surety. These holy men of old held communion with the Saviour who was to come to our world in human flesh; and some of them talked with Christ and heavenly angels face to face.

Christ was not only the leader of the Hebrews in the wilderness—the Angel in whom was the name of Jehovah, and who, veiled in the cloudy pillar, went before the host—but it was He who gave the law to Israel. [SEE APPENDIX, NOTE 7.] Amid the awful glory of Sinai, Christ declared in the hearing of all the people the ten precepts of His Father's law. It was He who gave to Moses the law engraved upon the tables of stone. (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 366)

The note added by the publishers in Appendix 7 says:

THAT THE ONE WHO SPOKE THE LAW, WHO CALLED MOSES INTO THE MOUNT AND TALKED WITH HIM, WAS OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, IS EVIDENT FROM THE FOLLOWING CONSIDERATIONS:

CHRIST IS THE ONE THROUGH WHOM GOD HAS AT ALL TIMES REVEALED HIMSELF TO MAN. "BUT TO US THERE IS BUT ONE GOD, THE FATHER, OF WHOM ARE ALL THINGS, AND WE IN HIM; AND ONE LORD JESUS CHRIST, BY WHOM ARE ALL THINGS, AND WE BY HIM." 1 CORINTHIANS 8:6. "THIS IS HE [MOSES], THAT WAS IN THE CHURCH IN THE WILDERNESS WITH THE ANGEL WHICH SPAKE TO HIM IN THE MOUNT SINAI, AND WITH OUR FATHERS: WHO RECEIVED THE LIVELY ORACLES TO GIVE UNTO US." ACTS 7:38. THIS ANGEL WAS

THE ANGEL OF GOD'S PRESENCE (ISAIAH 63:9), THE ANGEL IN WHOM WAS THE NAME OF THE GREAT JEHOVAH (EXODUS 23:20–23). THE EXPRESSION CAN REFER TO NO OTHER THAN THE SON OF GOD.

AGAIN: CHRIST IS CALLED THE WORD OF GOD. JOHN 1:1–3. HE IS SO CALLED BECAUSE GOD GAVE HIS REVELATIONS TO MAN IN ALL AGES THROUGH CHRIST. IT WAS HIS SPIRIT THAT INSPIRED THE PROPHETS. 1 PETER 1:10, 11. HE WAS REVEALED TO THEM AS THE ANGEL OF JEHOVAH, THE CAPTAIN OF THE LORD'S HOST, MICHAEL THE ARCHANGEL. (*Ibid.*, p. 761; capital letters in original)

So did both God the Father and Jesus verbally proclaim the Ten Commandments? It would not appear so, but, rather, that God proclaimed them, as he does all revelation through, and by, Jesus Christ.

Writing in his book *Christ and His Righteousness*, E. J. Waggoner gives solid reasoning to believe that the Law was spoken by Jesus Christ. Here is one of three different lines of Scripture proving that it was Christ who spoke the Father's law:

When the Lord comes, it will be with a shout (1 Thess. 4:16), which will pierce the tombs and arouse the dead (John 5:28, 29). "The Lord shall roar from on high and utter His voice from his holy habitation; he shall mightily roar upon his habitation; he shall give a shout, as they that tread the grapes, against all the inhabitants of the earth. A noise shall come even to the ends of the earth; for the Lord hath a controversy with the nations; he will plead with all flesh; he will give them that are wicked to the sword, saith the Lord." Jer. 25:30, 3. Comparing this with Rev. 19:11–21, where Christ as the Leader of the armies of heaven, the Word of God, King of kings, and Lord of lords, goes forth to tread the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God, destroying all the wicked, we find that it is Christ who roars from His habitation against all the inhabitants of the earth, when He has His controversy with the nations. Joel adds another point, when he says, "The Lord also shall roar out of Zion, and utter His voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake." Joel 3:16.

From these texts, to which others might be added, we learn that in connection with the coming of the Lord to deliver His people, He speaks with a voice that shakes the earth and the heavens—"the earth shall reel to and from like a drunkard, and shall be removed like a cottage" (Isa. 24:20), and "the heavens shall pass away with a great noise" (2 Peter 3:10). Now

read Heb. 12:25,26: “See that ye refuse not Him that speaketh; for if they escaped not who refused Him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from Him that speaketh from heaven; whose voice then shook the earth; but now He hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven.”

