

Three Cosmic Messages

Worshiping the Creator

Lesson #7 for May 13, 2023

Scriptures: Revelation 1:9; 4:11; Isaiah 40:26; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Colossians 1:17; John 19:16-30.

1. How often do you stop and think about all the things you take for granted? That is especially true of things which you have always known and expected to be there. Think of the sun, the sky, air, or even the ground beneath your feet.
2. Have you ever stopped to ask the existential question, “Why is there something instead of nothing?”

[From the Bible study guide=BSG:] Why does our universe itself, and all the majesty and grandeur and astonishing things in it, exist to begin with? What great logical contradiction would occur were our universe, and we who are in it, not here? According to the latest scientific theory (they tend to change), our universe once did not exist. In other words, ours is a contingent existence, and it’s a miracle that we are here at all. And despite all sorts of myths about the universe arising from absolutely nothing, or from some kind of mathematical equation, our universe exists because God, the Creator, has made it and everything in it.—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Sabbath Afternoon, May 6.‡

3. Have you ever wished that you could visit the island of Patmos where John was imprisoned near the end of his life? I have had that privilege. John, along with the other disciples, had witnessed Christ’s ascension into heaven.

Acts 1:9: After saying this, he [Jesus] was taken up to heaven as they watched him, and a cloud hid him from their sight.—American Bible Society. (1992). *The Holy Bible: The Good News Translation** (2nd ed., Acts 1:9). New York: American Bible Society [abbreviated as *Good News Bible*].‡

4. Before John was sent to the island of Patmos, they had tried to kill him by putting him into a cauldron of boiling oil! But, he did not die! God was not finished with him yet!

[From the writings of Ellen G. White=EGW:] **John was cast into a caldron of boiling oil; but the Lord preserved the life of His faithful servant, even as He preserved the three Hebrews in the fiery furnace.** As the words were spoken, Thus perish all who believe in that deceiver, Jesus Christ of Nazareth, John declared, My Master patiently submitted to all that Satan and his angels could devise to humiliate and torture Him. He gave His life to save the world. I am honored in being permitted to suffer for His sake. I am a weak, sinful man. Christ was holy, harmless, undefiled. He did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth.

These words had their influence, and John was removed from the caldron by the very men who had cast him in.

Again the hand of persecution fell heavily upon the apostle. **By the emperor’s decree John was banished to the Isle of Patmos, condemned “for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus**

Christ.” Revelation 1:9. Here, his enemies thought, his influence would no longer be felt, and he must finally die of hardship and distress.—Ellen G. White, *Acts of the Apostles** 570.1-3.^{††}

5. In writing his last letter to young Timothy, Paul said:

2 Timothy 3:12: Everyone who wants to live a godly life in union with Christ Jesus will be persecuted.—*Good News Bible.**

6. Although we do not have complete records, it seems that every one of the remaining 11 disciples—those besides Judas—suffered a martyr’s death except John who finally died at a very old age in Ephesus. There is an opening in an old church floor that is his grave.

7. While John was on the island of Patmos, apparently in a cave on the side of the mountain, the LORD appeared to John and gave him the messages we are studying in the book of Revelation.

8. By outlining many of the issues in the great controversy, the book of Revelation points out repeatedly that we need to worship God and to hold Him in great reverence and respect if we are going to “inherit” eternal life.

[BSG:] We were created as worshiping beings. Every one of us worships something or someone. True worship, the worship of the Creator, enables us to discover life’s true purpose. It gives us a reason for living. It gives us not only something to die for but also, even more significantly, something to live for and, if need be, to endure tribulations for. And indeed, as the final crises arise, we will better understand that “ ‘we must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God’ ” (*Acts 14:22, NKJV*).—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Sunday, May 7.^{‡§}

Acts 14:22: They [Paul and Barnabas] strengthened the believers and encouraged them to remain true to the faith. “We must pass through many troubles to enter the Kingdom of God,” they taught.—*Good News Bible.*†*

9. If all of the disciples suffered these kinds of troubles, should we be surprised that the Devil will try to trouble us, even kill us, in the final days of this world’s history?

