

“The Restoration¹ of All Things”



SABBATH—JUNE 25

READ FOR THIS WEEK’S LESSON: Genesis 1:26, 27; Deuteronomy 6:5; Genesis 3:8–19; James 4:4; Galatians 4:19; Mark 2:1–12; John 10:10.

MEMORY VERSE: “So God created man in his own likeness. He created him in the likeness of God. He created them as male and female” (Genesis 1:27, NlrV).

ALL ONE HAS TO DO IS LOOK AROUND at the world, at the neighborhood, at oneself, to see the point. And the point is? Something is terribly wrong.

It is called the Fall.² It is called sin. It is called rebellion (warring against God). And it is called the great controversy (war between Christ and Satan).

And yet, the good news is that evil will not last forever. Jesus came, died for the sins of the world, and promised to come again. And when He does, nothing of this world will remain. Instead, a new kingdom, His eternal kingdom, will begin. “In the time of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom. It will never be destroyed. And no other nation will ever take it over. It will crush all of those other kingdoms. It will bring them to an end. But it will last forever” (Daniel 2:44, NlrV).

What a restoration!

But we do not have to wait until the Second Coming for the restoration to begin. Those who are in Christ are a new creation now (2 Corinthians 5:17). And it is God’s plan for us to be remade spiritually or be reborn into the likeness (thoughts; feelings; actions; character) of Jesus now (Romans 8:29). Also, He calls us and gives us, His church, the ability to work toward the restoration of others too.

DEFINITIONS

1. restoration—the act or process of returning something to its original condition by repairing it, cleansing it, and so on.

2. Fall—the loss of eternal life in the Garden of Eden. Adam and Eve disobeyed God by eating the forbidden fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. This act resulted in the loss of eternal life and face-to-face communion (meeting) with God.

THE IMAGE OF GOD (Genesis 1:26, 27)

The Bible says that Adam and Eve were created in the “image” of God (Genesis 1:27). What does it mean to be made in the image of God? And what, exactly, is an image? An image may be either two-dimensional,³ such as a mirror reflection or photograph. Or it may be three-dimensional,⁴ such as a statue. An image can also be an idea that we have in our heads. So what exactly does the Bible mean when it says humans were made in the “image” of God?

Read Genesis 1:26, 27. How does the Bible explain the meaning of God’s “image”? Read also Genesis 1:31; Deuteronomy 6:5; and 1 Thessalonians 5:23.

Adam and Eve were our first parents. They alone were made in God’s image. They did not come from apes. As humans, they are very different from all other living things on earth. So are we. Any religion that does not teach this idea lowers the value of humans.

God “called their name Adam” (Genesis 5:2). Both of them, male and female, were different and separate. But they were still one. Together, in their fullness, they showed the image of God.

The nature of God’s image is wholistic:⁵ “When Adam came from the Creator’s hand, he had, in his *physical, mental, and spiritual nature, a likeness to his Maker.*”—Adapted from Ellen G. White, *Education*, page 15. (Italics⁶ supplied.)

The word for “image” in Hebrew is *tselem*; the word for “likeness” is *demuth*. These words can mean the physical (*tselem*) and the inward (*demuth*). The inward includes the spiritual and mental parts of people. Ellen G. White recognizes this point when she says man was made in God’s image, “both in looks and in character [thoughts; feelings; actions].”—Adapted from *Patriarchs [Forefathers and Leaders] and Prophets [Special Messengers]*, page 45.

Deuteronomy 6:5 lists the different parts of a person: soul (spiritual), heart (mind; mental), and strength (physical body). First Thessalonians 5:23 also teaches this idea. A person made in God’s image would naturally contain all of these parts.

There is much more to this idea of being made in “the image of God.” But the Bible is clear: humans are a different and special creation here on earth. No other living thing comes close. Why is it important for us to always remember this important difference?



Together, in their fullness, Adam and Eve showed the image of God, both in looks and in character.

DEFINITIONS

3. two-dimensional—having only two dimensions. A dimension is a measurement in one direction (such as the distance from the ceiling to the floor in a room). An object with two dimensions, or a two-dimensional object, is an object with measurements in two directions, such as length and width.

4. three-dimensional—having or seeming to have length, width, and height.

5. wholistic—relating to or concerned with complete systems rather than with individual parts.

6. italics—letters, numbers, and so on that slant upward to the right; italic type.