The time when the Voice speaking on earth shook the earth was when the law was spoken from Sinai (Ex. 19:18–20; Heb. 12:18–20), an event that for awfulness has never had a parallel and never will have until the Lord comes with all the angels of heaven to save His people. But note: The same voice that then shook the earth will, in the coming time, shake not only earth, but heaven also, and we have seen that it is the voice of Christ that will sound with such volume as to shake heaven and earth when He has His controversy with the nations. Therefore it is demonstrated that it was the voice of Christ that was heard from Sinai, proclaiming the ten commandments. This is no more than would naturally be concluded from what we have learned concerning Christ as Creator and the Maker of the Sabbath. (*Christ and His Righteousness*, pp. 42, 43)

Monday, February 6: Clearly the law of God was known to mankind before the revelation at Mt. Sinai, for the law defines sin (1 John 3:4), and Paul writes that “where no law is, there is no transgression” (Romans 4:15). Since we are sure that there was transgression of his law before Sinai, we must conclude that many, perhaps most all people had some knowledge of God’s law for surely the world was not sinless before Sinai. Below are Bible verses which show that the Ten Commandments were all known before they were formally codified at Sinai.

First — Genesis 35:2–4	Sixth — Genesis 4:8–15
Second — Genesis 31:19–34	Seventh — Genesis 39:9
Third — Genesis 12:3	Eighth — Genesis 44:8, 16
Fourth — Genesis 2:1–3; 4:3; Exodus 16:4–26	Ninth — Genesis 27:12
Fifth — Genesis 9:20–25	Tenth — Genesis 25:29–34; 27:1–46

Monday's lesson references Job 24:14, 15, where Job gives evidence of God's law. Job was written by Moses (*The Signs of the Times*, February 19, 1880), when he was in the desert of Midian before the giving of the law at Sinai.

Tuesday, February 7: As noted in the the chart for Monday's lesson, we have listed Genesis 4:3 for an evidence of the Sabbath being known and observed before Sinai. The text reads: "And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the LORD." Verse 4 speaks of Abel bringing an offering of his flocks. This happened "in the process of time." *Young's Literal Translation* agrees with the marginal reading from the Hebrew, when it says: "And it cometh to pass at the end of days." There is a time period that marks the end of days for worship. This time period was the only one at this point that had been given to man, and it is the Sabbath. The idea is not simply an Adventist interpretation for *The Critical Commentary and Explanatory on the Whole Bible* by Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown states: "Hebrew, 'at the end of days,' probably on the Sabbath."

Wednesday, February 8: Israel realized that they were taken into Babylonian captivity because of a failure to keep God's law (Deuteronomy 28:4–45; Jeremiah 25:8–11; 29:24–28; Hosea 4:6; etc.). What Israel failed to realize was that one's faith, working through love, could enable them to keep God's commandments (Galatians 2:20; 5:6). However, those who do not receive a love of the truth will perish (2 Thessalonians 2:10).

Thursday, February 9: What we today call the new covenant was first given to Adam and Eve in Eden and later confirmed to Abraham. Faith in Christ to come did not annul the law of God, but the law would be written in the hearts of those who, by faith, accepted Christ. Jeremiah noted:

Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: Naccording to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD: But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, *I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts*; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive

their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more. (Jeremiah 31:31–34)

Notice that the law is not removed here, but instead of being written upon stone, it is now written in the heart, and as Paul quotes from Jeremiah, as given in the LXX in Hebrews 8:10, 11 and 10:16, 17, he includes the word *mind* in the place of *inward parts*, as translated in the KJV. When God’s law is put into our mind, or spirit, and when we have a love for it in our hearts, we will be able to say, like Jesus: “I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart” (Psalm 40:8). Since character is set in the mind and the law, the transcript of God’s character is in the mind, we then have the mind that was in Christ Jesus (Philippians 2:5), the mind of God.

Lesson 7 — Lord of the Sabbath

With a couple of exceptions, this lesson will not be discussed on a day-by-day basis. There are a few points that directly relate to the lesson we will first touch upon, and then the rest of this section will show the importance of and the connection between the truth about God and the Sabbath. We will also discuss their counterfeits, the trinity and Sunday sacredness, and how they are connected.