1 Peter 4:12-15: ¹² My dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful test you are suffering, as though something unusual were happening to you. ¹³ Rather be glad that you are sharing Christ’s sufferings, so that you may be full of joy when his glory is revealed. ¹⁴ Happy are you if you are insulted because you are Christ’s followers; this means that the glorious Spirit, the Spirit of God, is resting on you. ¹⁵ If any of you suffer, it must not be because you are a murderer or a thief or a criminal or a meddler in other people’s affairs.—*Good News Bible.**

10. The first angel’s message ends with these very important words: “Worship him who made heaven, earth, sea, and the springs of water!”—*Good News Bible.** We have been told again and again throughout the Bible that we must learn to worship God.

John 1:1-3: ¹ In the beginning the Word already existed; the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² From the very beginning the Word was with God. ³ Through him God made all things; not one thing in all creation was made without him.—*Good News Bible.**

Romans 1:20: Ever since God created the world, his invisible qualities, both his eternal power and his divine nature, have been clearly seen; they are perceived in the things that God has made. So those people have no excuse at all!—*Good News Bible*.*

11. It is interesting to notice that the final book in the Bible is basing its reasons for worshiping God on the first chapter of the first book in the Bible.

Genesis 1:1: In the beginning, when God created the universe.—*Good News Bible*.*

[BSG:] To get just a small idea of how unlimited God's power is, let's **consider just one object of His creation—the sun**. The sun produces more energy in one second than humanity has produced by oil, gas, coal, or fire since the beginning of time.

The sun has a diameter of approximately 865,000 miles and could hold one million planets the size of earth. But the sun is just one of at least 100 billion stars in our galaxy, the Milky Way. One star called the Pistol Star gives off as much as ten million times the power generated by our sun. One million stars the size of our sun can easily fit within the sphere of the Pistol Star. How do we even begin to wrap our minds around the creation?

Creation reveals a God of awesome might and unlimited power. His creative power not only brought the heavens and earth into existence but also has worked in behalf of His people through the centuries. He is the God who began this world, who is ever present in this world, and who will never forsake His people in this world.

Despite how small we are in contrast to the creation, Christ died for us. How does the overwhelming size of the creation only amplify the reality of God's love?—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Monday, May 8.^{†‡}

[See: <https://theplanets.org/stars/pistol-star/>

See also <https://www.slideserve.com/oakes/the-pistol-star>

The amazing fact is that this God who created the entire universe reaches down and wants to have a personal relationship with us as human beings![‡]

2 Corinthians 5:17: Anyone who is joined to Christ is a new being; the old is gone, the new has come.—*Good News Bible*.*

Psalms 139:15-16: [A psalm by David:] ¹⁵ When my bones were being formed,
carefully put together in my mother's womb,

when I was growing there in secret,
you knew that I was there—

¹⁶ you saw me before I was born.

The days allotted to me

had all been recorded in your book,

before any of them ever began.—*Good News Bible*.*[‡]

Acts 17:24-28: [Paul said to the people of Athens:] ²⁴ "God, who made the world and everything in it, is Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples made by human hands. ²⁵ Nor does he need anything that we can supply by

working for him, **since it is he himself who gives life and breath and everything else to everyone.** ²⁶From one human being he created all races on earth and made them live throughout the whole earth. He himself fixed beforehand the exact times and the limits of the places where they would live. ²⁷**He did this so that they would look for him, and perhaps find him as they felt about for him. Yet God is actually not far from any one of us;** ²⁸as someone has said,

‘In him we live and move and exist.’

It is as some of your poets have said,

‘We too are his children.’—*Good News Bible*.*††

Colossians 1:17: Christ existed before all things, and in union with him all things have their proper place.—*Good News Bible*.*

12. The Bible speaks of God’s omnipresence. We believe that He inhabits all of space. He is aware of everything that happens to us, even everything we think, speak, and do. In His prayer just before His crucifixion, Jesus said:

John 17:23: “I in them and you in me, so that they may be completely one, in order that the world may know that you sent me and that you love them as you love me.”—*Good News Bible*.*

13. Does it scare you to think that God is so powerful? Why would God associate immense power with His care for each one of us? He wants to change us so that we can become part of His eternal kingdom.

