

**JESUS IS  
THE CENTER  
OF MY STORY**



by Jeremy Garlock, MA

This book is dedicated to all the hard working pastors and lay members who pray and work to win souls for Jesus Christ. I believe in you so much that I want this to be made available to you free of charge. Use the contents of this book in any way that you need, in part or in its entirety. As long as you are staying true to the mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church you have my permission to copy, print, and distribute this material.

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# A MESSAGE FOR THE TEACHER

If you were a school teacher and you taught math, or history, or language or any other subject the way Bible studies are normally taught, there is a good chance you would not be teaching very long.

That is a bold statement, but it is, I believe a true one. As an educational leader I can guarantee you that teachers in my schools who teach any subject the way Bible studies are traditionally given receive training on how to teach better, and will be let go if they don't improve. Education is too important to "mess with." There is no room for anything other than best practices that take into account how individuals learn and how they retain information. Yet learning styles, teaching strategies, and brain research are rarely, if ever taken into account when teaching the most important topics ever entrusted to humans; the eternal truths of God's Word.

For example, open any math text book and you will see review activities in every lesson. People need to take information and review it consistently until it is deeply ingrained in their longterm memory. But how do we do in consistently reviewing what our Bible students have already learned? Or is going over it once or twice really enough?

Brain research has taught us that learning is like a closet. Before you can hang up your clothes you must have a bar on which to hang them. Do you give your Bible students just the clothes hangers of salvation, the nature of man, the trinity, and other truths first and expect them to organize their closet without a bar? Or do you provide the bar? What does the bar look like?

Did you know that most young people today do not buy into the idea of a universal and eternal truth? Then how do we teach them the truth? Most young people love stories, and if they can find their place in a story or grand theme, then the elements of that theme become truth to them.

This Bible study seeks to take these teaching ideals and incorporate them into the study of God's Word. As you go through this study with your students remember to emphasize the story of the Great Controversy, which is simply the grand struggle between Jesus and Satan. This story serves as our bar upon which all other truths may hang. It is the story in which every person may find their place. It is the story in which Jesus shines as our protagonist and center of all our hopes. With regular reviews of past learning, with simple studies that can meet even students with difficult learning needs, it is my prayer that your students will grow to accept and love Jesus, and find their place in His story.

- Jeremy Garlock

# HOW TO USE THIS STUDY

This study is different from other studies in that it is not designed to simply be a fill-in-the-blank study guide. Rather it is meant to be a spring board for in depth discussion. And this should be obvious when you see how bare each lesson appears at first glance. Much more goes into this study than what is on the written page.

Young people today no longer desire to have a dozen proof texts for each truth they learn. They simply desire to have a person they can trust and grow close to lead them as they find their place in a grand theme. This study guide seeks to serve that purpose. Each lesson has a few simple texts to show the truths contained in a grand theme. As the leader it is your job to not only walk them through those verses, but to also be prepared to engage the student in the process. Turn each lesson into a conversation. Have examples from your own life to share. Review the material with them with each new lesson in a way that helps them grab the story. The appendix at the end of this guide will help you if you need some ideas on how to do this.

At the beginning of each lesson - starting with lesson 2 - there is a review of past lessons. Don't just breeze through these reviews. In these reviews you have opportunity to do more than just quickly answer some questions. You can repeatedly make sure the student grasps the theme of the Great Controversy, that they see where Jesus is in the center of the story, and where their place in Jesus' story is. When I give these studies I am writing all over the timeline, drawing arrows, making funny little stick figures of my students in the stories, and finding other methods to draw them in.

Like the lessons the reviews are very brief because brain research shows us that humans learn best when given small pieces at a time. However, don't let a set of short questions and reviews fool you into thinking that there is not much there. The brain processes a lot when given small amounts of material, and the Holy Spirit can use that processing to connect with students. As you discuss and deepen the lesson, do just that. Go deep, not wide. Don't go beyond the scope of the lesson (unless the student takes you there in their processing), but make the small pieces of information meaningful, relevant, and interesting.

During the main part of the lesson resist the urge to just read the texts and come up with a simple answer. Bring object lessons. Share your stories. Have the students use their imaginations to find where their place in the story is. I have left blank spaces after questions and it is ok to write answers there. However, I did not put in traditional answer blanks (as in lines) as I did not want students to feel obligated that they must write answers. Sometimes spoken answers and the paths they take us down are more valuable than what is written.

In other words, let the story be real, because then Jesus is real. And when Jesus is real, then His truths sink in, and young people delight in finding their place in the story of salvation.

## **BAPTISM**



It is often the case that people start these studies because someone has asked them if they want to get baptized. But what is baptism? What does it mean? Why would one want to get baptized? Before you can really get started in these studies you need to know what baptism is all about.

Different religions baptize people at different times. Some teach that baptism happens when a person is a baby, others teach that baptism should happen when a person is an adult. John the Baptist was called that because he baptized so many people. What age group was he baptizing, babies, or people old enough to make a decision? Matthew 3:5-6

If a person gets baptized when they are old enough to make a decision there must be a specific decision they are making. What decision leads to baptism? Acts 16:30-33

There are two different methods of baptism that churches use. One sprinkles water on a person and the other submerges them under water. Only one way is actually mentioned in the Bible. How does a person get baptized? Matthew 3:16

What does baptism symbolize? See Romans 6:3-4 and Acts 22:16.

What other ceremony has God given us that unifies two lives?

When two people get married it is highly recommended that they go through something called premarital counseling. This counseling serves two purposes. First, it helps the couple get to know each other better to see if they really want to be together forever. Secondly it helps them know what the others' family is like before joining it.

Baptismal studies are like that. Before making the decision to unify our lives with Jesus forever we study to learn more about what He is like and what His family, the church, is like. This helps us make an intelligent decision.

Do you want to unify your life with Jesus Christ in baptism?

Yes                      No

Will you study first to find out what Jesus and His family here on earth are like?

Yes                      No

## THE BIBLE

### Review - Baptism:

How is a person baptized – with sprinkling or submersion?

What does baptism symbolize?

What decision must be made first before baptism can take place?



During the course of these studies we will be learning about God as our future “husband,” as well as Savior and Lord. There are many different ideas about God in the world today, most of them disagreeing with each other. How can we know what is true and what is not? In this study we will look at what the Bible says about itself so we can see if it is God's intended authority about Himself.

Read 2 Peter 1:21. How did we get the Bible?

Read 2 Timothy 3:16-17. What are some of the things the Bible does for us?

Read 1 Corinthians 10:11. Who was the Bible written for?

Read Psalm 119:105. What should the Bible be like for us?

Read John 5:39. Who does the entire Bible teach us about?

Do you accept the Bible as God's Word? (circle one)

Yes      No

Will you read the Bible every day? (circle one)

Yes      No

## OUR BEST FRIEND: HE LOVES YOU

### Review - Baptism:

How is a person baptized – with sprinkling or submersion?

What does baptism symbolize?

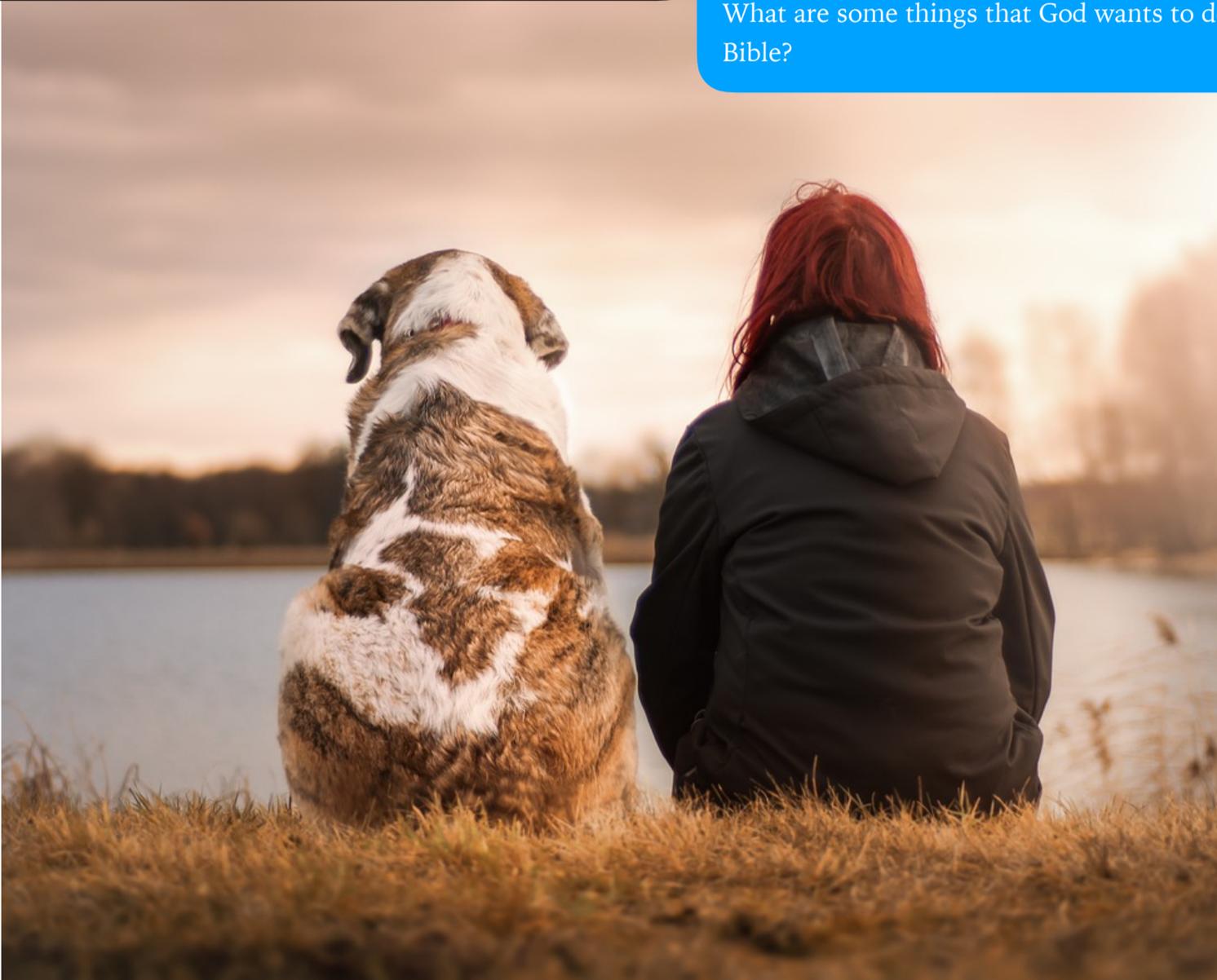
What decision must be made first before baptism can take place?

