

God Made Known in Revelation



SABBATH—OCTOBER 6

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON: 2 Peter 1:19–21; 2 Timothy 3:16, 17; Deuteronomy 6:4; Matthew 28:19; Hebrews 11:6; Exodus 3:1–14.

MEMORY VERSE: “In the past, God spoke to our people through the prophets [special messengers]. He spoke at many times. He spoke in different ways. But in these last days, he has spoken to us through his Son. He is the one whom God appointed [chose] to receive all things. God made everything through him” (Hebrews 1:1, 2, NlrV).

KEY (IMPORTANT) THOUGHT: It is important to understand how Bible inspiration¹ works. But it is more important to know that God gave His messages to us through that inspiration.

“THE HEAVENS TELL ABOUT THE GLORY OF GOD. The skies show that his hands created them” (Psalm 19:1, NlrV). That is so true. But what this verse does not say is that our God loves us and died for us. He is busy saving us from the results of our sinful choices.

We may learn about God from other books. But the important book has to be the Bible. There are great truths about the nature of God (who God is) and His work in this world that we would know nothing about if God had not told us. Maybe people can sense the battle going on between good and evil. But how else would they know of the great controversy (war) if they had not learned about it from the Bible?

This week we will focus (place our attention on) on two things. First, we will study what the Bible says about itself and the way it was inspired (given by God). Next, we will learn what it teaches us about the God who inspired (gave) it.

1. inspiration—how Bible writers were led by God to write down His messages.

SUNDAY—OCTOBER 7**THE DOCTRINE (BELIEF;
TEACHING) OF THE BIBLE
(2 Peter 1:19–21)**

Read 2 Peter 1:19–21. What do these verses tell us about what the New Testament writers thought of the Holy Bible?

Peter supports the idea that the prophecies (special messages from God) of the Old Testament did not begin with the human mind. His argument is that the prophets spoke *because* they were “moved by the Holy Spirit” (NKJV). The wording “moved by the Holy Spirit” means that the writing of the Bible came through the Holy Spirit’s leading. In short, the Bible writers were inspired (led) by the Lord Himself.

Read 2 Timothy 3:16, 17. What do these verses tell us about the Bible and what we should use it for?

It is very clear that Paul wanted Timothy to understand one important fact: that the Bible comes from God. For this reason the Bible is dependable and valuable for the building up of the believer. Paul leaves no doubt about the Bible’s truthfulness, authority, and creation. Notice, too, that Paul is talking about “all Scripture [the Bible].” Paul leaves no room for picking or choosing which parts we think are inspired (given by God) and which parts are not. There are some things in the Bible

(such as the ceremonial laws²) that we no longer need to observe or practice. But understanding this is very different from saying that there are some parts of the Bible that are inspired (given by God) and others that are not, or that some parts are not “as inspired” as other parts are.

Read Matthew 4:4, 7, 10; Matthew 22:41–46; and John 10:34, 35. What important truth about the Bible and its authority can we learn from these verses?

No matter what we believe, we need a foundation upon which we can base that belief. For Seventh-day Adventist Christians, that foundation is the Bible, which is the most perfect standard of truth.

How much time do you spend studying the Bible? How much of your life follows what it teaches? Think back on the past 24 hours. What have you done or not done in that time period that followed the Bible’s authority?



The Bible is the foundation of our beliefs.

2. ceremonial laws—laws that were given to Moses by God. These laws governed how the system of sacrifices and offerings was to be carried out in the sanctuary (house of God) services. After Christ died on the cross, these laws were no longer needed.

MONDAY—OCTOBER 8**WHAT INSPIRATION IS (Acts 1:18)**

“It is not the words of the Bible that are inspired. Instead, it is the writers who were inspired [led by God]. Inspiration acts not on the writer’s words. Instead, it works on the writer himself. Led by the power of the Holy Spirit, the writer is given thoughts from God. But the prophet writes down these thoughts in his own words. God’s mind and will are joined with the human mind and will. In this way, the written words of the writer are the word of God.”—Adapted from Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages*, book 1, page 21. How do these words help us to understand how Bible inspiration works?

