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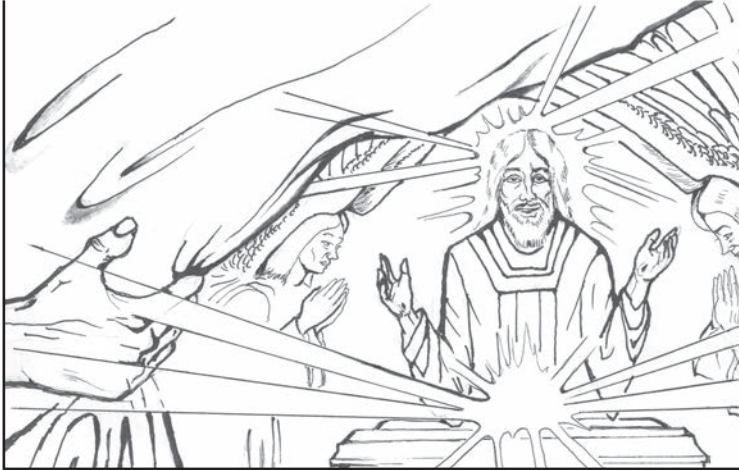
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**Sabbath School
Personal
Ministries**

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The Eternal Question

Christians have very good reasons to believe in God. These reasons go against the false beliefs that are widely accepted in the world. Some of the best and smartest thinkers claim that the theory (unproved idea) of evolution¹ can explain all that is strange, beautiful, and difficult to understand about life. But many people of the world do not accept what evolution teaches. There are many “scientific” theories about how the universe came from “nothing.” But most people think that it makes more sense to believe that the world came from a Creator God, as opposed to coming out of “nothing.”

We have very good reasons for believing in creation. But there is still the problem of how evil came to be. This problem leads us to the eternal question: *If God lives, and is so good, so loving, and so powerful, why is there so much suffering?*

The book of Job deals with this eternal question. How interesting it is that Job was one of the first books of the Bible written. God gave us, early on, some answers to the most difficult problem.

Some answers, but not all. No one book of the Bible could answer them all. Even the Bible as a whole does not. But still, Job pulls back a veil and shows the reader that there is a living God beyond our senses. The book of Job shows us what so much of the rest of the Bible does as well. It shows that those things that can be explained by science and those things that cannot always are connected. The story of Job is an example of the principle (important rule) and warning that Paul gives thousands of years later: “Our fight is not against human beings. It is against the rulers, the authorities and the powers of this dark world. It is against the spiritual forces [armies] of evil in the heavenly world” (Ephesians 6:12, NIV).

1. evolution—a theory (unproved idea) that the differences between modern plants and animals are because of changes that happened by a natural process over a very long time.

The book of Job is mostly about one man. But it is also the story of us all, for we all suffer in ways that often seem to make no sense. And even the story of the four men who come to Job mirrors our situation too. Who among us has not tried to understand why people suffer?

But we would miss a very important point about the book of Job if we limited our study of it only to how suffering humans try to understand the suffering of other people. The background of the story is the great controversy (war between Christ and Satan). The war is described very clearly as a real battle over human souls. That is because it is the realest of battles. It is the one that began in heaven and even now is being fought here in the heart, mind, and body of every human.

This quarter's study guide is about the story of Job. It studies his suffering close up and from afar. We know how the book ends. And we know the bigger background behind the story. As readers, we have the knowledge of the book of Job and also of the whole Bible. We use that knowledge to understand as much as possible the answer to the following two questions: Why do we live in a world of evil? And how are we to live in such a world?

Of course, even after we study Job, and later when we study it with help from the rest of the Bible, the problem of the eternal question remains. But we can be sure that the eternal answer lies in Jesus Christ. In Jesus "we have redemption [salvation with a price] through His blood" (Ephesians 1:7, NKJV). Through Him, all answers come.

Job pulls back a veil and shows the reader that there is a living God beyond our senses.

Clifford R. Goldstein is the editor of the Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide. He has been at the General Conference since 1984.