

# God's Plan for Humans Before Sin and After Sin



## SABBATH—SEPTEMBER 29

**READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON:** Genesis 1:26, 27; 1 John 4:7, 8, 16; Genesis 3:16–19; Genesis 11:1–9; Deuteronomy 7:6–11.

**MEMORY VERSE:** “The LORD took Abram outside and said, ‘Look up at the sky. Count the stars, if you can.’ Then he said to him, ‘That’s [that is] how many children will be born into your family.’ Abram believed the LORD. The LORD was pleased with Abram because he believed. So Abram’s faith made him right with the LORD” (Genesis 15:5, 6; NIV).



**A long time before humans sinned, God made a plan to save us.**

**THE STORY ABOUT GOD'S PEOPLE** started when God made humans. But humans turned away from God and sinned. We need to understand God's plan for humans when He made the earth and His plan to save us after we sinned. Then we will better understand God's plan for the church. What is God's plan for the church? God wants church members to have unity. Unity means we agree with and support each other.

The first chapters of Genesis show that God wanted humans to be one family and to stay that way forever. Sadly, sin destroyed this peace. Sin caused all the separation and fighting between people. Look at what happened after Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit and God asked them about their sin (read Genesis 3:11). Adam blamed Eve, and Eve blamed the snake. But a long time before humans sinned, God made a plan to save us. Part of God's plan is to make us new so that we may live with Him again.

This week we will read about Adam and Eve's story and also Abraham's story. Their stories show us God's plan to save sinners and bring them back to agreement with Him.

**AGREEMENT STARTS WITH LOVE (Genesis 1:26, 27)**

Genesis 1 and 2 tell us that God made everything on this earth in one week. These two chapters also tell us that all the animals and humans that God made were happy and friendly. There was perfect peace and agreement between all living things on earth. Look at what God says when He finishes making everything. God says everything He made is “very good” (Genesis 1:31). Yes, God means that everything He made is beautiful. But “very good” also means that there was nothing evil on the earth and no fighting anywhere. God’s first plan when He made the earth included peace on earth between every living thing. Wow! God made the earth a beautiful place! Everything was perfect and worthy of its Maker. God’s first plan for the earth included peace, agreement, and love.

**Read Genesis 1:26, 27. What do these verses teach us about how special humans are? How do these verses show us that humans are more special than anything else God made?**

Genesis says that God made humans in His “image [the same in shape, body, face, and mind; a copy] and likeness [the same as something else]” (Genesis 1:26, ICB). What else did God make in His image besides humans? Nothing. So, that makes humans very special. “So God created humans in his own image. He created them to be like [the same as] himself. He created them male and female” (Genesis 1:27, ERV). Many Bible experts have asked: What does it mean to be made in God’s image? Does it mean that we look the same as God only in ways that we can see on the outside? Or are we the same as God on the inside too? If yes, then how are we and God the same? What makes God who He is? People have many different answers to these questions. But everyone agrees that the Bible shows us that God is love.

**Read 1 John 4:7, 8, 16. How do these verses help us understand where love comes from and how we were made? How did love help everything get along together?**

God is love. Humans also can love. We can love in deep ways. The other things God made cannot love the way we do. So, we can say that our being made in God’s image means we can love God and other people very deeply.



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**WHAT DAMAGE DID SIN CAUSE? (Genesis 3:16–19)**

Sin made many bad things happen. Sin caused an awful separation between all living things that God made. Worse, sin started hate, disagreements, and separations between humans that continue to this day. We see an example of this disagreement happen right away in Adam and Eve's behavior after they sin. What do they do? They blame others for their sin (Genesis 3:12, 13). We do the same thing, right?

**How do Genesis 3:16–19 and Genesis 4:1–15 show us the bad things that happened to people because of sin? What did sin do to the peaceful planet God made?**

Adam did not obey God. Adam's sin made many bad things happen. Over time, sin changed everything God made. Sin changed the earth. Sin also changed human hearts. Cain and Abel's story is an example of how sin changed human hearts. Cain and Abel were brothers. Brothers should love and care for each other, right? But Cain wanted to follow his own selfish wishes instead of following God's commands. Cain's selfish heart caused an awful problem between him and his brother, Abel. The problem between them ended in death: Cain killed Abel. How did Cain behave before he killed his brother? He was mad at God (Genesis 4:5). Cain's anger at God led to Cain's anger with his own brother.

After Cain killed Abel, the people on the earth grew more and more evil. "They thought only about evil things all the time" (Genesis 6:5, ERV). This evil led to the Flood that destroyed everything God made on earth. But God did not give up on humans. He saved a small group of humans: Noah and his family. God used Noah and his family to fill the earth with people again.

After the Flood, God gives a promise to Noah and his family. God promises to never destroy the earth with a flood again. God puts His rainbow in the sky to help Noah and his family remember and trust His promise. The rainbow shows Noah's family how much God loved them (Genesis 9:12–17; Isaiah 54:7–10). The rainbow also shows Noah what God is going to do. God is going to go ahead with His first plan that He made before the Flood: God wants a family. He wants a human family who loves Him and is loyal to His law.

**How does sin destroy peace? What can you do right now to help the people around you to have more peace?**



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## MORE EXAMPLES OF PEOPLE WHO DID NOT GET ALONG (Genesis 11:1–9)

**Genesis 11:1–9** talks about humans who do not get along. What happened in these verses that makes this problem worse?

What happened after the Flood? The Bible tells us that some people decided to build a city and a tall tower in the land of Shinar. Today, Shinar is southern Iraq (Genesis 11:2). Shinar was part of a big area named Mesopotamia. Mesopotamia was very beautiful. This land was between two rivers: the Tigris River and the Euphrates River. Before the Tower of Babel was built, all the people on the earth spoke the same language. But after the Tower of Babel was built, things changed. God forced humans to move away from the Tower of Babel. They moved all over the earth. God caused them to speak many different languages.