THE FALL AND ITS RESULTS (Genesis 3:8–10)



Adam and Eve tried to hide from the presence of God.

The Bible does not say how long a period of time lasted between the finished Creation and the Fall. Days, weeks, years—we just do not know.

But we do know there was a Fall. And the results were immediate and clear.

The first result happened after Adam and Eve ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. They suddenly became aware that they were naked (Genesis 3:7). They tried to hide from the presence of God. Their robes of light now disappeared. (Read Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 57.) Their closeness with God was broken because of their new knowledge of sin. God then tried to educate the first couple about the results that their sin had created for them.

Read Genesis 3:8–10 and Genesis 3:12, 13, 16–19. List the results of Adam’s and Eve’s sin as found in each verse. Also, how are these same results shown today?

No question, the Fall was real. It was hard. And it had long-lasting results for humans. The long, sad story of human history shows the terrible results of sin right up to today’s events.

How thankful we can be for the promise that one day sin will come to an end and never rise up again.

We live with the results of our own sins every day. What are some of those results?

ENMITY (HATRED) AND FORGIVENESS (Genesis 3:14, 15)

Read Genesis 3:14, 15. What does God mean when He says to Satan, “I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring [children] and hers” (Genesis 3:15, NIV)? What hope can we find here for ourselves?

The word *enmity* in Hebrew shares its root with the Hebrew word *hate* and the word *enemy*. By eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, Adam and Eve made themselves, and all humans, the enemies of God (read Romans 5:10; Colossians 1:21; James 4:4). The promise found in Genesis 3:15 suggests God’s plan to bring people back to Himself. In this way, He would redirect their enmity to Satan. So, by redirecting the enmity from Himself to Satan, God would establish a way for people to be saved. At the same time, He would not break the principles (laws) of His government. This special work is known as “atonement [forgiveness; cleansing].” The work of cleansing and forgiving is what God has done and is doing in order to restore (bring back) what was lost in the Fall.

What do Leviticus 1:3, 4; 1 Corinthians 5:7; and 1 John 1:9 teach us about atonement?

Bible thinkers sometimes use the word *expiation* to talk about how this atonement works. The Latin root, *expiare*, means “to atone for.” And the idea of atoning involves reparation⁷ for a wrong action. Someone did something wrong. He or she broke a law, and justice requires punishment to pay for that wrong. In English, it is sometimes said that the guilty person owes a “debt to society” because of what he or she did.

In our situation, we sinned. But in the plan of salvation, the atonement (Christ’s sacrifice and death) removes us from the *legal* results of that wrongdoing. Instead, Christ Himself paid the penalty (“fine”) for us. The punishment should have been ours, but it was given to Jesus instead. That way, justice was done, but the price was paid by Jesus instead of by us. As sinners we have done wrong, but we are pardoned, forgiven, and made righteous (holy) in His sight. This is a very important step in “the restoration of all things” (Acts 3:21, NKJV).



The punishment that should have been ours was given to Jesus.

DEFINITIONS

7. reparation—something that is done or given as a way of correcting a mistake that you have made or a bad situation that you have caused.

RESTORATION IN JESUS (Galatians 4:19)

We were created as perfect and complete beings in a perfect and complete world. But this perfect place was lost through sin. And the world is filled with death, rebellion, suffering, and fear. The plan of salvation was created in order to bring this world back to the perfect state it once had. Christ came in order to regain what was lost in the Fall.

“In the beginning God created man in His own likeness. He gave him many good talents. His mind was well balanced, and all the powers of his being [of his mind, heart, soul, and body] obeyed God’s will. But the Fall and its results have spoiled these gifts. And sin has almost removed the image of God in man. To restore this image, God developed the plan of salvation for man. God also offered to man a life of probation [a time of testing]. To be brought back to the perfection of Creation is the great, most important goal of life.”—Adapted from Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 595. This restoration will not be completed until God forms the new heaven and the new earth. But this plan already has begun. And it is going on in us now!

Read Galatians 4:19. What important spiritual point is Paul making here?

In Hebrews 1:3, Christ Himself is pictured as the image of God—“the express [exact, perfect] image of His person” (NKJV). (Compare⁸ this verse with John 14:9; 2 Corinthians 4:4; and Colossians 1:15.) Jesus desires to unite (join) with us so that He can restore (renew) God’s image in us. If we let Him, Christ can be in us. And He is the image of God: “Christ in you, the hope of glory [great beauty, honor, and praise to God]” (Colossians 1:27, NKJV).

