

The Atmosphere¹ of Praise



SABBATH—MAY 15

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON: Genesis 1:1, 2, 9–12, 20–26; Psalm 104:29; Daniel 5:23; Luke 15:7; Revelation 21:4.

MEMORY VERSE: “Then the Lord God formed a man. He made him out of the dust of the ground. He breathed the breath of life into him. And the man became a living person” (Genesis 2:7, NIV).

A FEW YEARS AGO, A FAMILY OF FIVE WENT TO A CABIN IN THE MOUNTAINS for a short Christmas vacation. One evening they shut all the windows tight to keep cold air from coming in. And they turned the furnace all the way up to keep the cabin warm through the very cold night. The only problem? The whole family died because the furnace used up all the oxygen in their air!

As most of us know, we can live a few weeks without food and a few days without water. But we can live only a few minutes without air.

Air—clear, pure air—is important for life. Dirty, polluted² air is the cause of many diseases that are often blamed on other causes. Every year millions of people, especially children, suffer terribly because of breathing polluted air.

With oxygen (air) going to every organ³ of our bodies, it is no surprise we need air as fresh and as clean as possible. The good news about fresh air is that it is free, and most people can have it.

To view and/or download a Hope Channel show on this week's lesson, visit www.lifesbeat.org.

1. atmosphere—the whole mass of air that surrounds the earth.

2. polluted—making the land, water, and air dirty and not safe or suitable for use.

3. organ—a part of the body (such as the heart or liver) that has a special function (job).

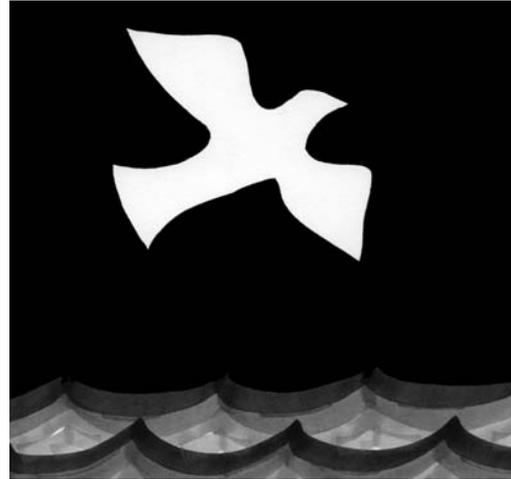
SUNDAY—MAY 16**THE CREATION (Genesis 1:1, 2)**

From Genesis 1:1, 2, how would you describe the earth when it was first created?

The earth at that time was without form or order. There was darkness and emptiness. It may be difficult for us to understand exactly what was present or what was happening. But it is clear that there was no created life at this time on the earth. Upon this mass, God's presence was made clear. This is shown in the words, "The Spirit of God was hovering [moving] over the waters" (Genesis 1:2, NIV). We can, for now, only guess what that means.

The verses say that over the next few days God began preparing the earth for life. Genesis 1:3–10 explains this part to us. Notice how the supporting and dividing take place several times. God separates light from darkness, the waters from several layers of air, and the land from water. All the way through there are large divisions of these elements. After these divisions have been completed, God then brings forth the first life on earth.

According to Genesis 1:9–12 and Genesis 1:20–26, what does God create next? What conditions were needed for this to happen? What was needed for this part of Creation to continue?



The Spirit of God hovered over the waters.

God had a great master plan for His creation. It called for many kinds of living things. They are the things that would require support to live. As the Creation story continued, God planned for many of His created beings to live on dry land. God also knew that these creatures would need oxygen for life. We find this plan all set up on day two of Creation. This took place when the waters were separated and the atmosphere was created. The space between the waters above and below was thus prepared to receive the rest of the creation that was to follow.

The Creation story teaches that Creation was a very well-planned event. It leaves no room for chance of any kind. What does that tell us about the character⁴ and power of God? How could this understanding about God help you with the problems you might be going through at this time?