When thinking about inspiration, people sometimes get too worried about verses that seem to create problems. Take, for example, the wording above Jesus’ cross as described in the Gospels. According to Matthew 27:37, it says, “THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS.” But Mark 15:26 says, “THE KING OF THE JEWS.” And Luke 23:38 says, “THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS.” How are we to understand these differences?

As the Bible says, “all Scripture [Bible] is given by inspiration of God” (2 Timothy 3:16), and all Scripture is trustworthy. But we are given different records of the wording on Jesus’ cross. Understanding these two points can give us a better idea of how inspiration

works. This case shows that inspiration uses different words for an idea or event in order to explain it better. When the wording explains an idea well enough, inspiration allows for it. On the other hand, when a special explanation is needed (1 Kings 6:1, for example), inspiration gives it, and it should be accepted as such.

Compare Acts 1:18 and Matthew 27:5. In what ways do these stories of Judas’ death seem to disagree?

For a long time, critics of the Bible claimed that these verses gave different stories of Judas’ death. But recent research has shown that the word translated as “falling headlong” in Acts 1:18 also means “swelling up.” So, it is possible that, after hanging himself, Judas was not discovered until his body had swelled up. If true, this would have caused his intestines to burst open. So, what at first seemed to be different is now shown not to be different.

But most of the Bible does not cause problems. In the few places where there seem to be problems, the wise thing to do would be to show a humble spirit. Who knows how many people have made a shipwreck of faith by focusing on “problem” verses. We have not been called to stand in judgment over the Bible. Instead, we have been called to obey it.

TUESDAY—OCTOBER 9**THE MYSTERY OF THE THREE-IN-ONE GOD (Genesis 1:26)**

Inspiration is important. But understanding how it works is only a way of reaching a goal. And that goal is to know God. For example, a deep understanding of how the Bible was written, or even of its truths, means nothing if we do not know the Lord for ourselves (John 17:3).

And one thing the Bible clearly teaches us about the Lord is His oneness.

Read Deuteronomy 6:4 and Mark 12:29. What important truth is found in these verses?

The Bible's stand on the idea that God is One does not encourage the idea that there are many gods. There is only one God. But the total picture we get from the Bible suggests that there are several "sides" or "parts" of God, even though He is One.

Read Genesis 1:26; Genesis 3:22; Genesis 11:7; John 1:1–3, 18; John 20:28; 2 Corinthians 13:14; and Matthew 28:19. How do these verses begin to make clear the idea that the One God has several "sides" or "parts"?

The Old Testament suggests that our God is a Three-in-One God—or Three Persons who are One in thought, feeling, and will. For example, the word *us* (Genesis 1:26) suggests more than one. There is also the New Testament's statement about Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. Because of these examples, we start to realize that there is a lot about God's nature

that we do not fully understand and probably never will. The three-in-one part of God is one mystery which we will have to learn to accept.

The information that the Bible gives about God's three-part nature does not mean that we can make wild guesses about who He is. But it is given so that we may understand more fully His saving work for us within the theme of the great controversy.

Who does not have a lot of questions that only God can answer? How can we learn to trust Him until the time comes when answers will be given?



Understanding how the Bible was written, or even its truths, is nothing if we do not know Jesus.

WEDNESDAY—OCTOBER 10

**THE CREATOR'S CHARACTER
(WHO GOD IS) IN THE BIBLE
(Hebrews 11:6)**

The Bible teaches us truths about God that we are not going to find anywhere else. Among those truths is

that He is the Creator. In fact, that is the first thing the Bible tells us about God. He created “the heavens and the earth” (Genesis 1:1).

One of the many interesting things about this verse is that the Bible simply tells us that God exists (is around; lives) without trying to prove it or show it. The Bible spends a lot of time teaching us about what God is like. The Bible also shows God’s character (who God is) through His work with fallen (sinful) humanity. But the Bible does not try hard to prove that He exists. It just shows God as a fact in the Bible.

Read Hebrews 11:6 and Romans 10:17. What do these verses say about God and how His Word makes us realize that He lives?