[EGW:] **It is a law both of the intellectual and the spiritual nature that by beholding we become changed. The mind gradually adapts itself to the subjects upon which it is allowed to dwell. It becomes assimilated to that which it is accustomed to love and reverence.** Man will never rise higher than his standard of purity or goodness or truth. If self is his loftiest ideal, he will never attain to anything more exalted. Rather, he will constantly sink lower and lower. The grace of God alone has power to exalt man. Left to himself, his course must inevitably be downward.—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy** 555.1.†† [What are we putting into our brains every day through our five senses?][†]

14. We can be changed on a day-by-day basis as we think about God, as we worship Him, as we pray to Him, and as we read our Bibles, filling our minds with the truth about Him.
15. The first angel’s message talks about three things together: 1) The everlasting gospel; 2) Our judgment; and 3) Worshiping the Creator. How are these related? Paul reminds us:

Romans 8:1: There is no condemnation now for those who live in union with Christ Jesus.—*Good News Bible*.*

16. It is very interesting to observe that just as the Seventh-day Adventist Church was being formed and beginning its incredible growth, the world was turning to evolution.
17. Why is evolution such a big deal? Those who believe in evolution are trying to explain to us that God may not exist; or, if He does exist, He does not impact our lives.
18. The three angels’ messages to the world focus on the fact that He was/is Creator and Sustainer of every one of us.

Ephesians 3:9-10: ⁹ And of making all people see how God's secret plan is to be put into effect. **God, who is the Creator of all things, kept his secret hidden through all the past ages,** ¹⁰in order that at the present time, by means of the church, the angelic rulers and powers in the heavenly world might learn of his wisdom in all its different forms.—*Good News Bible*.^{*†}

Colossians 1:13-17: ¹³He rescued us from the power of darkness and brought us safe into the kingdom of his dear Son, ¹⁴by whom we are set free, that is, our sins are forgiven.

¹⁵ Christ is the visible likeness of the invisible God. He is the firstborn Son, superior to all created things. ¹⁶For through him God created everything in heaven and on earth, the seen and the unseen things, including spiritual powers, lords, rulers, and authorities. **God created the whole universe through him and for him.** ¹⁷**Christ existed before all things,** and in union with him all things have their proper place.—*Good News Bible*.^{*†}

Revelation 4:11: “Our Lord and God! You are worthy to receive glory, honour [*sic*], and power. For **you created all things, and by your will they were given existence and life.**”—*Good News Bible*.^{*†‡}

19. **If we believe in God's foreknowledge, we must accept the incredible idea that the Godhead understood even before They created us what we would cost Them! Did They really know about the fall, the full story of Jesus, the end times, and the second coming?**

[BSG:] Look at how closely tied Jesus as Creator is to Jesus as Redeemer. The moment that His role as Creator is diminished, as the theory of evolution inevitably does, His role as our Redeemer comes into question, as well. Jesus comes to redeem us from sin, from death, from suffering, and from violence—when sin, death, suffering, and violence are, as evolution teaches, the very means of creation itself? God redeems us from the very process He used to create us to begin with? It's a dangerous lie.

And what makes it even worse is that evolution mocks the very idea of Jesus' death on the cross. Why? Paul (*see Rom. 5:17–19*) inseparably links the introduction of sin, by Adam, to the death of Jesus. There's a direct link, then, between Adam and Jesus. In any evolutionary model, however, no sinless Adam could have introduced death, because death—millions of years of death—was, supposedly, the force and power that was needed to create Adam to begin with.