### Review - The Bible:

Who helped the human authors of the Bible know what to write?

Who does the Bible tell us about?

What are some things that God wants to do for us through the Bible?



There are different opinions of God. Some say He is like a judge or police officer that is just waiting to catch you as you mess up. Others think He is just an absent God; He created everything and let it loose while He watches from the other side of the universe.

You are studying to “marry” God. The way that you see Him is extremely important because no relationship can succeed unless both parties truly try to understand the other.

What is God's number one character trait? 1 John 4:8

Who does God love? John 3:16

Does this mean that God even loves those that don't love Him? Romans 5:8, 10

Can anything make God stop loving us? Romans 8:38, 39

Jesus shows His great love for us in many ways. What is the biggest way that He showed His love for us? 1 John 4:9-10

Jesus continues to show His love for us today in many ways. In Matthew 6:25-32 we see that Jesus said we don't need to worry about the hardships of this life because God knows about our troubles and, as a loving Creator/Father, He wants to supply our needs. What word pictures does He give to make this point, and what does that mean to you?

Do you accept that God loves you, no matter what your life may have been like?

Yes      No

Do you accept that love into your life, knowing that Jesus will begin to change you with that love?      Yes      No

# THE GREAT CONTROVERSY: THE BIG PICTURE

## Review - Baptism:

How is a person baptized – with sprinkling or submersion?

What does baptism symbolize?

What decision must be made first before baptism can take place?

## Review - The Bible:

Who helped the human authors of the Bible know what to write?

Who does the Bible tell us about?

What are some things that God wants to do for us through the Bible?

## Review - God's Love:

When did God start loving you?

What can make God stop loving you?

What is the greatest way God showed His love for us?



Now that we've gotten to know our spiritual "fiance" Jesus Christ, it is time to get to know the family. The church is God's family. When we get to know a family we are marrying into we get to know who they are, in part, by getting to know what they think and what they believe. The next several lessons will begin the process of getting to know God's family by learning what they believe.

Most families have a history which serves as a storyline for their family's existence. Some may have immigrated to America from Europe in the 1700's, while others were here before the white men came. Some were brought as slaves and others came as explorers. Some settled in villages, while others blazed trails into the western half of the country. Each family's story is different, but each story shapes the way the family relates to each other and to the world around them.

The story of God's family is called the Great Controversy, and it began a very long time ago before there was ever life on this planet.

Read Ezekiel 28:11-17. This is a symbolic section of the Bible that talk's about God's ancient enemy.

What kind of a creature was he?

What was his character like?

Where were some places where he was known to be? What did God have to do to him?

What happened in his heart that caused this?

Read Isaiah 14:12-15. This is another symbolic passage about God's enemy.

What name does God's Word give His enemy here?

What did His enemy want to do?

Think about this. What is so bad about this? What kind of a "no-win" situation did this put God into?

Imagine that you were born into a loving family. Both your mom and dad were perfect in everything they did for you. In everything they were both completely trustworthy, totally loving, and faithful. Then, one day, one of them turns to you and says, "I really love you, but your other parent doesn't. Follow me, not them!" Then the other parent turns to you

and says, “No, I love you more! They don't love you at all. Follow me!” What would you do? Who would you follow?

This is the situation that the angels in heaven found themselves when Satan rebelled. Up until this time both God and Satan (first called Lucifer) were perfect in the eyes of the universe. Lucifer was probably the first created being, so everyone had known him like a parent. There was no way for God to just start over or forcefully handle the situation, just like the truly good parent in our story would have no way to forcefully yet correctly handle that situation. The only way to solve this dilemma (the beginning of the story) is to see what happens at the end of the story.

Read Revelation 12:9,17. What bad things did Satan do in these verses that showed who the true bad guy and true good guy was?

Read John 3:16. What good thing did Jesus do to show who the true bad guy and true good guy was?

In the end, once the “no-win” dilemma is solved, what will God do? Revelation 20:10,14,15 and Revelation 21:4.

The bookends of the story are in place. What comes in the following lessons will fill in the rest of the story.

# THE MORAL LAW

## Review - Baptism:

How is a person baptized – with sprinkling or submersion?

What does baptism symbolize?

What decision must be made first before baptism can take place?

## Review - The Bible:

Who helped the human authors of the Bible know what to write?

Who does the Bible tell us about?

What are some things that God wants to do for us through the Bible?

## Review - God's Love:

When did God start loving you?

What can make God stop loving you?

What is the greatest way God showed His love for us?

## Review - The Great Controversy - Bookends:

Describe what Lucifer (Satan) was like when he was created.

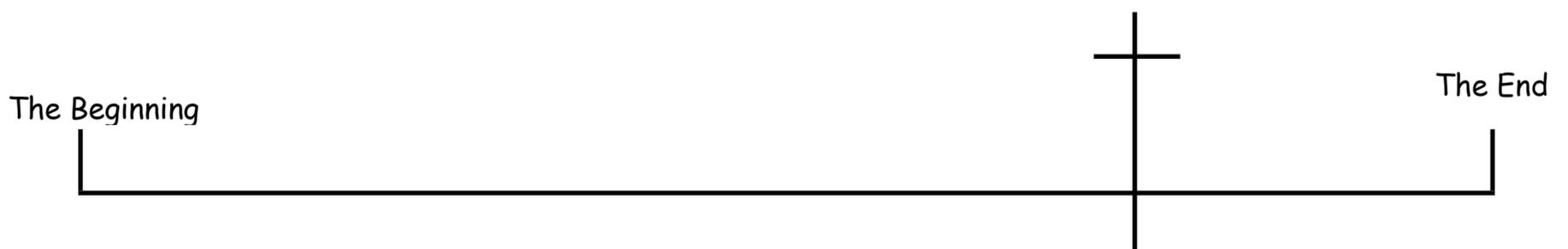
What happened in his heart that changed his perfect state?

What did he do to get kicked out of heaven?

Why was this so confusing for the angels?

How will this controversy end?

On the time line below fill in the “bookends” with the information above.



# GOD

- 1: Do not worship any other gods
- 2: Do not make any idols
- 3: Do not misuse the name of God
- 4: Keep the Sabbath holy

# MAN

- 5: Honour your father & mother
- 6: Do not murder
- 7: Do not commit adultery
- 8: Do not steal
- 9: Do not lie
- 10: Do not covet

The whole controversy between Christ and Satan centered around Satan's desire to sit in God's throne. He wanted to rule the universe, and it was because there was pride in his heart. What does that mean? It means that he thought he could do things better than God! He believed that his ways were better than God's ways.

Going against God's ways is sin. The Bible gives a definition for sin in 1 John 3:4. Read it, ponder it, and complete the equation below.

*Sin = \_\_\_\_\_, and going against God's way = \_\_\_\_\_, therefore the \_\_\_\_\_ = God's way.*

The Law of God is broken up into three basic categories: The Moral Law, the Ceremonial Law, and the Health Laws (or the Laws running the universe). This scripture is dealing with the Moral Law, otherwise known as the Ten Commandments.

The Ten Commandments are called the Moral Law because they tell us what God's moral character is like. In other words, the Law tells us what God is like. It is a list of "do not's" for the most part, but in the "do not's" we can see what God is like. For example, He says "do not murder" because He is the source of life, not death.

Read the Moral Law in Exodus 20:3-17. What are some things that you learn about what God is like?

This is why sin is so bad. At the root of it is turning away from what God is like. That is turning away from the source of life, the source of truth, the source of goodness.

Do you understand that the 10 Commandments help us to see what God is like?

Yes      No

Do you understand that sin is simply not acting like God?

Yes      No

# THE FALL: THE STORY CONTINUES

## Review - Baptism:

How is a person baptized – with sprinkling or submersion?

What does baptism symbolize?

What decision must be made first before baptism can take place?

## Review - The Bible:

Who helped the human authors of the Bible know what to write?

Who does the Bible tell us about?

What are some things that God wants to do for us through the Bible?

## Review - God's Love:

When did God start loving you?

What can make God stop loving you?

What is the greatest way God showed His love for us?

## Review - The Great Controversy - Bookends:

Describe what Lucifer (Satan) was like when he was created.

What happened in his heart that changed his perfect state?

What did he do to get kicked out of heaven?

Why was this so confusing for the angels?

How will this controversy end?

On the time line below fill in the “bookends” with the information above.

## Review - The Law:

What does the Moral Law (Ten Commandments) show us?

What is sin?





After Satan sinned, the story did not end there. He was not alone in his rebellion. Read Revelation 12:4 -9. Who else rebelled with Satan?

