

Contents

1	The Triune God—December 31–January 6	5
2	In the Beginning—January 7–13	17
3	God as Redeemer—January 14–20	29
4	The God of Grace and Judgment—January 21–27	41
5	The Holiness of God—January 28–February 3	53
6	God the Lawgiver—February 4–10	65
7	Lord of the Sabbath—February 11–17	77
8	Creation Care—February 18–24	89
9	The Bible and History—February 25–March 2	101
10	The Promise of Prayer—March 3–9	113
11	God as Artist—March 10–16	125
12	Love Stories—March 17–23	137
13	The Promise of His Return—March 24–30	149

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GLIMPSES OF OUR GOD

Who can look at those photos from the Hubble Space Telescope and not marvel at the beauty of the cosmos? Astonished at the famous photo of the “Sombrero Galaxy,” one writer said: “How can we begin to fathom the knowledge, the power, the reasoning, the truths, and the purposes that went into the Sombrero Galaxy (which is just one among billions of others)? Here we are, so small and so isolated, a speck of the creation with so much in our view but so infinitely beyond our grasp.”

More astonishing than the universe itself, however, has to be its Maker, because only something greater than the universe could have made it.

Of course, as Seventh-day Adventists, the God whom we worship and serve is the One who, indeed, has made the universe—everything from the Sombrero Galaxy to the quarks that compose all matter in it and everywhere else.

It is in this context, that of the Lord whom we worship and serve, that our quarter’s lesson is going to do some “theology,” a technical term for “the study of God.” After all, is it not important to know about the God whom we worship, trust, and serve—the One we are called to love with “all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind” (Luke 10:27)?

The picture of God in the Bible is very expansive. Yes, God’s love is underscored

again and again, but there is so much more about Him that He wants us to know. For example, there are hundreds of different names for God in Scripture. Each one of them could give a deeper and more informed understanding of the great God of heaven and earth. He is so much more than a benign Santa Claus in the sky who doles out assistance at our request. (A professional poker player recently won millions of dollars in a tournament and then publicly thanked Jesus for it!)

This quarter we're going to look at God, at various aspects of Him as they have been revealed to us, and at what these things mean for us on a practical level. We're going to start with some of the "basics," such as the Trinity—the amazing teaching that God is One God and yet composed of three Persons. From there, we're going to focus on God as Creator, the doctrine that forms the foundation of all that we believe. Next, we'll look at His work of redemption, because in a fallen world being created isn't enough—we need to be redeemed, as well. We'll also look at God as both a God of grace and a God of judgment. We'll then look at His holiness, His law, and the Sabbath, all of which stem from the essence of His character and help us to understand more about what He is like.

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And we also are going to look at some other aspects of God not commonly considered, such as God as a God of beauty, of history, and even of romance. We're going to look at prayer and ecology; that is, we want to look at some of the practical aspects of what it means to serve our Lord. We also, among other things, are going to look at God's great promise of the Second Coming, which leads to the climax of history and the end of humanity's horrible experience with sin.

God is big (after all, He created—along with everything else—the Sombrero Galaxy!). We are so small in contrast. How grateful we should be, then, for every bit of light that He casts our way. This quarter we'll look at some of that light. It's up to each of us, individually, as to how faithfully we walk in it.

Jo Ann Davidson is a professor of theology at Andrews University Seminary in Berrien Springs, Michigan.

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 to 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 to 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 to 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.