Belief that God is real cannot come from reason or arguments alone. The Bible teaches that a person believes that God lives and is real through personal experience with Him. Meanwhile, the Holy Spirit influences the person to believe that God is real. In many cases, people may come to believe in God first. Then, they start to build a strong foundation in their hearts and minds for faith in a God whom they cannot see.

Read Malachi 3:6; James 1:17; 1 John 4:8, 16; and 2 Chronicles 6:18. What do these verses tell us about several sides of God’s character? What other sides of God’s character are shown in the Word (the Bible)?

Think about the sides of God’s character that are shown in the Bible. How many of them could you know from other sources (places to go for more of something)? (For example, from nature or from personal experience.) What does your answer teach you about how important the Bible is to our understanding of who God really is?



The Bible teaches that God is Creator.

THURSDAY—OCTOBER 11

THE ACTIONS OF GOD (Genesis 11:9)

Even the shortest reading of the Bible shows that God is hard at work with people and with what happens here on earth. He is not as far away as some Greeks in Bible times taught, or even as some Christian thinkers try to describe Him. God is very different from what He created. But the Lord has tied Himself closely to His creation.

As we saw yesterday, the Bible shows the Lord as our Creator. This shows just how closely tied to this world He really is. What do Genesis 11:9; Genesis 19:24; Exodus 3:1–14; John 3:16; and 1 Thessalonians 4:17 tell us about God’s other actions here on earth, especially with the theme of the great controversy in mind?

Without doubt, the Bible shows a God who is greatly (very) involved with people. The whole theme of the great controversy is that the Lord is working to save people from sin and Satan’s traps. The Bible (from the earth’s creation [Genesis 1:1], to the cross [John 19:18], and to the earth’s re-creation [2 Peter 3:12, 13]) shows us very clearly how the Lord works with people.



The whole theme of the great controversy is that God works to save us from Satan’s traps.

In what ways have you experienced the actions of God? In what

ways have you seen Him work in your life and in the lives of others? How can you learn to receive comfort from knowing God’s closeness to us?

FRIDAY—OCTOBER 12

ADDITIONAL STUDY: Read Ellen G. White, “Danger in Speculative [Uncertain] Knowledge,” pages 427–438, in *The Ministry [Work Done for God] of Healing*; “The Word Made Flesh,” pages 746–749, in *Testimonies [Messages] for the Church*, volume 5; “Preface” and “Introduction,” pages 5–7, in *The Great Controversy*.

“God has been pleased to give His truth to the world through humans. He Himself, by His Holy Spirit, made men able to do this work. God guided the mind in what to speak and what to write. The treasure was entrusted to human servants. But still, it is from Heaven. The testimony is given through human language, which is imperfect [not perfect]. But it is the testimony of God. And the obedient, believing child of God understands through it the glory [great beauty] of God’s power, full of grace and truth.

“In His word [the Bible], God has given men the knowledge necessary for salvation. The Holy Bible is to be accepted as the perfect will of God. It is the standard of character, the teacher of doctrines, and the test of experience. ‘God has breathed life into all of Scripture [the Bible]. It is useful for teaching us what is true. It is useful for correcting our mistakes.

It is useful for making our lives whole again. It is useful for training us to do what is right. By using Scripture, a man of God can be completely prepared to do every good thing' (2 Timothy 3:16, 17, NIV).”—Adapted from Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, pages 8, 9.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- ❶ How much trust can we place in the opinions and thoughts about God that we form on our own without the Bible's help to guide us? Is there any room at all for an understanding of God from other books and places? If so, what are they? And how can we be sure that the information they give us is correct?
- ❷ Why does any worldly opinion that denies God mean death for us?
- ❸ Science and technology have, in many ways, been a great blessing to people. In some ways, too, science has helped us to better understand the power of God. (For example, look at what it has shown us about how deep a mystery life is!) But what are the limits to what science can teach us about God? When, too, can science work against a true understanding of God?
- ❹ Why is the doctrine of a Three-in-One God (no matter how difficult to understand) so important to us as Seventh-day Adventists? Think what it would mean, for example, if Christ were not fully God.