At this time the earth was “formless and empty.” (Genesis 1:2) God, being the Creator and Source of Life, began to change this world from the desolate abyss that it was into a perfect planet, teeming with life and pronounced “good” by God. This took 6 literal days, and is written down in Genesis chapters 1 - 2.

After God created the first man, Adam, He gave him very specific instructions about one matter. What was it? Read Genesis 2:16-17.

Back to our last lesson, what would be so wrong about knowing both good AND evil?

In Genesis chapter 3 we see Satan, the dragon of Revelation, is in the form of a snake in Eden. Read the conversation he has with Eve in Genesis 3:1-5. What is the foundation for Satan's arguments, and where have we heard it before?

In the verses that followed Eve ate the fruit and gave some to Adam, both disobeying God and choosing a way that is against God's character. This is sin. In so doing they chose to cut themselves off from the source of life (that is why they would die), they chose for themselves a character that is different from God's (having evil, or sin in it), and they chose to make Satan their leader (they were following him, after all).

Think of the world around you. Do you think that those choices they made have effected us even until today? Why or why not?

In this God did not just stand idly by. Read Genesis 3:8-24. Answer the following questions:

Who went searching for whom?

What did God promise in Gen. 3:15?

What did God use to clothe Adam and Eve, and what do you think was significant about that?

Do you believe that God created this world?

Yes

No

Do you believe that this world is filled with human beings that were created by God?

Yes                      No

Do you believe that, while God gave them everything they could want, Adam and Eve chose to have a different character than God's and a different leader than God?

Yes                      No

Do you believe that that character lives on in all people today?

Yes                      No

Do accept God's promise to one day make all things right again?

Yes                      No

# THE CROSS

## Review - The Fall

Why was eating the forbidden fruit so bad?

What were the results of that choice?

What happened to the image of God in us as a result?

What did God promise He would do for us?

On the time line write a quick summary of the above info above "The Fall."

## Review - The Bible:

Who helped the human authors of the Bible know what to write?

Who does the Bible tell us about?

What are some things that God wants to do for us through the Bible?

## Review - God's Love:

When did God start loving you?

What can make God stop loving you?

What is the greatest way God showed His love for us?

## Review - The Great Controversy - Bookends:

Describe what Lucifer (Satan) was like when he was created.

What happened in his heart that changed his perfect state?

What did he do to get kicked out of heaven?

Why was this so confusing for the angels?

How will this controversy end?

On the time line below fill in the "bookends" with the information above.

## Review - The Law:

What does the Moral Law (Ten Commandments) show us?

What is sin?





Now the dilemma that the angels in heaven faced was the same dilemma the people on Earth were to face: What way is really the right way. This dilemma is a little different in the fact that we can't see the spiritual conflict like the angels could. Nonetheless, the character of God has been confused ever since.

Into this mess Jesus arrived on the Earth. Who was He and what was His purpose? Read John 1:18.

Some people try to say that Jesus was only a man, only God, or half and half. What does the scripture say about this? Read Colossians 2:9 and 1 Timothy 2:5.

By looking at Jesus the world can see clearly what God is truly like. His life showed that God is love (1 John 4:8) but so did His death on the cross. See Romans 5:8.

Aside from giving us a true picture of God's character, what else did Jesus' death on the cross do? Read John 3:16; 1 John 2:2.

Read Revelation 12:10-11. Jesus' death on the cross has results for the people on this Earth, for those in "the heavens," for God, and for Satan and his angels. What were they?

For us?

For "the heavens"?

For God?

For Satan?

When Jesus lived such a perfect, loving life, and died for us - His enemies - so willingly, it showed the universe beyond a shadow of a doubt what God's character is truly like. At the same time Satan was doing everything possible to stop Jesus, and even encouraged those who put Him to death. His character was also truly shown. As a result the confusion as to who was truly right and who was truly wrong and whose way was best was done away with.

What parallels do you see between the sacrifice of Jesus and the promise made to Adam and Eve in Genesis 3:15-21?

Do you accept Jesus as the perfect reflection of God's character?

Yes

No

Do you accept that Jesus is both fully man and fully God, making a bridge between us?

Yes

No

Do you believe that Jesus' death on the cross can and does restore us back to the way God intended us to be, giving us eternal life, and fulfilling the promise He made to Adam and Eve?

Yes

No

Do you believe that His sacrifice for us sealed the case against Satan?

Yes

No

# GOOD NEWS/BAD NEWS

## Review - The Fall

Why was eating the forbidden fruit so bad?

What were the results of that choice?

What happened to the image of God in us as a result?

What did God promise He would do for us?

On the time line write a quick summary of the above info above "The Fall."

## Review - The Cross:

How did Christ's sacrifice on the cross seal Satan's doom?

Who is Jesus and what was His mission?

How does His sacrifice on the cross fulfill God's promises to Adam + Eve?

Write a summary of this info above the cross.

## Review - God's Love:

When did God start loving you?

What can make God stop loving you?

What is the greatest way God showed His love for us?

## Review - The Great Controversy - Bookends:

Describe what Lucifer (Satan) was like when he was created.

What happened in his heart that changed his perfect state?

What did he do to get kicked out of heaven?

Why was this so confusing for the angels?

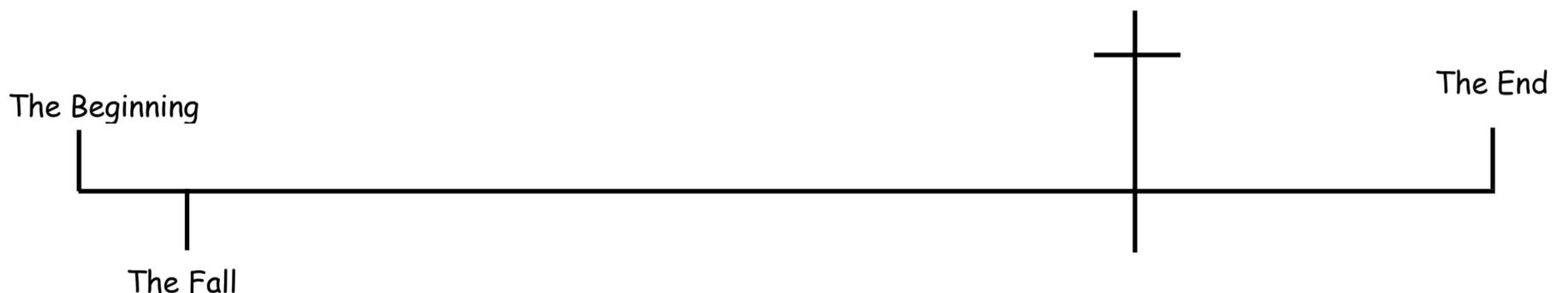
How will this controversy end?

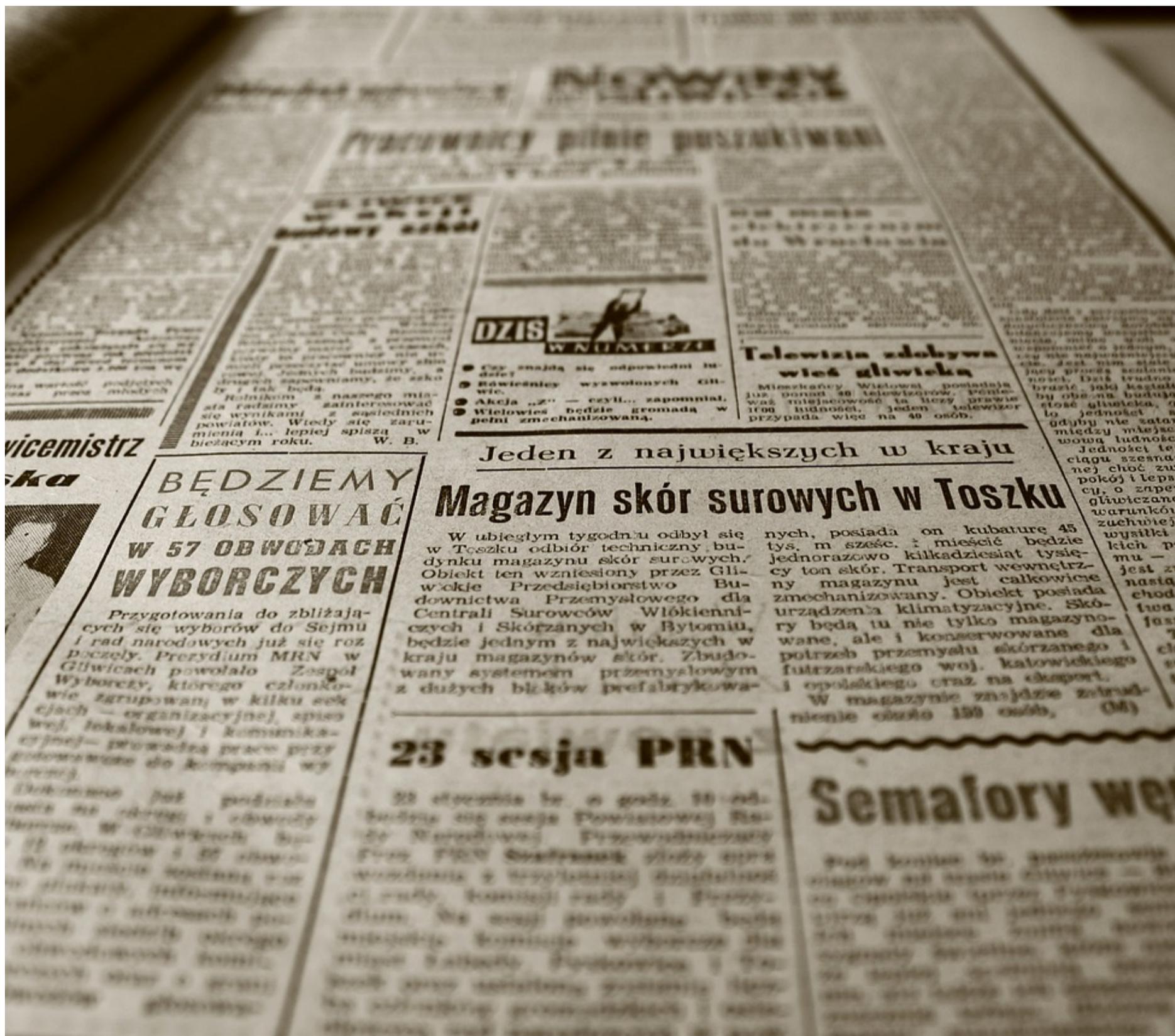
On the time line below fill in the "bookends" with the information above.