Directed points: Sunday’s lesson states that “God created a day, He rested on that day, He blessed the seventh-day, and He sanctified it, which means He made it holy or set it apart for holy use.” If one carefully follows the sequence of events in Genesis 2, we see that God blessed the seventh day after he had rested on it—in other words, upon the first day of the next week.

And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made. (Genesis 2:3)

Notice that the blessing and sanctification happened because God had already rested from all his work.

Wednesday’s lesson speaks about Jesus and the Sabbath and states that the Sabbath is “about people, about mercy and kindness and loving others.” While this is true we are not to use this as a license to *do good* for others by painting their houses on the Sabbath or by doing other jobs that are not of an immediate need and that can be accomplished on another day.

Thursday’s lesson continues the theme about Jesus and the Sabbath, declaring that the Sabbath is a time for “healing and restoration.” While that is true the Sabbath is primarily a day about worship, and if we fail to worship God, then all else is immaterial.

God and Worship: This lesson on the Sabbath covers a basic view of the Sabbath as a sign of creation and redemption. It points out well that the

Sabbath commandment, as given in the Decalogue, speaks of a provision for slaves (Hebrew for manservant), something that certainly would not have been needed before sin nor after Jesus comes back. The emphasis upon the Sabbath as a sign of redemption is needed. Interestingly, many evangelicals think the Ten Commandments, and especially the Sabbath Commandment, is a work, and keeping the Sabbath indicates that the one obedient to God is trying to save himself by works. However, this is Satan's lie. Remember that Satan is the father of lies (John 8:44), and he "hates the divine precepts" (*The Great Controversy*, p. 608), especially the Sabbath. Instead of the Sabbath being a work of the flesh, it is a work of faith and the sign of redemption and righteousness by faith! No wonder Satan has attacked, and continues to attack, the Sabbath so strongly. We have been told:

The Sabbath is a test, not a human requirement, but God's test. It is that which will distinguish between those who serve God and those who serve him not; and upon this point will come the last great conflict of the controversy between truth and error. (Ellen G. White, *Historical Sketches of the Foreign Missions of the Seventh-day Adventists*, p. 215)

Make no mistake that the Sabbath will be the great test for God's people at the end of time. "The Sabbath is a golden clasp that unites God and His people" (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 351). So why does Smyrna Gospel Ministries and other concerned brothers and sisters continue to make an issue of the truth about God? If the Sabbath is the test, why do we not discard all else to concentrate upon the Sabbath question? We think that this is a reasonable question and worthy of a reasonable answer. Notice in the above quotation that it says the Sabbath "will distinguish between those who serve God and those who serve him not." But in order to serve God, we must know who he is. When unbelievable pressure is brought to bear against the Jews, they will forgo the Sabbath for we have been told that all the world will wonder after the beast (Revelation 13:3). They claim to know God but do not really know his person nor character and they especially reject Jesus as the Son of God.

The Sabbath will be the test, but only those who deeply and personally know God will be able to withstand the pressures that will be brought upon them. The Sabbath will be the test, but to show who will follow the true God. Daniel writes: "And such as do wickedly against the covenant shall he corrupt by flatteries: but the people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits" (Daniel 11:32). The LXX says, "And the transgressors shall bring about a covenant by deceitful ways: but a people knowing their God shall prevail, and do valiantly." God's people who know him will be

valiant in their stand against the beast, the image of the beast, and the mark of the beast.

Perhaps you did not know that there is a special relationship between the worship of Sunday and trinity. Note these two references from the Douay Catechism of 1649. Concerning trinitarian Sunday, we read:

It is the octave of Whitsunday, and is so called in honour of the Blessed Trinity, to signify that the works of our redemption and sanctification then completed, are common to all the three persons. (*Douay Catechism of 1649*, question 1089)

Then concerning each Sunday, we read:

“It [Sunday] is a day dedicated by the Apostles to the honour of the most holy Trinity, and in memory that Christ our Lord arose from the dead upon Sunday, sent down the holy Ghost on a Sunday, &c. and therefore is called the Lord’s Day. It is also called Sunday from the old Roman denomination of Dies Solis, the day of the sun, to which it was sacred.” (*Ibid.*, question 1092)

