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# “What We Don’t

In 2007 a popular science magazine, *Wired*, had a cover article titled “What We Don’t Know About . . .” The article then ran short pieces on such unanswered mysteries as “Why Do We Sleep?” “Is Time an Illusion?” “What’s at the Earth’s Core?” “What Is the Universe Made Of?” and “Why Can’t We Predict the Weather?”

Even after hundreds of years of scientific advancement, on such basics *we’re still in the dark!*

Fortunately, on the most basic of all questions (and by far more important than “What’s at the earth’s core?”)—questions such as “How did we get here?” “Why are we here?” and

“Where are we going?”—we haven’t been left to grope in darkness. Instead, God has revealed to us, in the Bible, the answers to these fundamental concerns. And among those revelations given to us in Scripture, we have the writings of John the evangelist.

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*“In Jesus we find the answers to the most important questions.”*

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This quarter, instead of studying John’s Gospel (his own inspired eyewitness account of Jesus) or the book of Revelation (which he also wrote), we’re going to study his three letters. Though addressed to certain churches and individuals in his time, they deal with issues relevant to us today, issues such as false doctrine, sin, love, apostasy, and obedience. But most important of all, they deal with Jesus Christ, the One through whom we were created (“How did we get here?”), the One who gives our existence meaning and purpose (“Why are we here?”), and the One who promises to come again and raise us to eternal life (“Where are we going?”). In short, in Jesus we find the

# *Know About . . . ”*

answers to the most important questions.

As with many of the letters of the New Testament, John’s don’t occur in a vacuum. On the contrary, they were written to deal with issues facing some churches at that time, including the nature of Christ, which for John wasn’t mere abstract theology but a topic that impacted the Christian’s view of truth. For John, to deny that Jesus Christ “has come in the flesh” would ultimately lead to a view of sin and redemption that radically differs from the Bible’s teaching. It would lead to a different dynamic within the community of believers and to a different relationship to the “world.” Finally, it would lead to apostasy and ruin. Hence, the importance of this theme.

Indeed, while discussing the passages and themes of these epistles, we need to keep in mind that they are all related to Jesus. Whenever we discuss them, we also discuss who Jesus is, what He has done for us, and what He promises to do for us.

Thus, the three epistles of John speak to issues relevant for the church today. We would do well to listen to them, because we believe that, ultimately, it is God who is speaking to us through John’s words, the God who—though not revealing to us answers to such questions as “What’s at the earth’s core?”—has revealed to us truths about a greater and firmer foundation upon which we can rest: our Creator and Redeemer, Jesus Christ.

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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.