## Review - The Law:

What does the Moral Law (Ten Commandments) show us?

What is sin?





This is the part of the story where we come in. We are now living in a world that has seen the terrible evils of turning away from God and the great goodness of God in Jesus Christ. The rest of the universe, outside of planet Earth, has seen clearly the goodness of God and the evil of Satan and have decided to whole heartedly follow God, casting Satan permanently out of heaven. However, on this planet there are still those that think they can be on the fence and neither follow God, nor fall into the evils of life, and yet stand on their own. What does the Bible say about this?

Bad News

Read Romans 3:23. According to this, who has been perfect all by themselves?

Read Romans 6:23. Since everyone has sinned, what do we get for it?

Good News

Look at Romans 6:23 again. It starts with bad news, but gives a piece of good news at the end. What is it?

Read 1 John 1:9. How do we get this free gift?

Read John 3:16. How and why does God give this gift?

God is perfect, and the Father ruled the universe peacefully. When Lucifer rebelled he confused the issues terribly to deceive as many as possible to follow him. Jesus, who is God the Son, came to bring clarity to the issues, especially the issue of God's character. Now the Holy Spirit (the last member of the Trinity) "convicts the world" (John 14:26; John 16:7-9) of the truth, so that we may make a decision to follow God.

Do you feel that the Holy Spirit has spoken to your heart, showing you your need for Jesus to save you?

Yes      No

Would you like to accept this free gift from God and have eternal life through Jesus Christ?

Yes      No

# LIVING FOREVER

## Review - The Fall

Why was eating the forbidden fruit so bad?

What were the results of that choice?

What happened to the image of God in us as a result?

What did God promise He would do for us?

On the time line write a quick summary of the above info above "The Fall."

## Review - The Cross:

How did Christ's sacrifice on the cross seal Satan's doom?

Who is Jesus and what was His mission?

How does His sacrifice on the cross fulfill God's promises to Adam + Eve?

Write a summary of this info above the cross.

## Review - Good News, Bad News:

Who has sinned?

What are the wages of sin?

What is the good news?

What roles does each member of the Trinity play in all this?

## Review - The Great Controversy - Bookends:

Describe what Lucifer (Satan) was like when he was created.

What happened in his heart that changed his perfect state?

What did he do to get kicked out of heaven?

Why was this so confusing for the angels?

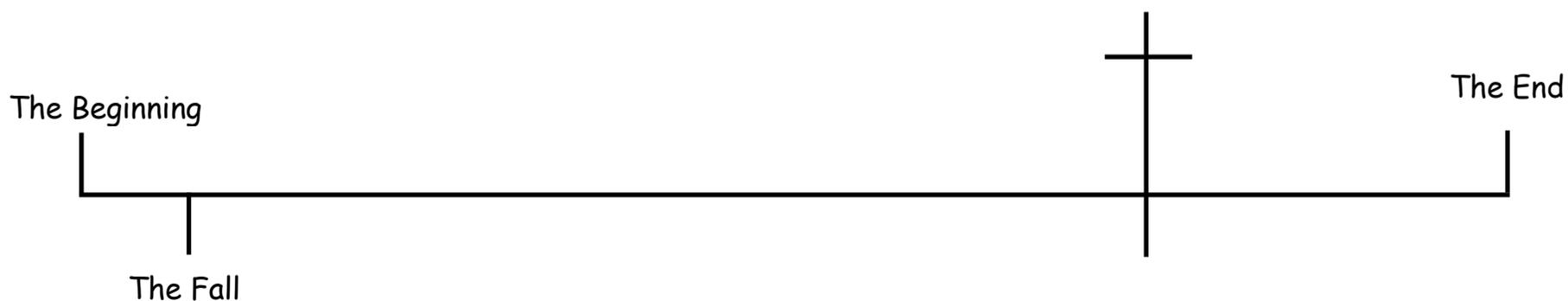
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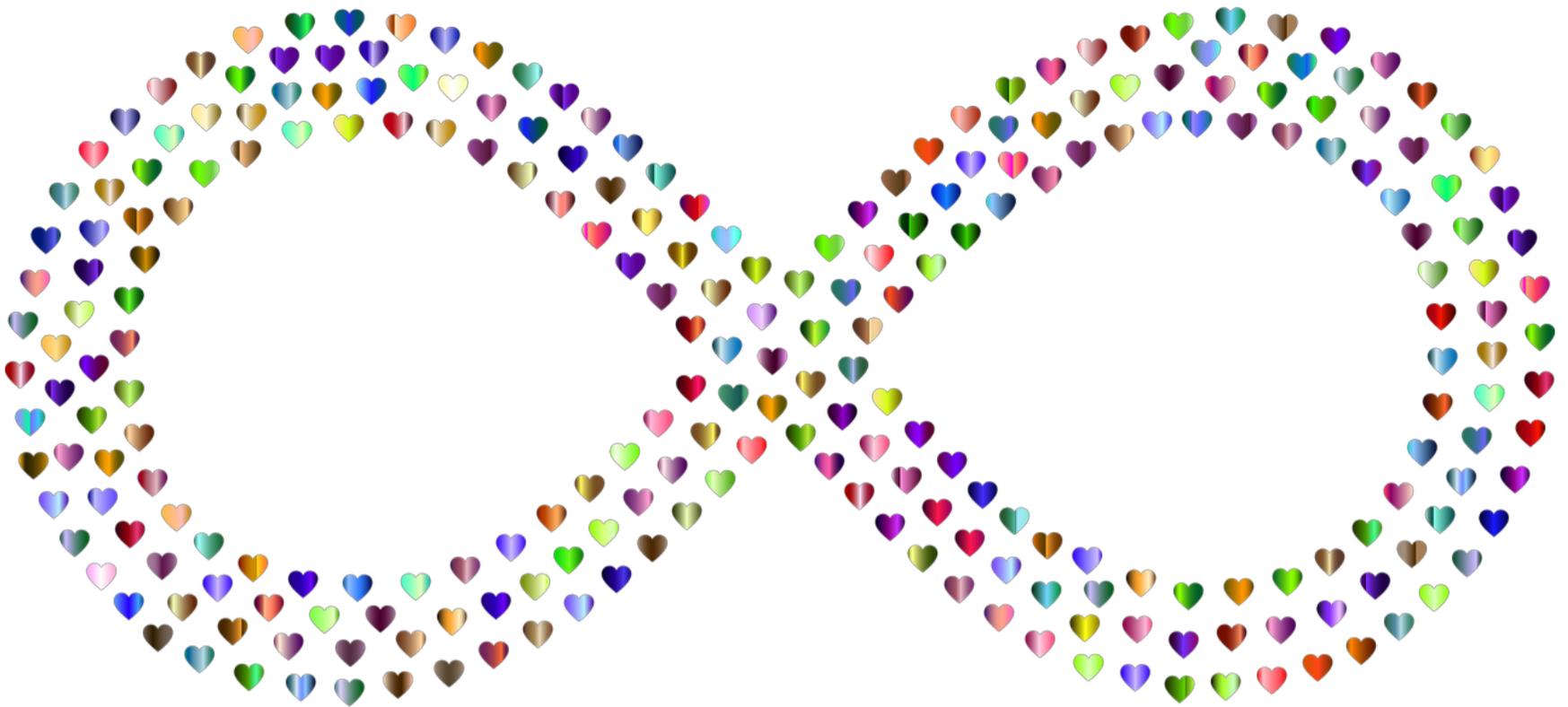
On the time line below fill in the "bookends" with the information above.

## Review - The Law:

What does the Moral Law (Ten Commandments) show us?

What is sin?





When God created Adam and Eve death had not yet been introduced to Earth. That means the God intended for Adam and Eve to live forever. That desire continues in each of us, because in God's original plan for you and me we were to live forever. Sin has disrupted that plan.

Satan knows that we have this desire to live forever, and therefore, designed a lie to help satisfy that desire on his terms. Read that lie in Genesis 3:4. How do we see the fulfillment of that lie in other religions, in spiritualism, and in the world at large?

What Satan doesn't tell you is that, if his lie were true, it would lead to more suffering. In most of the ways talked about above either a person lives forever with their current character/ailments (hardly constituting a joyful existence), or they continue to live in seemingly perfect state, but have to watch their loved ones here on Earth suffer (hardly constituting a paradise).

God's truth is much more merciful. Read the following verses and then write a description of what it is like to be dead: Ecclesiastes 9:5-6; Psalm 115:17; John 11:11-14. Why is this merciful?

At some point, if we are to truly live forever, we will need to be “woken up” from our sleep-like state of death. Read 1 Thessalonians 4:15-16. Who wakes us up?

Read the following passages and write down some things Jesus will do for us when we are “woken up” that will make heaven great: 1 Corinthians 5:50-55; Revelation 21:4.

Do you want to live forever according to God's plan?