The overpowering argument will be made by Catholics and apostate Protestants to Sabbath-keeping trinitarians, “We worship the same God. Let us worship him together on the day set apart and dedicated to him. For the good of society, to stop the chaos in the world, let us unite.” Beloved, the pressure that will be brought to bear at that time cannot be described today. Only those who know God will be able to stand. We have been told:

There will be those, who, after a feeble resistance, will yield one point of truth after another. The reason they will do this is that they have never valued truth as they should. They have never enthroned the truth in the inner sanctuary of the heart, and they have not been sanctified through the truth. They will give way to the powers that be, and render obedience to men rather than to God. But those who stand firm to the truth will answer those who demand their surrender to the traditions of men and their compliance with the custom of the majority, that they owe allegiance to a higher authority than that of the State. They will declare that they cannot set aside the Sabbath of the great Creator for a man-made institution. They will declare that as partakers of the divine nature, they are placed in a position where the ordinances of men, when conflicting with the commands of God, are of no force nor value. Those who are empowered with authority will say to them as they said to Paul, “Thou art beside thyself;” and when persuasion and entreaty are in vain, *heavier pressure will be brought to bear, and the steadfastness of Christ’s followers will be tested to the uttermost.* Every conceivable device that men and demons can invent will be brought to bear against them to overcome them; but those

who have learned how to cling to God will not abate one jot or tittle of truth. (*The Review and Herald*, October 23, 1894)

Beloved, if we are to stand firm under such great pressure we must stand firm today when the winds of strife and persecution are just barely beginning to kick up. For if we begin to compromise now, even a little at a time, we are sure to fall prey to Satan. We have been told:

The time is not far distant when the test will come to every soul. The mark of the beast will be urged upon us. Those who have step by step yielded to worldly demands and conformed to worldly customs will not find it a hard matter to yield to the powers that be, rather than subject themselves to derision, insult, threatened imprisonment, and death. The contest is between the commandments of God and the commandments of men. In this time the gold will be separated from the dross in the church. True godliness will be clearly distinguished from the appearance and tinsel of it. Many a star that we have admired for its brilliancy will then go out in darkness. Chaff like a cloud will be borne away on the wind, even from places where we see only floors of rich wheat. All who assume the ornaments of the sanctuary, but are not clothed with Christ's righteousness, will appear in the shame of their own nakedness. (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 81)

If today we cannot now "jealously guard the edges of the Sabbath [and] remember that every moment is consecrated, holy time" (*Ibid.*, vol. 6, p. 356), how can we expect to be faithful to God in the soon-coming crisis? If we today trample upon God's holy day, how shall we hallow it during the coming time of trouble? Of course, we know the answers to these questions. Beloved, we will not be faithful then, if we are not faithful now.

God will have a people who will "build the old waste places," who will "raise up the foundations of many generations," and who shall "be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of paths to dwell in" (Isaiah 58:12). You can be one such person, as you learn to know, love, and trust the God the Bible reveals, in the place of the god of the councils.

Lesson 8 — Creation Care

This lesson is on stewardship of the earth and its resources. This appears to be an important, politically-correct subject that has to be addressed today by the churches of the world.

Man is using the earth's resources at an alarming rate. With over seven billion people, the task of feeding the population of the earth seems daunting, using the current methods of food production and the type of food

consumption. Interestingly, it has been noted that if all the grain and resources that were used in raising livestock for human consumption were diverted directly into use for plant-based food for humans, these resources alone could feed over eight billion people.

Psalm 24:1 states: “The earth is the LORD’S, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein.” This is the principle upon which stewardship is based. Humanity is not the rightful owner of the world or of its assets. Since they belong to God and are his by right of creation, we are simply stewards of this earth and its resources. As stewards we shall be held accountable for our use of the earth. In Revelation 11:18, we find the following warning:

And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and *shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth.*

From the time that John penned these words until a little more than one hundred years ago, it might have seemed impossible that man could “destroy the earth.” The earth was large, and its resources were considered unlimited. When the United States was founded, there were few, if any, who could imagine the seemingly unlimited resources, such as timber, good water, or coal, becoming depleted. Today, however, we have a very different picture of the matter. Not only are resources being depleted at an alarming rate, but man has the ability to pollute the earth in unprecedented ways, including non-biodegradable materials and contamination from nuclear radiation, due to weapons of mass destruction and faulty nuclear powerplants that are vulnerable both to natural disasters (Fukushima, 2011) and poor management (Chernobyl, 1986).