The full experience of being restored (made new) in His image will happen at Jesus’ second coming (read 1 Corinthians 15:49; 1 John 3:2). But because Christ is in us, we are in Christ. So being restored in God’s image really begins while we are still on earth. When that happens, we will wish to bring those in our community to Jesus, the One who can restore them too.

The work to restore us begins now in us. But why must we always remember that restoration will not be fully complete until the second coming of Jesus?

DEFINITIONS

8. compare—to show how two or more things are the same or different.

THE RESTORING (RENEWING) WORK OF THE CHURCH (Mark 2:1–12)

As we have studied, our world was created perfect. But it has fallen. The Fall led to terrible results. But God did not leave us to eternal destruction (the fate that science says awaits us). Instead, the plan of salvation was already in place even before the world began (read 1 Peter 1:2). At great personal cost to Himself, Jesus came to this world. He suffered on the cross, and promised to return. And by the time everything is over and sin is destroyed, the lost world will be fully restored.

But what is surprising is that even now God calls us, His church, to have a part in working toward this restoration.

Read in Mark 2:1–12 the story of how some friends worked hard together to bring a paralytic⁹ to Jesus. How does this story show the importance of the church in healing and restoring people?

The house was crowded because Jesus was there. His love for people pulled large crowds together. The four men made a very large hole in the roof in order to bring the spiritually, mentally, and physically sick man to Jesus. Then Jesus restored him by forgiving his sins. He gave him peace of mind. And He commanded him to get up and walk. Jesus showed that no one really is healed unless he or she is completely restored spiritually, mentally, and physically.

How did the apostle (teacher and leader) John describe the reason that Christ appeared on this earth? What hope can we learn from these promises? Read John 10:10 and 1 John 3:8.

John 10:10 is the Seventh-day Adventist message in a single verse. It was clearly Christ's mission statement. An important work for Christ's body, His church, is to follow in His footsteps and spoil the work of the devil by replacing death with a full and healthy life (read Acts 10:38; 1 John 2:6). The church is called to partner with Christ in moving people toward being restored in God's image—physically, mentally, and spiritually.

Who are the people in need of your help right now, the kind of help that you know how to give?



Jesus showed that no one is really healed unless he or she is completely restored spiritually, mentally, and physically.

DEFINITIONS

9. paralytic—a person who is paralyzed. A paralyzed person is unable to move or feel all or part of his or her body.

ADDITIONAL THOUGHT: Read these other verses on restoring God’s image: Romans 8:29; Colossians 1:15; Colossians 3:9–11; 2 Corinthians 3:18; 2 Corinthians 5:17. Read Ellen G. White, “The Creation,” “The Temptation and Fall,” and “The Plan of Redemption,” pages 44–70, in *Patriarchs and Prophets*.

As a people, we have been called by God to work for others, for the good of others. We are to point others to the promises of hope and restoration that we have been given in Jesus. There are different ways the Lord can work through us to do this. Some churches give physical restoration to the people in their community through health programs and services. Also, the church’s system of hospitals and clinics works toward this same goal. Mental restoration can take place through classes that help community members meet their life needs. Churches also may establish or improve local schools, teach job skills, help others learn to read, and offer counseling.¹⁰ As they continue their search for restoration and a full life, many people in the community will realize that they need spiritual restoration, even if they did not think so at first. In fact, this realization is a key part of restoration to God’s image (read Ephesians 4:22–24). The church is the right place to help meet these spiritual needs, better than any worldly social or health organization.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

DEFINITIONS

10. counseling—the advice and support given to deal with problems and to make decisions.

① Give examples of what your church already is doing toward the physical, mental, and spiritual restoration of the people in your community. What is your church doing in this area? Share with your class your ideas of how your church can better offer restorative ministries (work done for God) to your community.

② How do we understand this idea of physical restoration? No matter what we do to help others regain their health, most will sooner or later fall to disease and old age. Why is this fact more proof that full restoration can happen only after Jesus comes back?

③ Discuss the idea of what it means to start being restored into God’s image now. How does that work? How can we know if we are making progress? Why must we have a clear picture of God for that restoration to happen? How can we learn not to become discouraged and give up if we do not make progress?