Yes      No

Do you accept that when you die you will be in a sleep-like state, not knowing anything?

Yes      No

Do you accept that one day Jesus will wake up the dead that believed in Him and will take them to live forever with Him in perfect bodies in a perfect heaven?

Yes      No

### Further Study

Use Genesis 2:7 to complete this equation.

\_\_\_\_\_ + \_\_\_\_\_ = \_\_\_\_\_

Compare that with Ecclesiastes 12:7. What do you notice?

Name some things in everyday life that can help you remember that idea.

# JESUS RETURN: OUR WAKEUP CALL

## Review - The Fall

Why was eating the forbidden fruit so bad?

What were the results of that choice?

What happened to the image of God in us as a result?

What did God promise He would do for us?

On the time line write a quick summary of the above info above "The Fall."

## Review - The Cross:

How did Christ's sacrifice on the cross seal Satan's doom?

Who is Jesus and what was His mission?

How does His sacrifice on the cross fulfill God's promises to Adam + Eve?

Write a summary of this info above the cross.

## Review - Good News, Bad News:

Who has sinned?

What are the wages of sin?

What is the good news?

What roles does each member of the Trinity play in all this?

## Review - The Great Controversy - Bookends:

Describe what Lucifer (Satan) was like when he was created.

What happened in his heart that changed his perfect state?

What did he do to get kicked out of heaven?

Why was this so confusing for the angels?

How will this controversy end?

On the time line below fill in the "bookends" with the information above.

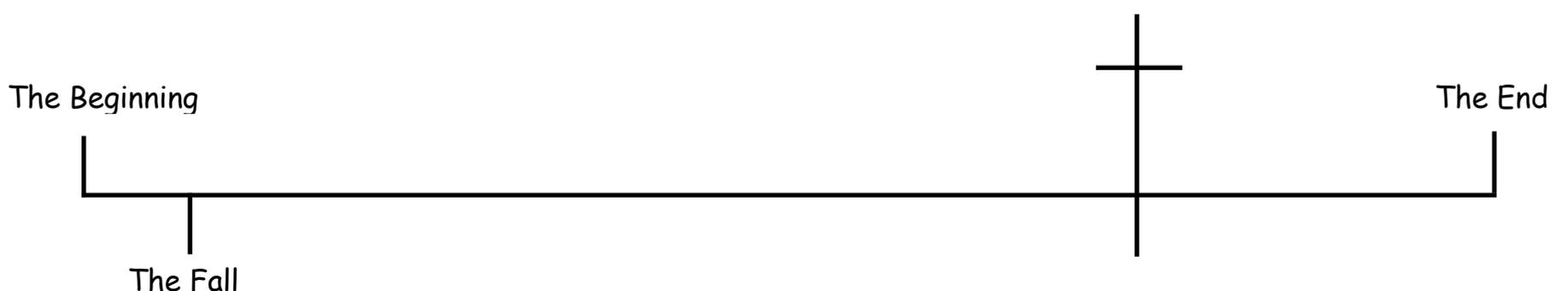
## Review - Living Forever:

What lie does Satan tell us about living forever? How do we see this lie around us?

What is the truth about what happens when we die?

When do we gain perfect bodies and physical eternal life in paradise?

Do you remember the equation?





Since we know that people who are “sleeping” in death will wake up when Jesus returns, then we have two very logical questions we could ask. When will He come back? What will it be like when He comes back?

First off, it is important to notice that Jesus will come back. In John 14:3 He promised that if He were to go that He would come back to take us with Him. Most Christians don't have an issue with the idea of Him coming back, they just have different points of view about what it will be like when He comes back.

Opinion 1: The Secret Rapture: In this idea Jesus will come back after a thousand years of peace on this Earth. He will come back secretly to only take those who believe in Him. No one will see or hear Him coming, but suddenly people will disappear, leaving chaos and confusion.

Opinion 2: A Public Appearing: In this idea Jesus will come back in a very loud and public way. Those who love Him go to heaven, but even those who don't love Him will see Him coming, and will be terrified at the prospect. In their sin they will not be able to stand in His presence and will die.

Let's look at the Bible to see what it says about how Jesus will come back.

Read Acts 1:10-11. What does this tell us about the way in which Jesus will come back?

Read 1 Thessalonians 4:15-18. Some say that when Jesus comes back it will be secretly. How does this passage fit in with that idea?

Read Matthew 25:31. Who will come with Jesus to get us?

Read Revelation 1:7. Who will see Jesus coming back?

Read Luke 17:26-37. What will happen to those who don't love Him?

When will Jesus come back?

Again, there are two different opinions. The first one says that Jesus will come back after a thousand years of peace on the Earth. The other opinion says this is not possible because of the sinful nature of men. Instead, the end will only come after the whole Great Controversy is over. That means that everyone has to come to a decision about God's character and who they will follow.

Again, let's see what the Bible says about this. Read Matthew 24:14. When will Jesus come back?

Do you believe that Jesus will come back for those who love Him?

Yes      No

Do you believe that Jesus will come back in a literal, physical way that will be seen by everyone?

Yes      No

Do you believe that Jesus will come back only after everyone has a chance to learn the truth about Him?

Yes      No

Do you want to be among those who go to heaven with Jesus?

Yes      No

# THE MILLENNIUM

## Review - The Fall

Why was eating the forbidden fruit so bad?

What were the results of that choice?

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How did Christ's sacrifice on the cross seal Satan's doom?

Who is Jesus and what was His mission?

How does His sacrifice on the cross fulfill God's promises to Adam + Eve?

Write a summary of this info above the cross.

## Review - Jesus' Return:

When will Jesus come back?

Who will see Jesus come back?

What will happen to those who love Him when He comes back?

What will happen to those who don't love Him when He comes back?

Summarize this information in the appropriate place on the time line above.

## Review - The Great Controversy - Bookends:

Describe what Lucifer (Satan) was like when he was created.

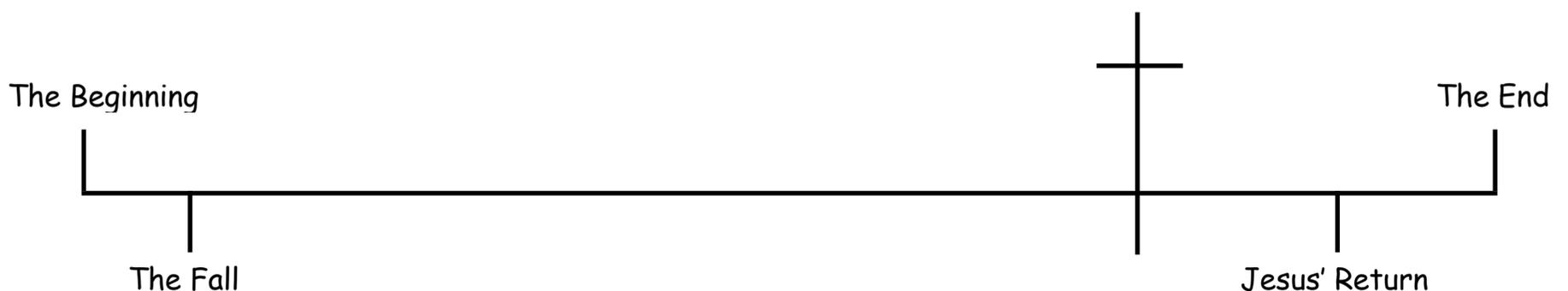
What happened in his heart that changed his perfect state?

What did he do to get kicked out of heaven?

Why was this so confusing for the angels?

How will this controversy end?

On the time line below fill in the "bookends" with the information above.





In our last study we saw that when Jesus comes He will take all the people who have loved Him to heaven while those that didn't love Him die here on earth. In all of this we talked about what happened to humans. What about evil angels? We still have not yet seen what happens to Satan and his angels. They started this whole thing. What happens to them?

In Revelation 19:11-19 we read about the return of Jesus. There is a lot of symbolism there, and it can be very confusing. For our purpose today we just need to recognize that this section is about Jesus coming back. It is immediately followed by Revelation 20, which talks about what happens to Satan. Read Revelation 20:1-3 with the following symbolism in mind:

Abyss: The word used for abyss is related to the word used in Genesis 1:2 that said the world was “formless and empty.”

Bound: To be kept from doing what you want to do, largely because you are stuck in one place.

*What you think this passage means.*

For a thousand years Satan and his angels will be stuck on this empty planet. They will not be able to deceive anyone during this time. Either people will be in heaven or dead, so there is no one left for him to deceive.

During this time we will be in heaven. What will we be doing during this time? Read Revelation 20:4-5.

The first resurrection has happened, as we saw in the last lesson. The righteous are in heaven, reigning with Christ and judging the dead. They are in judgment, not on the people who didn't make it, but in judgment of God. It is important to make sure that they are positive that God did everything right. Has he truly shown that He is the rightful ruler of the universe and has the character that He said He has? Was He right to bring us to heaven? Was He right to not bring those who didn't come? He wants all these questions answered ahead of time so that there will never be any confusion throughout all eternity.

Do you understand that we will be in heaven for a thousand years after Jesus returns?

Yes      No

Do you understand that we will be looking over the whole Great Controversy to make sure everything is really settled?

Yes      No

Do you understand that Satan will be stuck on Earth during this time with nothing to do and no one to deceive?

Yes      No

# THE END OF SIN AND SATAN

## Review - The Millennium

When does the thousand years begin?

Where will the righteous be during this time, and what will they be doing?

Where will the wicked be during this time?

Where is Satan at this time?

## Review - Jesus' Return:

When will Jesus come back?

Who will see Jesus come back?

What will happen to those who love Him when He comes back?

What will happen to those who don't love Him when He comes back?