Hence, right from the start, evolution destroys the biblical foundation of the Cross. In contrast, Seventh-day Adventists, by calling the world to worship the Creator, stand as a living witness against this error.—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Wednesday, May 10.^{‡§}

20. However, the incredible truth is that **the Creator of this entire universe came to this world and was willing to die to demonstrate many of the truths that we must understand in the great controversy.**

[EGW:] Upon Christ as our substitute and surety was laid the iniquity of us all. He was counted a transgressor, that He might redeem us from the condemnation of the law. The guilt of every descendant of Adam was pressing upon His heart. The wrath of God against sin, the terrible manifestation of His displeasure because of iniquity, filled the soul of His Son with consternation. All His life Christ had been publishing to a fallen world the good news of the Father's mercy and pardoning love. Salvation for the chief of sinners was His theme. **But now with the terrible weight of guilt He bears, He cannot see the Father's reconciling face. The withdrawal of the divine countenance from the Saviour in this hour of supreme anguish pierced His heart with a sorrow that can never be fully understood by man. So great was this agony [of separation from the Father] that His physical pain was hardly felt.** [How much pain?]

Satan with his fierce temptations wrung the heart of Jesus. **The Saviour could not see through the portals of the tomb. Hope did not present to Him His coming forth from the grave a conqueror, or tell Him of the Father's acceptance of the sacrifice. He feared that sin was so offensive to God that Their separation was to be eternal. Christ felt the anguish which the sinner will feel when mercy shall no longer plead for the guilty race.** It was the sense of sin, bringing the Father's wrath upon Him as man's substitute, that made the cup He drank so bitter, and broke the heart of the Son of God.—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages** 753.1-2.†‡

Genesis 1:26: Then God said, “**And now we will make human beings; they will be like us and resemble us.** They will have power over the fish, the birds, and all animals, domestic and wild, large and small.”—*Good News Bible*.*†

Matthew 27:46: At about three o'clock Jesus cried out with a loud shout, “*Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?*” which means, “**My God, my God, why did you abandon me?**” [Jesus did NOT ask, “Why are You killing Me?”]—*Good News Bible*.*†‡§

[BSG:] How can we, as fallen human beings, adequately respond to such an amazing truth as this? What could we possibly do in response? We are told, in the first angel's message, what to do: “Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water” (*Rev. 14:7, NKJV*).—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Thursday, May 11.‡§

21. Is it true that the Creator of the entire universe came down and was willing to die for us?

John 19:16-30: ¹⁶Then Pilate handed Jesus over to them to be crucified.

So they took charge of Jesus. ¹⁷He went out, carrying his cross, and came to “The Place of the Skull”, [*sic*] as it is called. (In Hebrew it is called “Golgotha”. [*sic*]) ¹⁸There they crucified him; and they also crucified two other men, one on each side, with Jesus between them. ¹⁹Pilate wrote a notice and had it put on the cross. “Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews”, [*sic*] is what he wrote. ²⁰Many people read it, because the place where Jesus was crucified was not far from the city. The notice was written in

Hebrew, Latin, and Greek. ²¹The chief priests said to Pilate, “Do not write ‘The King of the Jews’, [*sic*] but rather, ‘This man said, I am the King of the Jews.’ ”

²² Pilate answered, “What I have written stays written.”

²³ After the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his clothes and divided them into four parts, one part for each soldier. They also took the robe, which was made of one piece of woven cloth without any seams in it. ²⁴The soldiers said to one another, “Let’s not tear it; let’s throw dice to see who will get it.” This happened in order to make the scripture come true:

“They divided my clothes among themselves and gambled for my robe.”

And this is what the soldiers did.

²⁵ Standing close to Jesus’ cross were his mother, his mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. ²⁶Jesus saw his mother and the disciple he loved standing there; so he said to his mother, “He is your son.”

²⁷ Then he said to the disciple, [John] “She is your mother.” From that time the disciple took her to live in his home.

²⁸ Jesus knew that by now everything had been completed; and in order to make the scripture come true, he said, “I am thirsty.”

²⁹ A bowl was there, full of cheap wine; so a sponge was soaked in the wine, put on a stalk of hyssop, and lifted up to his lips. ³⁰Jesus drank the wine and said, “It is finished!”

Then he bowed his head and died.—*Good News Bible*. *†

22. How should we respond to that incredible sacrifice?

Philippians 2:5-11: ⁵The attitude you should have is the one that Christ Jesus had:

⁶ He always had the nature of God, but he did not think that by force he should try to remain equal with God.