4. character (of God)—who God is; having and understanding the character of God is the same as being kind, loving, honest, and so on. God's law (Ten Commandments) shows us His character.

MONDAY—MAY 17**THE NEED FOR AIR (Genesis 2:7)**

God created animals to fill the earth. They shared one thing in common. It was the need for oxygen (air) to support life. Air includes several gases. Oxygen forms about 21 percent of air. (Our entire atmosphere weighs about five thousand trillion tons!) Other gases include nitrogen, argon, helium, hydrogen, and other gases, which come in smaller amounts. The amount of oxygen in the air is the perfect percentage for the breathing requirements of the living things God made. It shows proof of how careful God was in creating us.

According to Genesis 2:7, what was the special way God used air in the creation of Adam? How is this story different from the story of how God created the other creatures? What does this tell us about how special we are in the eyes of God?

Air clearly was important in the creation of all animals. This is because all these animals needed air to live. But the creation of humans⁵ was different. God breathed into Adam the breath of life. Air, life-giving air, was certainly an important part of the miracle⁶ of Creation. This is because right after God breathed this breath

into him, Adam became a living soul. When Adam was first made, he was lifeless. He was a “corpse.” One more thing was needed, and that was life itself. Only God, the Life-Giver, could give it to him. And God did just that. Every day we ourselves take part in this gift of life. The gift of life has been shared by everyone in the human race (group) since then. Through our first father, Adam, the breath of God has been passed on to all of us. And through the act of breathing, we keep that original (first) breath of life alive in us. Each breath we take should remind us of that original breath breathed into Adam!

Take a deep breath. If you do not have breathing problems, it seems so simple, so natural, and so easy. But it is really a miracle from God. It is a gift passed on to us from Eden. How thankful are you for the gift of life? Why wait until your life is under threat before you are grateful for it?



Each breath we take should remind us of that first breath God breathed into Adam.

5. humans—men, women, and children.

6. miracle—an extraordinary (amazing; great) event believed to be a sign of the power of God. Jesus' raising Lazarus from the dead is an example of a miracle.

TUESDAY—MAY 18**THE AIR OVER OUR HEADS
(Acts 17:25)**

What do Acts 17:25; Daniel 5:23; Psalm 104; Psalm 29; and Psalm 146:4 tell us about the connection between life and breath?

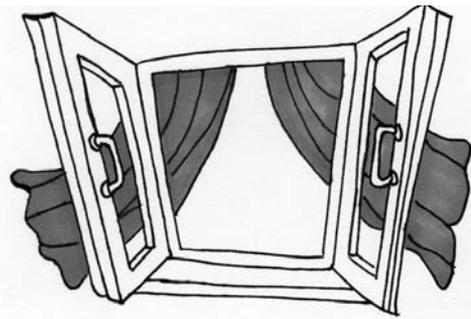
The air has many good things that protect us. Around the earth, the air and its water-vapor layer⁷ protect the earth and its people from the sun and from the coldness of outer space. The air recycles (uses again) water and many chemicals to control the climate.⁸ Within this layer of atmosphere, people find living things from high to low places and from hot to cold places. Some living things require a high level of light and warmth. Other things require only a little light and very little heat to live. Some animals require large amounts of oxygen. Others need only a little amount.

Fresh air is best for moving oxygen to the blood through the lungs and for carrying off the carbon dioxide that the body makes. This kind of air is most available in natural environments, where trees, plants, and flowing waters are found. The plants accept the carbon dioxide and give off renewed oxygen to the air.

We recall that God placed Adam and Eve in a Garden surrounded by plants of all kinds. The Garden was watered by a river that flowed through

the Garden and became the headwater for the great rivers of the earth before the great Flood. The message is that for us to have the best overall health, fresh air is important. We should do all we can to breathe the cleanest and freshest air possible.

A person carries about two quarts⁹ of oxygen in the blood, lungs, and body tissues¹⁰ at any given time. Every cell in our bodies requires air to work. When that supply is cut off, life cannot continue. Brain cells without oxygen for more than four minutes begin to die. And the person will die too.