Summarize this information in the appropriate place on the time line above.

## Review - The Cross:

How did Christ's sacrifice on the cross seal Satan's doom?

Who is Jesus and what was His mission?

How does His sacrifice on the cross fulfill God's promises to Adam + Eve?

Write a summary of this info above the cross.





After we have spent the thousand years in heaven judging the Great Controversy it will be time to bring the controversy to its final end.

Read Revelation 20:4,5,7,8. What happens at the end of the thousand years?

Satan is freed by the second resurrection because he suddenly has people to deceive again. Read Revelation 20:9-10. What happens here and why?

After all that has happened God will finally be allowed to put an end to sin. Remember, people will have made a clear choice before Jesus had returned before the thousand years. They saw Him come back and knew they were wrong and He was right. And now, given life again, they do not come to God for forgiveness but try to destroy God so they can continue to do things their way; they way they've already acknowledged was wrong. With tears in His eyes God destroys them all with fire.

**\*\*\*NOTE\*\*\***

The end of verse 10 says they will be tormented forever. In the Greek the term forever means “until the time appointed for it ends.” This is not foreign to the Bible. Jonah, for example, describes his experience in the ocean as lasting “forever.” (Jonah 2:6) The book of Jude talks about this fire by comparing it to others that go out. (See Jude 5-7) The point is that this fire will be unquenchable, yet it will end in death (Revelation 20:14; Revelation 21:8).

After sin is destroyed what will happen? Read Revelation 21:1, 4.

Do you want to be a part of the New Heaven and New Earth?

Yes      No

# WAITING FOR HIS RETURN, PART 1 - MORAL LAW

## Review - The Millennium

When does the thousand years begin?

Where will the righteous be during this time, and what will they be doing?

Where will the wicked be during this time?

Where is Satan at this time?

## Review - The Cross:

How did Christ's sacrifice on the cross seal Satan's doom?

Who is Jesus and what was His mission?

How does His sacrifice on the cross fulfill God's promises to Adam + Eve?

Write a summary of this info above the cross.

## Review - The End of Sin:

What happens to the wicked after the thousand years are over?

Why and how does God destroy the wicked, including Satan?

Does this hellfire burn for all eternity? Why or why not?

## Review - Jesus' Return:

When will Jesus come back?

Who will see Jesus come back?

What will happen to those who love Him when He comes back?

What will happen to those who don't love Him when He comes back?

Summarize this information in the appropriate place on the time line above.





According to the time line we've been working on it is clear that we are living near the time when Jesus should be returning. We are not supposed to just be sitting down doing nothing while we're waiting. We have an active part to play in His plan. The world needs to know about God, His love, His character, and the controversy that is going on all around them. He has asked us to play an important role to help get people ready. (See Matthew 24:14; 28:19-20). Revelation 19:7-8 say that the bride of Christ (that's us) makes herself ready for the marriage and the wedding feast. The remaining lessons will look at what we need to do to get ready for our Husband's arrival.

Let's begin with our place in the middle of this controversy. Remember, the Moral Law has been at the center of the controversy because it shows what God is like. When we are His, we should be showing people what He is like. Read 2 Corinthians 5:20-21. What does this have to do with our relationship to the Law, to Christ, and to our fellow people?

It is impossible for us to keep the Law without God's help. We have been born with a sinful nature, separated from God. Only with His Spirit living in us can we keep the Law. Even then, it is not merely obedience to the Law that is required. What else is needed? Read Colossians 3:12-14 and Romans 13:10.

Most people don't have a problem with the Ten Commandments. It seems common sense that we shouldn't kill, commit adultery, steal, lie, worship other Gods, and so on. But, there is one commandment, the fourth commandment, that people seem to go back and forth on. Read it in Exodus 20:8-11. What is it, and what does it mean?

There are different reasons people give for not wanting to keep the Biblical Sabbath. They are as follows:

*The Sabbath was for the Jews only.*

*The Sabbath day was changed/done away with by Jesus.*

*It doesn't matter what day we worship on, just as long as we worship.*

*The Sabbath day was changed when the calendar was changed.*

Let's do a quick study to see what the Bible says about the Sabbath. For each of the scriptures below write what it has to do with the Sabbath and the arguments above.

*Genesis 2:1-3 (think about what people there were at this time):*

*Exodus 20:8-11 (what was it written on, and what does that mean?)*

*Matthew 5:17-18*

*Isaiah 66:22-23 (when is this taking place?)*

When we look at what the Bible says about the Sabbath it is easy to see that most “Biblical” arguments against it don't line up with God's Word. The “non-Biblical” argument of the calendar change is easy to address, for in no argument is it stated that the Jewish calendar was changed, only the Gregorian calendar. Yet Jews are still keeping the Sabbath on Saturday and have been keeping such thorough records that we can rest assured they have been for thousands of years.

The bottom line is that the Sabbath is part of God's Moral Law. It is something that states what God is like: He is a God who so desperately wants to spend time with us that He set aside a day every week just for us to be with Him. Why would we want to argue with something that so clearly shows what He is like?

Do you accept that the Biblical, seventh-day Sabbath is from sundown Friday to Sundown Saturday?

Yes      No

Do you want to set aside that time as special, dedicated to spending time with God?

Yes      No

# WAITING FOR HIS RETURN, PART 2 - SPIRITUAL GIFTS

## Review - The Millennium

When does the thousand years begin?

Where will the righteous be during this time, and what will they be doing?

Where will the wicked be during this time?

Where is Satan at this time?

## Review - The Sabbath:

When is the Sabbath?

What does the Sabbath show us about God?

Has it ever been changed? Why/why not?

## Review - The End of Sin:

What happens to the wicked after the thousand years are over?

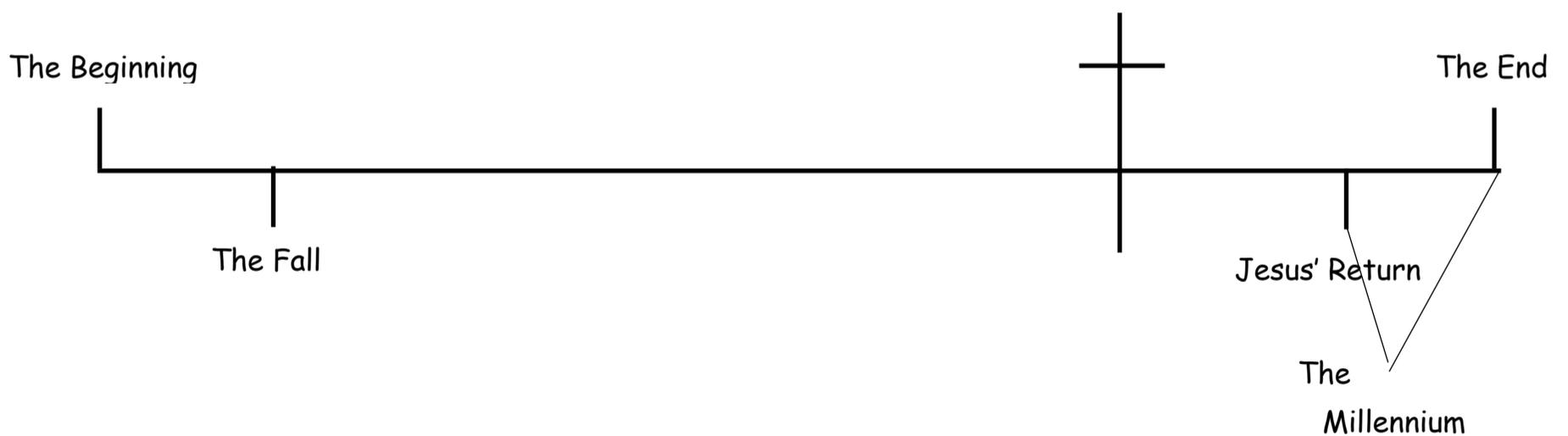
Why and how does God destroy the wicked, including Satan?

Does this hellfire burn for all eternity? Why or why not?

## Review - The Law:

What does the Moral Law (Ten Commandments) show us?

What is sin?





As we wait for Jesus to come back, His Spirit will make a new heart in us (Psalm 51:10). This new heart will make us more like Jesus and we will begin to naturally be like Him, which will mean we will be living the Moral Law because we are just being like Jesus (see Romans 2:12-16).

As well as a new heart Jesus will give us a love for other people and a desire to serve them. Read 1 Corinthians 12:12-26. What does Paul compare the church to?

As we are waiting for His return Jesus will give us something to help us function as part of the body. What is it? Read 1 Corinthians 12:4-11.

Why does God give us Spiritual Gifts? Read Ephesians 4:11-13.

Does everyone get a Spiritual Gift? Read 1 Corinthians 12:11. Yes      No

The focus of the doctrine of Spiritual Gifts should be on service. God wants us to be servants to other people both inside and outside the church. When we serve those inside the church it becomes a more loving, stable group, ready to serve others. When we serve others we again show God's loving character to a world still stuck in this Great Controversy.

Think about what gifts you may think you already have. They may not be Spiritual Gifts yet, but they may shed some light onto the type of service God may call you to and equip you for later.

Do you believe God will give you spiritual gifts?

Yes      No

Will you use the spiritual gifts God gives you to serve Him and His people?

Yes      No

# WAITING FOR HIS RETURN, PART 3 - THE REMNANT

## Review - Spiritual Gifts

Who gives Spiritual Gifts?

Who gets Spiritual Gifts?

What are the reasons for Spiritual Gifts?

## Review - The Sabbath:

When is the Sabbath?

What does the Sabbath show us about God?

Has it ever been changed? Why/why not?

## Review - The End of Sin:

What happens to the wicked after the thousand years are over?

