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A Hope Big With

Of all the people immortalized over millennia upon the pages of history, Jesus of Nazareth had the shortest period of public labor. Only three and a half years.

But what a three and a half years they were!

Socrates taught for 40, Plato for 50, Aristotle for 40, Jesus for not even four. Yet, the impact of Christ's short ministry infinitely exceeds that of the combined 130 years of those three Greek giants.

Someone once wrote that "the grandest paintings of Raphael, Michelangelo, and Leonardo da Vinci are but a reflection of Jesus, the Light of the world. Haydn, Handel, Bach, and Mendelssohn gave to the world their best melodies in the symphonies and oratorios they wrote to glorify Jesus

*Christ's appeal . . .
is universal,
transcending all
political, ethnic,
and cultural
borders.*

Christ. Art, culture, music, philosophy—all have been enriched by His teachings. But Christ offers far more than philosophy, art, and music. These cannot save. Jesus offers light and life and salvation to sinful men."

That statement, however eloquent, falls short of doing justice to the richness of Jesus, for that quote is in the context of the West only; Christ's appeal, in contrast, is universal, transcending all political, ethnic, and cultural borders.

"You should search the Bible," Ellen G. White writes, "for it tells you of Jesus. As you read the Bible, you will see the matchless charms of Jesus. You will fall in love with the Man of Calvary, and at every step you can say to the world, 'His ways are ways of pleasantness, and all His paths are peace.' You are to represent Christ to the world. You may show to the world that you have a hope big with immortality."—*Life Sketches*, p. 293.

With Jesus at its center, Christianity is also a historical religion, meaning that it revolves around a person whose life and work are amenable to historical study and analysis. Yet, at the same time, we cannot circumscribe Jesus Christ within the confines of history. For the reality of His person is suprahistorical (above history)—there's a point beyond which historical

Immortality

analysis cannot probe. History cannot take us into the mysteries of salvation or into the wonders of what Christ's death offers the world. For all that history offers, it cannot begin to fathom what Ellen G. White called "a hope big with immortality."

This quarter centers on Jesus, on who He was, on what He taught, on what He did—and on what He is doing now. That last clause, "on what He is doing now," makes all the difference in the world. It is what might be called "the mystery of the present tense," a crucial element that distinguishes Jesus from every other historical figure, for what other historical figure, no matter how great, is doing anything for us now?

Who was this amazing Jesus? What was He like? What did He do while here? What is He, indeed, doing for us now? And finally, why should He be a concern for people in the twenty-first century?

The answers, as we will see, are far from academic. On the contrary, they affect the destiny of every human being.

Roy Adams, a native of the Caribbean, the author of this quarter's Bible study guide, is an associate editor of the Adventist Review, the international magazine of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. He is married to Celia (nee Wilson), and they have two adult children, Dwayne and Kimberly.

How to Use This Teachers Edition

Get Motivated to Explore, Practice, and Apply

We hope that this format of the teachers edition will encourage adult Sabbath School class members to do just that—explore, practice, and apply. 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? (Practice); and
4. What can I do with what I’ve learned from God’s Word? (Apply).

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—Practice: 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—Apply: 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.