We should do all we can to breathe the cleanest and freshest air possible.

How often do you make use of fresh air? What changes can you make that would give you more air? Sometimes it would take nothing more than opening a window.

WEDNESDAY—MAY 19**BAD AIR, GOOD AIR
(Psalm 146:4)**

A great challenge that many city

7. water-vapor layer—the layer of air that is made up of very small drops or particles mixed with the air.

8. climate—a region with particular weather patterns or conditions.

9. quarts—a quart is a unit of liquid measurement. One quart is equal to two U.S. pints or 0.946 liters.

10. tissues—the materials that form the parts in a plant or animal.

people have is that the air often is dirty and polluted. Also working against fresh air is tobacco smoke. Tobacco smoke often goes through the air in office buildings. Breathing dirty air can lead to many health problems such as headaches, nausea,¹¹ vomiting, and eye and breathing difficulties. In some parts of the world, millions of people, especially children, suffer life-threatening illnesses from breathing bad air, which comes from poorly ventilated¹² kitchens.

Plenty of good, clean air usually may be found in natural outdoor areas around evergreen trees, green plants in mountains and forests, near moving water such as oceans, lakes, and waterfalls, and after rain. The algae in the ocean make almost 90 percent of the oxygen in our atmosphere, with the rest coming from plants. Live plants in your own home can help to clean the air there and remove carbon dioxide.

It is important to do our best to breathe clean air. Exercise outside every morning, if possible. For those who work inside, it is important to take regular breaks to get outside and breathe fresh air. After just a few moments outside, a person often will feel refreshed. It is better to sleep at night with a window open, even just a little, to enjoy fresh air while sleeping.

“To have good blood, we must breathe well. Full, deep breaths of pure air fill the lungs with oxygen and make the blood pure. They give the blood a bright color and send it to every part of the body. Breathing fresh air calms the

nerves, improves the appetite,¹³ and helps with digestion.¹⁴ And it encourages sound, refreshing sleep.

“The lungs should be allowed to breathe as much as possible. Full breathing of fresh air into the lungs is developed by free action. It becomes limited if the lungs are cramped and unable to breathe fully. Problems come to people who are not physically active at work and who sit all the time. In this position it is not possible to breathe deeply. Shallow breathing soon becomes a habit, and the lungs lose their power [ability] to breathe deeply.”—Adapted from Ellen G. White, *The Ministry [Work Done for God] of Health and Healing*, pages 272, 273.

Our personal situations are each different. Some people breathe fresh and clean air all the time. Others may live and work where fresh air is not available. They may desire fresh air as much as a thirsty person does water.

Wherever you are, it is very important to make the best use of fresh air when you can get it.



Plenty of good clean air can be found around evergreen trees, green plants in mountains and forests, and near moving waters.

11. nausea—the feeling you have in your stomach when you think you are going to vomit (throw up).

12. ventilated—allowing fresh air to enter and move through a room or building.

13. appetite—the body's desire for food.

14. digestion—the process by which food is changed to a simpler form after it is eaten.

What does Genesis 1:26 teach us about how we should take care of the created world we have been given?

THURSDAY—MAY 20

THE ATMOSPHERE OF HEAVEN (Job 38:6, 7)

The study so far this week has focused on the physical part of the atmosphere that God created for His family on earth.

We use the word *atmosphere* to describe the physical environment of air around us. But it also means attitudes,¹⁵ feelings, emotions, and support of those around us. This creates an atmosphere that may be positive or negative.

“Every person is surrounded by an atmosphere of its own. It may be an atmosphere filled with the life-giving power of faith, courage, hope, and love. Or it may be heavy and chilly with the gloom of dissatisfaction and selfishness, or poisoned with deadly and cherished sin. By the atmosphere around us, every person, knowingly or unknowingly, is influenced.”¹⁶—Adapted from Ellen G. White, *Christ’s Object Lessons*,¹⁷ page 339.