Of course, the real root of the problem we face is the selfish heart of man that takes all it can for himself, regardless of the lack it leaves for others or the destruction it causes. As noted in the Ellen White quotation on Friday’s lesson, “There is nothing, save the selfish heart of man, that lives unto itself” (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 20).

Lesson 9 — The Bible and History

Did God create our world, wind up the planet and humanity with spiritual and physical springs, and allow us to move on without his intervention? Or has God been a master controller of all that happens, even choosing whom will be saved and whom will be lost, and arranging matters in such a way

that the elect will be saved and the damned will be lost? In this lesson we see the hand of God working throughout history.

Before we go to the main body of the lesson, we wish to discuss the memory verse first—Revelation 1:8 from the NKJV—which says: “ ‘I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End,’ says the Lord, ‘who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.’ ” Some red-letter editions of the KJV only have the phrase “I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending” in red text, indicating that they do not believe that the latter part of the verse applies to Jesus Christ, but rather to the Father, who in the Old and New Testament is referred to as “the Almighty” (Job 11:7; Revelation 21:22). The Greek word translated *almighty* is *pantokrator*. It is from two words that mean *all* (Greek: *pas*) and *power* or *strength* (Greek: *kratos*). Almighty is a good translation of this Greek word. Revelation 1:8 is commented upon just one time in the Spirit of Prophecy, where Ellen White says:

What a Saviour we have! It was he that revealed himself to John on the Isle of Patmos, and proclaimed, “I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.” None but just such an ever-living, mighty God, could pay the ransom to save sinners from going down into the pit of death. (*The Review and Herald*, February 18, 1896)

In this one reference we have a clear connection of the *Almighty* to Christ, but if in all other texts of the Bible the word applies to the Father, can we use this one reference and apply it to Jesus? After quoting the text Ellen White does not call Jesus the *Almighty God*, but rather a “mighty God.” By strict definition, there cannot be more than one almighty—anything else would be counter to the very definition of the word and concept. However, we must remember that Jesus said “all power is given unto me in heaven and in earth” (Matthew 28:18). Since God has given all power to Christ, he can be said to be almighty in the sense that there would be no power that has been withheld from him.

Sunday, February 26: God said that he declares the end from the beginning. To do this he must know the end from the beginning. In Isaiah he says:

Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure. (Isaiah 46:9, 10)

This text tells us that God not only knows all the events that are to take place, but also that his hand intervenes in history, for he says that he “will do all” his “pleasure.” Daniel declares:

Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever: for wisdom and might are his: And he changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings: he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding. (Daniel 2:20, 21)

In verse 21, God is said to change times and seasons and to set up kings and to remove them. This is intervention. Now God does not force people to serve him, but he does help put together circumstances whereby people will be drawn to him and whereby his people may prosper.

It has been said that God transcends time, and all time is as the present for God. Finite minds can only speculate on how God relates to his creation of time. However, we know that he is above time and space and is not bound by any of their restrictions that might contain his creatures.

Monday, February 27: This lesson is on the prophets as historians. I recently read an article on CNN that described what John Shelby Spong, a former Episcopal bishop of Newark, New Jersey, says are “the 3 biggest biblical misconceptions.” The first of these so-called misconceptions is stated as:

First, people assume the Bible accurately reflects history. That is absolutely not so, and every biblical scholar recognizes it. (<http://religion.blogs.cnn.com/2011/12/29/my-take-the-3-biggest-biblical-misconceptions>)

Sorry Mr. Spong, but not every biblical scholar recognizes this, and in fact, no person who believes the Bible, *scholar* or not, believes this to be true. When writing under inspiration the prophets gave detailed and accurate history about what they wrote. For many years *scholars* did not believe that a race called the Hittites existed. They claimed that the Bible simply made up information about this group. But today the race of the Hittites is accepted by biblical and non-biblical scholars, who have changed their tune, due to evidence from archeology.

Now it is true that not all prophets were given detailed historical information; that was just not their message. Ellen White was given visions of many things that transpired in the past, but there is no record that they were tagged with exact place and date makers. For this she was dependent upon historians.

