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# The Crucified

*At the Cross, He  
[Jesus, our Creator]  
bore “our griefs and  
carried our sorrows”  
(Isa. 53:4)—all of  
them.*

“All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made” (*John 1:3*).

“All things” were made by Him, Jesus, and yet—according to Scripture—“Jesus wept” (*John 11:35*). The Creator wept? Even more so, Jesus was “despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief” (*Isa. 53:3*). The Creator, a man of sorrows, despised and rejected? And He once cried out, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken

me?” (*Matt. 27:46*).

How could these things be? It’s because Jesus, our Creator, was also our Redeemer, and as such He was the Crucified God—the Creator who took on humanity and in that humanity suffered through a life of privation and toil that ended with Him being hung on a Roman cross.

Thus, our Creator, the One in whom “we live, and move, and have our being” (*Acts 17:28*), suffered in humanity in ways that none of us ever could. We can experience only our own griefs, our own sorrows; at the Cross, He bore “our griefs, and carried our sorrows” (*Isa. 53:4*)—all of them. It’s the most amazing act in all cosmic history.

With that background (that of the crucified God looming over us like the desert sky) we will for the next few months seek to better comprehend the incomprehensible—our own suffering, the sufferings of Christians, of those who have committed their lives to Christ. We’re making no claims to have all the answers or even many; we’re claiming only that “God is love” (*1 John 4:8*) and that although these things happen, we can trust God despite them and, indeed, grow in grace through them, no matter how painful the process.

This quarter we will study the Word of God and see how other flesh and blood, though radiated in faith, nevertheless faced despair, betrayal, disappointment, loss, injustice, and abuse (sound like anything you can relate to?). How did they cope? What did they learn? What can their examples teach us?

# Creator

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As we look at these people, their experiences, their struggles, and their trials of faith (which might be much like our own), we must always see them contrasted against the background of the Cross. We must always remember that no matter what anyone faces, Jesus Christ, our Creator and Redeemer, went through it worse.

Our God is a suffering God. Even Albert Camus, hardly a Christian, understood some of the implications of the Cross and the sufferings of God there: “The night on Golgotha is so important in the history of man only because, in its shadow, the divinity abandoned its traditional privileges and drank to the last drop, despair included, the agony of death.”—*The Rebel* (New York, Vintage International, 1991), p. 33. Or, as Ellen White expressed it: “The cross is a revelation to our dull senses of the pain that, from its very inception, sin has brought to the heart of God.”—*Education*, p. 263.

Our lessons are not a theodicy, the justification of God in the face of evil. Instead, as we’ve said, they’re an attempt to help us work through the inevitable suffering we all face here in a world where sin is as easy as breathing. What we will try to show is that pain, suffering, and loss don’t mean that God has abandoned us; they mean only that, even as believers, we share now in the common lot of a fallen race. The difference is that for us, through Jesus and the hope He offers, meaning and purpose can be found in what seems meaningless and purposeless and that somehow, even if we can’t imagine how, we can trust the promise that “all things work together for good to those who love God” (*Rom. 8:28, NKJV*)—the God who, though He made all things, suffered all things, too (and that’s why we love Him).

*Gavin Anthony, this quarter’s principal contributor, grew up in Sri Lanka as a missionary kid. He worked as a pastor in England and was conference president in Iceland when he authored these lessons.*

# How to Use This Teachers Edition

## Get Motivated to Explore, Practice, and Apply

We hope that this format of the teachers edition will encourage adult Sabbath School class members to do just that—explore, practice, and apply. 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? (Practice); and
4. What can I do with what I’ve learned from God’s Word? (Apply).

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 “I Have to Teach Tomorrow . . .” 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—Practice:** 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—Apply:** 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.