One may live or die, depending upon the nature of such atmospheres. Let us now think about the atmosphere of heaven. This is a spiritual atmosphere

of praise and joy. And we can study the result it can have on the lives of believers here and now on earth.

What can you learn about the atmosphere of heaven from Job 38:6, 7; Psalm 103:20–22; Psalm 148:2; Luke 15:7; and Revelation 21:4?

The atmosphere in heaven is clearly one of joy and praise to God. Several of the verses above show groups of angels singing praises to God. It is a rich experience for us to imagine these mighty (strong) angels singing around the throne of God in praise for His love, mercy, and grace.¹⁸ Heaven is a place where joy, praise, and happiness rule.

The good news is that we can accept Christ and the Father into our lives (John 14:23). Then we may begin to experience these things. God calls upon us to breathe the pure air of heaven now and be surrounded by the atmosphere of the heavenly home while we try to finish His work on this earth.

What kind of atmosphere is around you? For example, what are your words, your actions, your attitudes? Are they gloomy and dark? Or are they examples of the promises of heaven? What does your answer tell you about yourself and your need to change?

15. attitudes—how people feel and think about certain ideas or things.

16. influenced (by)—to be affected or changed by the power of another person or thing.

17. object lessons—lessons that use an object or a thing to teach a spiritual (holy) truth. Most often the object comes from nature, such as a flower, an animal, a tree, or a seashell. But the object used to teach the lesson might be man-made instead.

18. grace—God’s gift of fairness and mercy (kindness) that He freely gives us to take away our sins.

FRIDAY—MAY 21

ADDITIONAL STUDY: Read Ellen G. White, “Not Judging, but Doing,” pages 123–152, in *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*; “Growing Up Into Christ,” pages 67–75, in *Steps to Christ*; “General Hygiene,”¹⁹ pages 151–154, in *The Ministry of Health and Healing*.

“God calls upon His people to arise and come out of the chilling, frosty atmosphere in which they have been living. He asks them to shake off the ideas that have frozen up the urges of love and held them in selfish inaction. He orders them to come up from their low, earthly level and breathe in the clear, sunny atmosphere of heaven.”—Adapted from Ellen G. White, *Testimonies*²⁰ for the Church, volume 5, page 607.

“Christ dwells [lives] with people who will be surrounded with a divine [godly] atmosphere. Their pure white robes will smell sweet with perfume from the garden of the Lord.”—Adapted from Ellen G. White, *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, page 135.

“There may be a dirty, polluted atmosphere around us. But we need not breathe the air from it. Instead, we may live in the pure air of heaven. We may close every door to impure [sinful] ideas and unholy thoughts by lifting the soul into the presence of God through sincere [faithful and true] prayer. Those whose hearts are open to receive the support and blessing of God will walk in

a holier atmosphere than that of earth. And they will have a closer connection with heaven.”—Adapted from Ellen G. White, *Steps to Christ*, page 99.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- ① What is the general condition of the air where you live? If you live in the country, it is probably very good. And you can breathe plenty of it. But if you are in the city, what challenges do you have?
- ② The question of air pollution is a serious one. What can you do as a person to help fight against this problem? And what can we do about it as a church?
- ③ “In fellowship with God, with Christ, and with holy angels, the gospel workers [God’s people] are surrounded with a heavenly atmosphere. This is an atmosphere that brings health to the body, strength to the mind, and joy to the soul.”—Adapted from Ellen G. White, *Gospel Workers*, page 513. How can the class help one another in reaching this goal?
- ④ Do you know people who have been suffering some kind of health problems caused by impure (unhealthy) air? If so, how could you help? Why not help them spend some time in a place where the air is pure and fresh?
- ⑤ Bring a health professional to class who could explain how fresh air can improve people’s health.

19. hygiene—the things you do to keep yourself and your surroundings clean in order to maintain good health.

20. *Testimonies*—the writings of Ellen G. White.