Tuesday, February 28: This lesson discusses “Daniel 2 and the Providence of God in History.” As we noted in our introduction, Daniel declares

that God's hand guides history. Due to the exact accuracy of Daniel's prophecies, some critics have said that he could not have been the one writing and certainly not five hundred years before Christ. In the time of Darius, Daniel was put in the lions' den. Today Daniel has been put in the critics' den. However, for those who would put Daniel in the critics' den, they must also put Jesus Christ there, for Jesus spoke of Daniel and endorsed him as a prophet (Matthew 24:15).

Wednesday, February 29: The subject of the great controversy between Christ and Satan is a theme that is known to a depth that only Adventists can understand. While the Bible speaks of this theme, through the writings of the Spirit of Prophecy we have been granted a clearer, deeper, and more detailed view and understanding of this theme than any other people could possibly have. Reading Chapter 1 in *Patriarchs and Prophets*, "Why Was Sin Permitted?" provides information not found in any non-Adventist sources. The same could be said for the chapter entitled "The Origin of Evil" in *The Great Controversy*. As a people we have been given the privilege to have a wealth of information upon this subject like no people who have ever lived. Martin Luther, John Wycliffe, William Tyndale, and others were men of keen insight and had a tremendous depth of knowledge in the Scriptures, but an Adventist youth who has read the Conflict of the Ages series with a prayerful desire to learn knows more about the great controversy theme than all of these great reformers combined!

It is a wonder that so many of these books lie dusty upon our shelves. I would encourage all our brethren to dust off these books and read them with your Bible and see if a revival and reformation is not the result.

Before leaving the subject of history, we should note that we also have, by the Spirit of Prophecy, an inspired history of our people, showing how God has worked, or, in cases, has been restricted from working, among them. To disregard this history would be to our hurt, for we are told:

In reviewing our past history, having traveled over every step of advance to our present standing, I can say, Praise God! As I see what the Lord has wrought, I am filled with astonishment, and with confidence in Christ as leader. 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. (*Life Sketches*, p. 196)

One interesting point of the history of the Advent people, where we see God's direct intervention, is explained in the book *Early Writings*:

September 23, the Lord showed me that He had stretched out His hand the second time to recover the remnant of His people, [SEE PAGE 86.]

and that efforts must be redoubled in this gathering time. In the scattering, Israel was smitten and torn, but now in the gathering time God will heal and bind up His people. In the scattering, efforts made to spread the truth had but little effect, accomplished but little or nothing; but in the gathering, when God has set His hand to gather His people, efforts to spread the truth will have their designed effect. All should be united and zealous in the work. I saw that it was wrong for any to refer to the scattering for examples to govern us now in the gathering; for if God should do no more for us now than He did then, Israel would never be gathered. I have seen that *the 1843 chart was directed by the hand of the Lord*, and that it should not be altered; that the figures were as He wanted them; that *His hand was over and hid a mistake in some of the figures, so that none could see it, until His hand was removed.* (*Early Writings*, p. 74)

It cannot be controverted that God change the course of history by his action in this case. God not only knows the future, he has the ability to guide it within the limitations of man's freewill.

Thursday, March 1: Paul notes in Colossians 1:20 that Jesus has "made peace through the blood of his cross" and reconciled "all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven." Paul is declaring that before the cross there were issues, even in heaven, that were not fully clarified in the minds of the angels, but through the cross all doubt or questions were answered.

The third paragraph of Thursday's lesson states: "The whole doctrine of salvation can be expressed in this one sentence: God cancels our hopelessly stranded history and in its place puts His history." The sounds like salvation is limited to Christ's death being substituted for my death. While Jesus clearly must take the sinner's place in death, the gift of Jesus brings change into the believer's life, and the sinner is both, in title and deed, fit for heaven.

The proud heart strives to earn salvation; but both our title to heaven and our fitness for it are found in the righteousness of Christ. The Lord can do nothing toward the recovery of man until, convinced of his own weakness, and stripped of all self-sufficiency, he yields himself to the control of God. Then he can receive the gift that God is waiting to bestow. From the soul that feels his need, nothing is withheld. He has unrestricted access to Him in whom all fullness dwells. "For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones." Isaiah 57:15. (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 300)

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