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The *Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide* is prepared by the Office of the Adult Bible Study Guide of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. The preparation of the guides is under the general direction of the Sabbath School Publications Board, a subcommittee of the General Conference Administrative Committee (ADCOM), publisher of the Bible study guides. The published guide reflects the input of worldwide evaluation committees and the approval of the Sabbath School Publications Board and thus does not solely or necessarily represent the intent of the author(s).

Genesis:

The book of Genesis says that we are here because God created us, that our existence resulted from the purposeful act of a loving God who made us in His own image.

In 1997 a Nobel Prize–winning physicist made a stir when he wrote, “The more the universe seems comprehensible, the more it seems pointless.” Responding to the statement, one astronomer wrote, “Why should it have a point? What point? It’s just a physical system; what point is there?” Another scientist, agreeing, said, “I am willing to believe that we are flotsam and jetsam.”

Flotsam and jetsam? Yet, considering their premise—that we are here by pure chance alone—what other conclusion would they have drawn? After all, we just one day are born; eventually we become aware of ourselves—pain, fear, and hunger often being the first sensations of self-consciousness. Uninvited, life is foisted upon us without asking for it and yet remains difficult to give back if we don’t want it and impossible to retain if we do. We’re given something none sought after, planned for, or acquiesced in; we’re not sure what it is, what it means, or even why we have it; its most real and immediate givens—pain, sorrow, loss, fear—remain inexplicable.

No wonder these scientists, left to try to understand our origins on their own, see it as all pointless, a mere physical system, nothing more.

How thankful we should be, then, that the Lord hasn’t left us on our own regarding our origins. Genesis is God’s revelation to us of those origins, and it presents a view radically different from what most science presents. That science, without revelation, has determined we’re the creation of meaningless and purposeless forces is more than enough proof of how, without revelation, we get it all wrong.

Indeed, contrary to the “scientific” view, which says we’re here

Creation and Redemption

only because of pure chance, the book of Genesis says that we're here because God created us, that our existence resulted from the purposeful act of a loving and caring God who made human beings "in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them" (*Gen. 1:27*). It's hard to imagine two more conflicting, irreconcilable positions.

But Creation is only the beginning of Genesis. The book teaches us about the Fall, the global Flood, the Tower of Babel, which together help us better understand the nature of the world we have all found ourselves in without any choice of our own.

Most important, though, Genesis also tells the story of Abraham and the patriarchal line that would arise out of him, the one in whom "all the nations" shall "be blessed" (*Gal. 3:8, RSV*). Genesis doesn't focus only on the Fall and its results; instead, scattered through its pages are symbols and shadows that point to the great hope of salvation offered to God's fallen world through Jesus, a hope offered to everyone who, like Abraham, claims it by faith. Or, as Paul, steeped in Genesis, expressed it: "So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham" (*Gal. 3:9*)—the father of "all who believe" (*Rom. 4:11, NIV*).

This quarter we'll get an inspired account of the miracle that created us; we'll also get, in hints and symbols, the earliest revelations of the miracle that saves us: the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

All this is found in Genesis, a book about Creation and Redemption, not "flotsam and jetsam."

Born in Germany, the late Arthur J. Ferch immigrated to Australia, where he worked for many years as a pastor, teacher, and administrator.

How to Use This Teachers Edition

The teachers comments demonstrate different methods of teaching the adult standard edition Bible study guide. Five parts make up the teachers comments:

- ▶ **Key Text, Lesson Aim, and Outline:** The key text is taken from the standard edition guide. The lesson aim is designed to (a) help class participants understand and know about the lesson material, (b) evoke an appropriate feeling about the lesson material that complements the lesson content and helps to internalize it, and (c) help class participants apply the lesson material to their daily lives. The lesson outline may not always follow exactly the material that appears in the standard guide. It may reflect additional perspectives as it attempts to stimulate class discussion.
- ▶ **The Commentary** follows the traditional teaching methods of Sabbath School. It explains Bible passages and provides appropriate information leading to spiritual applications.
- ▶ **The Inductive Bible-Study Method** emphasizes careful, methodical discovery of the meaning in a text. The teacher encourages and supports the learner's investigation and discovery, using distinctive approaches: (a) Study a text thoroughly and systematically before drawing a conclusion. (b) Look for textual meaning carefully and thoroughly, understand the passage in context, avoid misquoting the author. We must not develop opinions without biblical proof. (c) Share insights through group discussion as students examine a Bible passage together. (d) Apply the text to life today. (e) Allow the Holy Spirit to minister to class members during Bible study.
- ▶ **The Focus-on-Witnessing Approach** should be used in conjunction with other methods of Bible study to demonstrate how particular passages of Scripture can be used to encourage people to commit their lives to Christ and to nurture spiritual life once it has been awakened.
- ▶ **The Life-Application Approach** demonstrates how issues that grow out of Bible study can be shared in a small-group setting. This section uses an approach suitable for discussion in a small group in which interpersonal sharing and dialogue are key elements.

Use a combination of teaching methods. Within one class period it often is possible to draw from all five methods demonstrated in the teachers comments. Some teachers will prefer to focus on one method of teaching, drawing heavily on the material in the teachers comments.