Why and how does God destroy the wicked, including Satan?

Does this hellfire burn for all eternity? Why or why not?

## Review - The Law:

What does the Moral Law (Ten Commandments) show us?

What is sin?



# **The Remnant:** **Standing Out** **With A Special** **Message**



As we are waiting for Jesus' return, and as we are serving Him with the Spiritual Gifts He gives us, we will long for the company of people who believe as we do. It is a need that God has placed inside of us to not only worship Him, but worship Him in fellowship with others who believe the truth. The only problem is that one only has to look around at all the churches to see that no two believe the same exact things. How do you choose which ones to worship with?

Throughout history God has had a "remnant" people. They are the ones left out of all the rest who stay loyal to His truth. That doesn't always mean they are the only people who are saved, just those who are faithful to all the truth available at the time. It should be no surprise that the Bible tells us that during the final days of the Great Controversy there will be a people like that, who, though they are not the only saved people, are a group with special characteristics and a special message.

The characteristics of the last day remnant are found in Revelation 12:17. They are a people that, since they are so close to God, Satan hates and makes special war with. What are their two characteristics?

Obedying all the commandments of God is easy to understand. They must be keeping all Ten Commandments, including the fourth Commandment, by the grace, love, and power of Jesus. But what does the “testimony of Jesus” mean? Read Revelation 19:10.

### **The Remnant's Message**

Revelation also gives the message of the last day remnant people. It is contained in the messages given by three angels in Revelation 14:6-12. Read that passage and summarize the messages of all three angels.

### **The Remnant's Identity**

There is only one church today that matches up with the above characteristics and message, and that is the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Since its founding the Seventh-day Adventist Church has based its message on the soon return of Jesus Christ, in the necessity of obeying His commandments, and in the need to come out of other forms of worship that do not honor God. They have also been blessed with the Spirit of Prophecy, which will be the topic of our next study.

Do you believe that God's last day remnant church will obey all the commandments found in the Moral Law?

Yes      No

Do you believe that God's last day remnant church will have the gift of prophecy?

Yes      No

Do you believe that God's last day remnant church will have a special message to tell the world – that Jesus is returning and that we need to be ready for Him?

Yes      No

Do you believe that God's last day remnant church is the Seventh-day Adventist Church?

Yes      No

# WAITING FOR HIS RETURN, PART 4 - SPIRIT OF PROPHECY

## Review - Spiritual Gifts

Who gives Spiritual Gifts?

Who gets Spiritual Gifts?

What are the reasons for Spiritual Gifts?

## Review - The Sabbath:

When is the Sabbath?

What does the Sabbath show us about God?

Has it ever been changed? Why/why not?

## Review - The Remnant Church:

What are the characteristics of God's last day remnant church?

What is the message of God's last day remnant church?

Who is God's last day remnant church?

## Review - The Law:

What does the Moral Law (Ten Commandments) show us?

What is sin?





As we saw in the last study, one of the characteristics of the remnant church is the spirit of prophecy. Throughout all of history God has provided prophecy to shine as a light in the darkness and illuminate the path His people should travel. However, prophecy has been a matter of dispute in almost every age.

What is the warning Jesus gives in Matthew 24:11?

What instruction does John give in 1 John 4:1?

If the spirit of prophecy is one of the characteristics of God's last day remnant church, then it will pay for us to know the difference between true and false prophets. The following are verses that help us to know the difference between true and false prophets. Read each one and summarize the "test" that it gives.

*1 Corinthians 14:3*

*Jeremiah 28:9*

*1 John 4:2*

*Isaiah 8:20*

These verses comprise the 4 basic Biblical tests of a prophet. The Seventh-day Adventist Church believes that Ellen G. White, one of the church's founding members, was a true prophetess of God. In her writings, which she wrote in response to visions, she has passed these tests.

There is no way for you to know if this is true or not unless you read some of her writings and judge for yourself. Before you complete the questions below, please read a selection of her writings so you can judge for yourself. Your teacher should give you a passage to read.

(After reading)

Do you believe that in the last days there will be true and false prophets?

Yes      No

Do you believe that you can use the Bible to prove the authenticity of a prophet?

Yes      No

Do you believe that Ellen White was a true prophet, and that her writings can be helpful to us today?

Yes      No

# WAITING FOR HIS RETURN, PART 5 - STANDARDS

## Review - Spiritual Gifts

Who gives Spiritual Gifts?

Who gets Spiritual Gifts?

What are the reasons for Spiritual Gifts?

## Review - The Law:

What does the Moral Law (Ten Commandments) show us?

What is sin?

## Review - God's Love

When did God start loving you?

What can make God stop loving you?

What was the greatest way Jesus showed His love for us?

## Review - The Remnant Church:

What are the characteristics of God's last day remnant church?

What is the message of God's last day remnant church?

Who is God's last day remnant church?

## Review - The Sabbath

When is the Sabbath?

What does the Sabbath show us about God?

Has it ever been changed? Why/why not?

## Review - Good News/Bad News:

Who has sinned?

What are the wages of sin?

What is the good news?

What roles does each member of the Trinity play in all this?

## Review - Spirit of Prophecy:

Why do we need to "test the spirits?"

What are the tests of a true prophet?

Who do Seventh-day Adventists believe was a true prophetess?





There are behaviors that many Christians partake in that seem strange to non-believers. Often this is because they are done with the wrong spirit. Christians have standards for their lives. These standards are meant to do good, but, unfortunately, they can give the impression that Christianity takes all the fun out of life. However, when done with a heart transformed, they have a very practical purpose and can help the life we live while waiting for Jesus to return be more fulfilled. Basically, we are to judge for ourselves, with God's wisdom, what we should do with our own lives.

Read 1 Corinthians 6:19-20. How can we do this, and why should we?

There are certain substances and behaviors we should stay away from to help our bodies be healthy so we can glorify God and live healthier, happier lives. What would some of these be?

Believe it or not, food can play a major role in this. In the beginning God gave fruits to Adam and Eve for their diet (see Genesis 1:29) in addition to the Tree of Life (Genesis 2:9-16). After the fall and their separation from the Tree of Life (Genesis 3:22) God gave them veggies, nuts, and seeds to supplement their diet of fruit (Genesis 3:18). At the time of the flood, when fruit and veggies would be scarce, God permitted them to eat only certain kinds of meat (designated clean, as opposed to unclean).

Look at Leviticus 11 and tell what the test is for what types of meat are clean or unclean.

*Land-Moving Animals*

*Fish*

*Birds (fowl)*

*Insects*

Not only does the Bible give us standards for what to do with the inside of our body, but also the outside. What is the basic principal that is found in 1 Peter 3:3-4?

The other category of standards that sometimes causes confusion is “Sabbath behavior.” Since the beginning Satan has found ways to confuse this subject so that people either treat the Sabbath like any other day of the week or fill it with so many rules that it becomes a chore. Read Exodus 20:8-11 and Isaiah 58:13-14. What basic principles does God give us to help us know the difference between acceptable and non-acceptable Sabbath behaviors?

According to Isaiah 58:13-14 what is the whole point of the Sabbath?

Again, these standards are very important in reflecting Christ to the world and even to the universe (see Ephesians 3:10-11). They can even help us lead lives that are longer, healthier, and happier. But, if done in the wrong spirit they can be legalistic and reduce the amount of joy in our lives.

Do you believe it is important to live for Jesus in a way that shows Him to the world (and beyond)?

Yes      No

Will you stay away from harmful chemicals such as tobacco, alcohol, and caffeine that can harm the body and do a disservice to God?

Yes      No

Will you stay sexually pure, reserving yourself until the day of marriage and remaining monogamous in marriage?

Yes      No

Will you do your best to rely on God and God alone to make the beauty He gave you shine out?

Yes      No

Will you reserve your Sabbath activities to those things that will bring you joy in the Lord?

Yes      No

Will you refrain from eating unclean meat?

Yes      No

# WAITING FOR HIS RETURN, PART 6 - SUPPORTING THE CHURCH

## Review - Spiritual Gifts

Who gives Spiritual Gifts?

Who gets Spiritual Gifts?

What are the reasons for Spiritual Gifts?

## Review - Standards:

Why does the Christian church have standards?

What basic standards should you keep regarding your body, inside and out?

How can you tell the difference between acceptable and non-acceptable Sabbath activities?

## Review - God's Love

When did God start loving you?

What can make God stop loving you?

What was the greatest way Jesus showed His love for us?

## Review - The Remnant Church:

What are the characteristics of God's last day remnant church?

What is the message of God's last day remnant church?

Who is God's last day remnant church?

## Review - The Sabbath

When is the Sabbath?

What does the Sabbath show us about God?

Has it ever been changed? Why/why not?

## Review - Good News/Bad News:

Who has sinned?

What are the wages of sin?

What is the good news?

What roles does each member of the Trinity play in all this?

## Review - Spirit of Prophecy:

Why do we need to "test the spirits?"

What are the tests of a true prophet?

Who do Seventh-day Adventists believe was a true prophetess?



It is important to remember that we are not waiting alone for Jesus. We are a part of a body of believers: Christ's church. As a church we are like a very diverse family. Just as a family does, we need to support each other and the work of Christ with our time, money, and talents.

The early church had such a sweet, generous attitude that people shared eagerly and willingly. See Acts 2:42-47. The ultimate goal is for this to come naturally as the Spirit of God fills us and moves us. However, it is sometimes helpful to have a beginning place to start. Let's look at a simple place to start with money, time, and talents.

Read Malachi 3:6-10. What two things does God ask us to give?

*A tithe* is 10% of what we earn. Biblically it was used to support the priests so they wouldn't have to find jobs to support their families. They could then focus on ministering to God's people.

