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Rebellion and Redemption

Somehow, and we don't know exactly why, sin arose in God's perfect creation, and that sin became the starting point for what we understand as the great controversy. One thing, though, we do know, and very well too: as human beings, we are caught in the middle of this controversy. It's a battle that none of us escape.

It wasn't, though, supposed to be that way, not in the beginning. Creation was "very good" and "blessed" by God. Although the Lord was recognized as the Sustainer of this perfect creation, He gave Adam and Eve the responsibility of taking care of what He had made for them. The great controversy came to earth when Satan deceived Adam and Eve with flattery and deception, diverting their allegiance from God to himself. Had they remained faithful to what God had told them, had they obeyed His simple commands, the world as we know it, with all its miseries, trials, and suffering, never would have arisen.

"Satan's efforts to misrepresent the character of God, to cause men to cherish a false conception of the Creator, and thus to regard Him with fear and hate rather than with love; his endeavors to set aside the divine law, leading the people to think themselves free from its requirements; and his persecution of those who dare to resist his deceptions, have been steadfastly pursued in all ages. They may be traced in the history of patriarchs, prophets, and apostles, of martyrs and reformers."—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, pp. 12, 13.

In answer to this tragedy, God, who had foreseen all this happening "before the

foundation of the world” (*Eph. 1:4*), put in place His rescue plan. It’s what we know as the plan of Redemption. This Redemption is prefigured in the account of God meeting with Abram in Genesis 15, when He passed between the animal pieces. The ancient ceremony was an assurance to Abram; and thus, to all of us that God is personally involved in providing a solution to the problem caused by sin.

Yes, God has pledged to bear in Himself the full responsibility for all human rebellion and to suffer the consequences for every evil we have committed. Only in this way could God restore His relationship with the human race, relationships between humans, and humanity’s relationship with the rest of creation.

It is in this overarching context that we see Satan’s insatiable passion to deface creation and to obliterate God’s people. His strategies are revealed in the Bible, where good and evil are played out between siblings, in families, and in besieged nations. It is seen in times of oppression, famine, slavery and exile, in frustrated attempts to rebuild after disaster, in divided loyalties, and in the enticement of idolatrous practices.

Throughout Scripture, God is constantly defeating Satan’s purposes. Jesus’ coming as Immanuel, “God with us,” recovered the territory stolen from Adam and Eve. Jesus succeeded where Adam failed. In His ministry, Jesus showed His authority over creation and the forces of evil. Just before His return to heaven, Jesus recommissioned His followers and at Pentecost empowered them to extend the borders of His heavenly kingdom.

Jesus has won the decisive victory at the cross. The challenge has always been where we place our loyalties, on the side that has won or on the side that has lost. Though the choice should be easy and obvious, because the controversy still rages and the deceptions are ever-present, the battle for our hearts and minds continues. Our hope and prayer, then, is that this quarter’s lessons will reveal some of these deceptions and thus help us not just to choose Christ but to remain with Him because, as He has promised, “He who endures to the end shall be saved” (*Matt. 24:13, NKJV*).

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How to Use This Teachers Edition

Get Motivated to Explore, Apply, and Create

We hope that this format of the Teachers Edition will encourage adult Sabbath School class members to do just that—explore, apply, and create. Each weekly teachers lesson takes your class through the following learning process, based on the Natural Learning Cycle:

1. Why is this lesson important to me? (Motivate);
2. What do I need to know from God’s Word? (Explore);
3. How can I practice what I’ve learned from God’s Word? (Apply); and
4. What can I do with what I’ve learned from God’s Word? (Create).

And for teachers who haven’t had time to prepare during the week for class, there is a one-page outline of easy-to-digest material in “The Lesson in Brief” section.

Here’s a closer look at the four steps of the Natural Learning Cycle and suggestions for how you, the teacher, can approach each one:

Step 1—Motivate: Link the learners’ experiences to the central concept of the lesson to show why the lesson is relevant to their lives. Help them answer the question, Why is this week’s lesson important to me?

Step 2—Explore: Present learners with the biblical information they need to understand the central concept of the lesson. (Such information could include facts about the people; the setting; cultural, historical, and/or geographical details; the plot or what’s happening; and conflicts or tension of the texts you are studying.) Help learners answer the question, What do I need to know from God’s Word?

Step 3—Apply: Provide learners with opportunities to practice the information given in Step 2. This is a crucial step; information alone is not enough to help a person grow in Christ. Assist the learners in answering the question, How can I apply to my life what I’ve learned?

Step 4—Create: Finally, encourage learners to be “doers of the word, and not hearers only” (*James 1:22*). Invite them to make a life response to the lesson. This step provides individuals and groups with opportunities for creative self-expression and exploration. All such activities should help learners answer the question, With God’s help, what can I do with what I’ve learned from this week’s lesson?

When teachers use material from each of these four steps, they will appeal to most every student in their class: those who enjoy talking about what’s happening in their lives, those who want more information about the texts being studied, those who want to know how it all fits in with real life, and those who want to get out and apply what they’ve learned.