⁷ Instead of this, of his own free will he gave up all he had, and took the nature of a servant.

He became like a human being and appeared in human likeness.

⁸ He was humble and walked the path of obedience all the way to death—his death on the cross.

⁹ For this reason God raised him to the highest place above and gave him the name that is greater than any other name.

¹⁰ **And so, in honour [*sic*] of the name of Jesus all beings in heaven, on earth, and in the world below will fall on their knees,**

¹¹ **and all [even Satan] will openly proclaim that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.**—*Good News Bible*. *††

23. **What does it mean to say that we are “redeemed by His blood”? How has the death of Jesus on the cross affected your life and made it possible for you to be healed and saved?**

24. **To many Christians, the death of Jesus on the cross was to pay the debt we owed because of our sins. There are several questions that this raises.**

25. **If Jesus actually paid our debt, to whom was it paid? How does this fit with Romans 6:23?**

Romans 6:23: For sin pays its wage—death; but God’s free gift is eternal life in union with Christ Jesus our Lord.—*Good News Bible*.*

26. **If Jesus fully paid the debt for all human sin, why aren’t all humans healed and saved?**

27. **Jesus Christ was the only Person who has ever lived on this earth who never sinned. So, why would the death of the only completely innocent Person pay the debt for sin of all guilty sinners?**

28. **Is the death of Jesus supposed to change us in some way? If so, how?**

29. **Or, does this change take place only in the records of heaven where my slate is “wiped clean” so that God does not recognize that I am a sinner? Have you been taught this?**

30. **If God the Father is omniscient, i.e., knows everything in advance, why does Jesus “plead” with Him? The Bible tells us that God does not change His mind. So, what happens?**

1 Samuel 15:29: “Israel’s majestic God does not lie or change his mind. He is not a human being—he does not change his mind.”—*Good News Bible*.*

31. **Ultimately, the choice that we will have to make before the world can come to an end is whether we will worship a loving God or a selfish Satan. (See Revelation 13-14.)**

[BSG:] “Worship addresses the most fundamental aspect of human existence in that it has to do with what humans as living creatures should do when confronted by the presence of the Creator. . . . Only those who are alive can worship the Lord; the dead cannot praise and worship Him. . . . The One who created us invites us to surrender our lives in the act of worship in order to receive them back from Him enriched, to be used for the benefit of others. Worship has to do with the very nature and purpose of our existence and with the need for having a center outside of ourselves that frees us from selfishness. Not to worship God is to lose our reason for existence; it is to exist in a state of disorientation and therefore to be dying, heading to total extinction because we are disconnected from the very source of life.”—Ángel Manuel Rodríguez, “The Closing of the Cosmic Conflict: Role of the Three Angels’ Messages,” unpublished manuscript, p. 42.—[as quoted in *Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Friday, May 11].‡

32. **Ellen White takes this amazing sacrifice to its ultimate end by stating:**

[EGW:] In the parable the shepherd goes out to search for one sheep—the very least that can be numbered. **So if there had been but one lost soul,**

Christ would have died for that one.—Ellen G. White, *Christ's Object Lessons** 187.2.†‡

33. **If evolution were true, who would we worship?** The apes? Or, the fish? Or, the slime? Or, the one-celled organisms that they say are supposed to be our ancestors?
34. If God does not exist, think of all the lies the Bible is trying to perpetrate on us. We did not evolve. We are not “just” a genetic accident. **We are much more than just the most advanced member of the animal kingdom; God created us to partake of His nature.**

[BSG:] This week's lesson explores the significance of Creation itself. After all, what can anything else we believe, as Christians, mean, or even become sensible, apart from us as beings created by God? Notice the opening lines of the Bible, the opening chapter, Genesis 1. They don't talk about justification by faith alone, do they? They say nothing about the life, the death, resurrection and high priestly ministry of Jesus, either. Not a word about the Second Coming. Total silence on the Ten Commandments and the eternal perpetuity of God's law. Nothing about the state of the dead.