*An offering* is an unmet amount donated to whatever cause you feel God is asking you to support.

## Time + Talents

Time and Talents really go together. If you have a talent - a skill that God has given you (often in the form of Spiritual Gifts) to serve others - then it will take your time to use it. A skill is no good until you take the time to put it into practice. Read Acts 2:42-47 again. Notice that the people were ministering to each other, serving each other. When there was a need people stepped up and took care of it. This took time, and often took talents. While we need to be doing this for everyone we need to be specifically doing this inside the church. Read Galatians 6:2,9,10.

The easiest way for you to know how to use your time and talents wisely is to simply look around you for a need that needs to be filled that will put you in a position of service to others. Match these needs up with the talents and gifts that you have, and then find a way to make the time necessary to fill the need.

Will you give a faithful tithe and offering to your church?

Yes      No

Will you faithfully serve with your time and talents?

Yes      No

How will you faithfully serve with your time and talents?

# BAPTISMAL VOWS

After a couple that is planning to unite their lives forever in marriage complete their premarital counseling sessions they often prepare or review premade vows that they will say to each other at the wedding. These vows are designed to be promises that state their feelings for each other, their acceptance of each other's family, and to communicate to others that the commitment they have for each other.

In the same way, you are planning to unite your life to Jesus forever in baptism and have completed a baptismal study. Now you are ready to begin thinking about the vows you will be asked to make at baptism. Like marriage vows, these vows are designed to be promises that show your acceptance of Jesus and His family, as well as help you communicate to others the commitment you have for Him.

The vows you see below are the traditional vows found on the Seventh-day Adventist baptismal certificate slightly modified to be easier to be understood by young people. You should review these vows with your teacher and make sure you agree with all of them before your baptism date.

## **Modified Baptismal Vows (Taken From It's My Choice by Steve Case)**

1. I believe in God, who is my loving Father; in His Son, Jesus Christ, who is my Best Friend and Husband; and in the Holy Spirit, who is my sweet Helper.
2. I believe that Jesus loved me so much that He died on the cross for my sins.
3. I believe that Jesus forgave my sins and gave me a new heart when I opened the door and invited Him in.
4. I believe that Jesus will help me to live a good life so that others can see Him in me.
5. I believe that the Bible is God's Word, given to me to guide me in life, and I will spend time in prayer and reading it.
6. I believe that God gave the Ten Commandments to show what He is like and that I will be happiest when, by His grace, I obey them. I also believe that the Sabbath is my special day to spend with my forever Friend, Jesus.

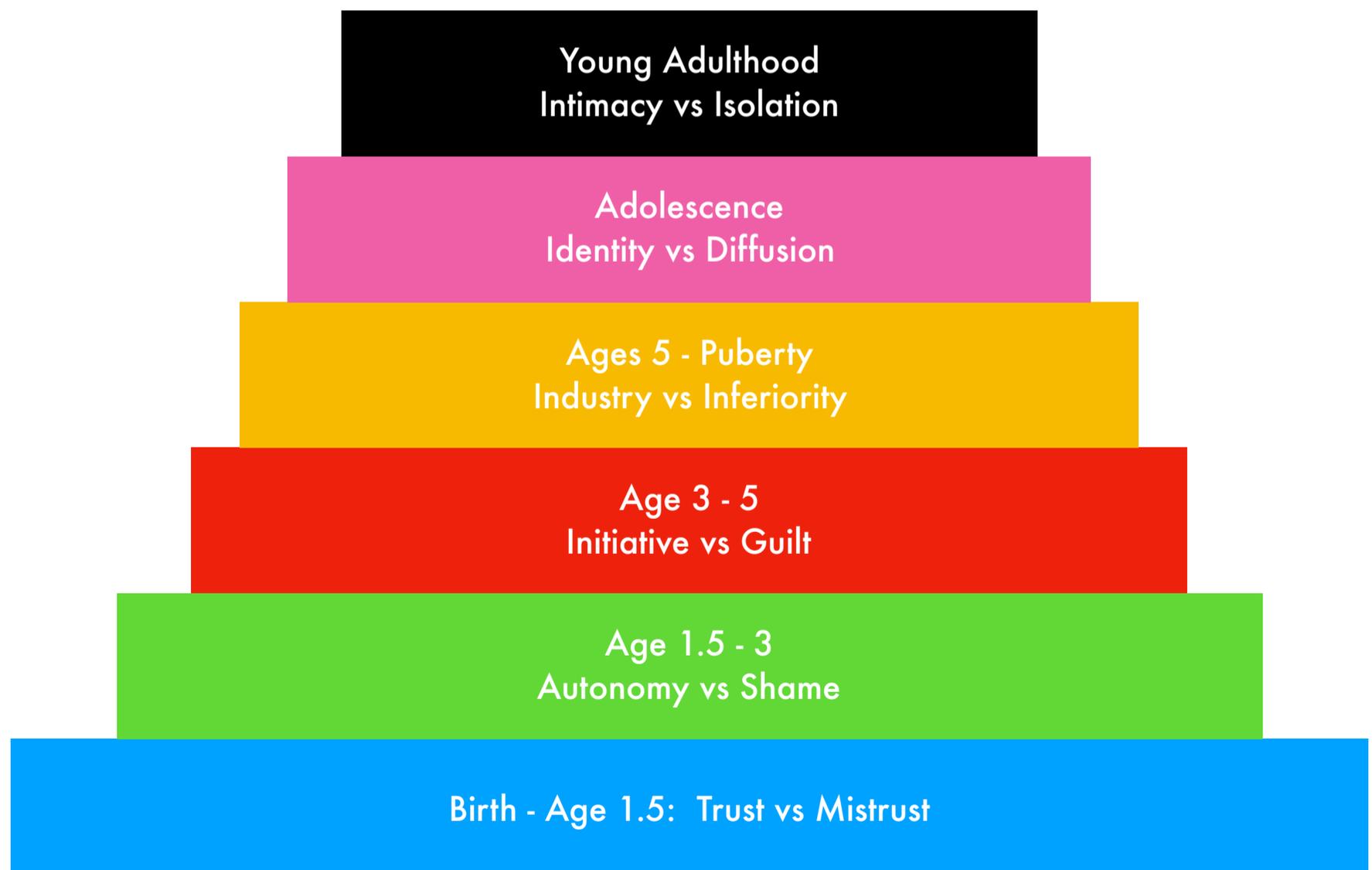
7. I believe that death is like a sleep and that one day soon Jesus will come to awaken all those that rest in Him.
8. I believe that Jesus will come soon to take me to live with Him forever, and I will tell others about Him so that they can also live with Jesus forever.
9. I believe that Jesus makes each of us special by giving us gifts that we can use for Him. One of those gifts is the gift of prophecy.
10. I believe that God wants me to love and support my church in all that I do.
11. I believe that Jesus wants me to take care of my body, so I will be careful to keep it healthy.
12. I believe in the basic beliefs as God has shown them to the Seventh-day Adventist Church, and I want to live by them with Jesus as my Guide and the Holy Spirit as my Helper.
13. I believe that Jesus gave me an example to follow when He was baptized, so I want to be like Him and follow that example, uniting my life to His forever.
14. I believe the Seventh-day Adventist Church has a special message to give to the world, and I want to become a member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

# APPENDIX

## Teaching To Different Levels Of Cognitive Development

Humans have different cognitive needs as they grow up. While all Bible students need to know beyond a shadow of a doubt that God loves them, they are naturally dealing with other topics that are in the forefront of their existence. A well known psychiatrist named Erik Erickson developed the Theory of Human Development, which outlines what humans are cognitively struggling with throughout their lives. Below I have outlined the key elements of this theory that deal with the young people you will most likely be working with as you use this study. As the Bible teacher, if you can understand these levels of cognitive development you will be better able to plan your discussions and teaching strategies.

The chart below shows all of Erickson's cognitive stages, and it may be helpful to know all of them. The table on the next page focuses on the stages you will most likely run into as you study with young people.



<b>Age Range</b>	<b>Development Level</b>	<b>Description</b>
Prepubescent (approximately 5-12)	Industry vs. Inferiority	<p>During this time young people are struggling to learn what they are good at and what they are not. It is important for them to have physical things to do that they can excel at, and to learn to accept that there are things they are not good at. If they learn these things they will become very industrious individuals. If they don't learn these things they may develop an inferiority complex.</p> <p>Spiritually they need to learn how to work for God, identify their gifts, and accept their weaknesses. As you teach them, focus on very concrete examples and teaching strategies.</p>
Adolescence (approximately 13-18)	Identity vs. Diffusion	<p>During this time young people are struggling to find their identity in this world. They are worried about what their career will be, what college they should go to, and are beginning to think about the type of person they will want to marry. Failure to establish one's identity may lead to a person who can never take a stand for they have no passion on which to stand, and they stand for nothing.</p> <p>Spiritually they need to learn who they are in Jesus, and they need to see that God has a plan for their life. They are not an accident, and God is ordering their steps. They need to trust that God will accomplish His plans in their lives. As you teach them you can begin to move a bit into the abstract, but focus on these issues and help them as they seek their identity in Christ.</p>
Young Adulthood (approximately 18-35)	Intimacy vs. Isolation	<p>During this time young people are struggling to build intimate relationships with others. Developing healthy relationships is a must, and a failure to do so may lead to either self-imposed isolation or isolation imposed on them by unhealthy relationships.</p> <p>Spiritually they need to develop healthy relationships with God (this is where a love relationship with God is most likely to develop) and with Christian peers and elders. As you teach them keep in mind they will be very receptive to mentoring if you earn their trust, and you should focus on the relational aspects of these studies and our faith.</p>