Why? The answer is, really, simple. These doctrines, however important, become meaningless dribble, pure and utter nonsense apart from the doctrine of Creation itself, apart from the opening line—“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”...

In November 1998, Charles Colson wrote an article entitled “Astronauts Who Found God: A Spiritual View of Space.” In it, he said, “Astronaut John Glenn's return to outer space 36 years after his awe-inspiring orbit around the earth is a reminder of the kind of heroism that makes space exploration possible. . . . [Glenn told reporters in 1998, just after returning, at age 77, from his final trip into space that] ‘To look out at this kind of creation and not believe in God is to me impossible. It just strengthens my faith.’ ”—Charles Colson, *Breakpoint Commentary*, November 5, 1998.

People may be unaware that many of the early astronaut heroes had a deep religious faith. Their view of infinite space only increased their faith. “Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin are best known as [two of] the first astronauts to land on the moon and take that ‘giant leap for mankind.’ But you probably don't know that before they emerged from the spaceship, Aldrin pulled out a Bible, a silver chalice, and sacramental bread and wine. There on the moon, his first act was to celebrate communion.

“Frank Borman was commander of the first space crew to travel beyond the Earth's orbit. Looking down on the earth from 250,000 miles away, Borman radioed back a message, quoting Genesis 1: ‘In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.’ As he later explained, ‘I had an enormous feeling that there had to be a power greater than any of us—that there was a God, that there was indeed a beginning.’ ”—Charles Colson, *Breakpoint Commentary*, November 5, 1998.—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 93-94.†§ [Brackets and the content in brackets in the paragraph are in the Bible study guide.]‡

35. We need to recognize that the message of the three angels was specifically designed by God to meet the evolutionary, humanistic, postmodern challenges of the generation in

which we live. It is not an accident that at the same time that the theory of evolution was developed, God sent a message to the world reminding us to worship the Creator.

36. God not only created the universe but also, He wants to live in you. He has a plan for your life.

[BSG:] When Bruce Olson was 19 years old, he went into the jungle on the border of Colombia and Venezuela to bring the gospel to the Barí tribe. The Barí were a primitive, aboriginal people isolated in the dense jungles of South America. They were known for their fierce fighting ability and their violent, barbaric tactics when they warred against other tribes. Bruce was unfazed by their brutal reputation and, if necessary, was willing to give his life to share the gospel with them. He spent weeks trying to win their confidence. No Westerner had entered their territory before. Slowly, over time, the Barí learned to love this gentle, caring foreigner. As Bruce shared the gospel with these primitive natives, they experienced new life in Christ. The all-powerful Creator changed their lives. This once warlike, violent tribe became a force for peace in the entire region.

Just as Bruce was making real progress for the gospel, the unexpected happened. Colombian guerrillas kidnapped him and held him in a secret hideout deep in the jungle. Subsequently, the Colombian army attempted to recruit the Barí to war against the guerrillas.

The Barí refused, saying, "Violence only engenders violence."

Bruce was held for months in inhumane conditions; yet, he was able to rise above the horror of his circumstances. He won the confidence of his captors. Eventually they gave him a Bible. Day after day he shared God's Word with them. More than 100 of these rebel fighters accepted Christ and broke with the guerrilla force, laid down their weapons, and rejoined society as productive Colombian citizens.

Despite the evil forces marshaled against Bruce Olson, the all-powerful Creator had a plan for his life, and all the powers of hell could not destroy it. Our Creator not only had a plan for Bruce Olson's life—He has a plan for our lives. But it even gets better. Our Creator not only has a plan for our lives, but through the Holy Spirit, He will guide us into His plan. Understanding the richness of the Sabbath gives us deeper understanding of God's plan for us, as well as deeper purpose to our lives.—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 94-95.†

37. **God created the Sabbath as a memorial of creation that we are to celebrate once a week as a special time to worship Him. Satan hates that idea. Satan will do everything he possibly can to turn people away from God's plan for their lives.**
38. We serve an all-powerful Creator with unlimited, infinite power. This power is available to us and for us. We can be transformed, changed, and made new by the power of the Creator. Are we ready to accept the challenge?

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