Scientists who study the past make it clear that a lot of people have always lived in Mesopotamia from the start of history. The Sumerians were one of the first people who lived there. The Sumerians were the first people to write on clay tablets. They built strong houses and made beautiful jewelry and tools. Sumerians also built temples to different gods. These temples were as big as towers.

Many of Noah's children and their families went to live in the land of Shinar after the Flood. But soon they forgot the God of Noah and the promises He made to never again destroy the earth by a flood. So, the people in Shinar decided to build a tower. Their building the Tower of Babel showed that they were very smart and skillful. They built the tower because they wanted to "be famous" (Genesis 11:4, ERV). "It was God's plan for true religion to help men to get along together. But men started to worship false gods. False worship separated men from God and from each other. That is why the people did not finish building the Tower of Babel. Men thought that building the Tower of Babel had the power to help them get along again. But this plan failed."—*The SDA Bible Commentary [explanation]*, volume 1, pages 284, 285, adapted.

When Adam and Eve sinned, sin separated humans from each other. Their sin also destroyed God's first plan for all living things to get along with each other. Their sin caused humans to separate into many different groups. Many of these groups do not get along to this day.



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## ABRAHAM: THE FATHER OF GOD'S PEOPLE (Hebrews 11:8–19)

What are the top three religions on the earth that worship only one God? They are the religions of the Jews, Christians, and Muslims. All three religions have Abraham as their Father. What does that mean for Christians? Abraham is the spiritual father of the Christian religion. He is an example of how God wants us to serve Him. When God asked Abraham to leave his country in Mesopotamia, God made Abraham a promise. God told Abraham, “ ‘Good will come to all the families of [on] the earth because of you’ ” (Genesis 12:3, ERV). What was the good gift that came to all people on the earth because of Abraham? The answer is Jesus.

**Hebrews 11:8–19; Romans 4:1–3; and Galatians 3:29 talk about Abraham’s faith. What do these verses tell us about the faith that Abraham had? How does the example of Abraham’s faith teach us about getting along together? How do these verses help us understand how important it is for Christians to be in agreement?**



**Abraham is the father of all believers.**

Abraham is the father of all believers. As our spiritual father, he teaches us important rules about Christian agreement. First, Abraham obeys God (Hebrews 11:8). Second, Abraham hopes in God’s promises (Hebrews 11:9, 10). Third, Abraham believes that God will give him a son and many future children the same as there are many stars. Because Abraham believes God’s promises, God makes Abraham right with Himself by faith (Romans 4:1–3). Fourth, Abraham trusts in God’s plan to save him. The biggest test to Abraham’s faith happens when God asks Abraham to put Isaac to death (Genesis 22:1–19; Hebrews 11:17–19).

The Old Testament says that Abraham was God’s friend (2 Chronicles 20:7; Isaiah 41:8). Abraham lived a life of faith. He was loyal to God. Abraham obeyed God. Abraham trusted in God’s promises. Abraham shows us what our Christian lives should be now.

**Think about what you do and say over the next few days. What can you do to make sure that your words and actions show what you believe?**

**GOD'S CHOSEN PEOPLE (Deuteronomy 7:6–11)**

God chose Abraham to serve Him. By choosing Abraham, God also chose Abraham's future children, the people of Israel. God chose Israel to show who He was to everyone on earth. God's choice of Abraham and Israel showed God's love. This choice was at the center of God's plan to save all humans after the separation and suffering that sin caused. Our study of the Bible shows us that God works to connect us with Himself again and to make us new. The Bible shows us that an important part of that plan is God's Special Agreement, or Covenant, with the people of Israel.

**In Deuteronomy 7:6–11, we learn that God chose Israel as His people. Why did God do that?**

God's love for all humans is the reason He chose Israel as His people. God made a Special Agreement with Abraham and his family. As part of the agreement, God told Israel about Himself. He gave Israel this knowledge and asked them to share it with their children forever. God also wanted Israel to be a part of His plan to save the people on this earth (Psalm 67:2). God's choice of Israel to be His special people shows God's wonderful love. The people of Israel had no reason to brag about anything. They did nothing special to win God's love (Deuteronomy 7:7). God does not choose the strong and powerful to serve Him. He chooses people who know that they are weak and know they are nothing without God (1 Corinthians 1:26–31).

Look at how God blessed Israel: "God wanted to bless Israel more than any group of people on the earth. God gave Israel every spiritual gift. God did not hold back anything good from them. He gave them everything that they needed to become examples of God's goodness to everyone on the earth.

"God planned for Israel's obedience to be a witness to other countries. God had the power to give Israel wisdom and the skill to make things. God was their teacher. He had the power to make Israel holy when they chose to obey His law. If Israel obeyed, God promised to never let them get sick from any diseases. God also promised to make them very smart. God wanted everyone to see how much He blessed Israel. God planned for Israel to be a kingdom of holy leaders and princes. God gave Israel everything they needed to become the top nation on earth."—Ellen G. White, *Christ's Object Lessons*, page 288, adapted.



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**ADDITIONAL THOUGHT:** Read Ellen G. White, “The Creation [How God made the heavens and the earth],” pages 44–51, and “The Call [God’s choosing] of Abraham,” pages 125–131, in *Patriarchs [fathers and leaders in Old Testament times]* and *Prophets [special messengers]*.

What was God’s first plan for humans when He made them? We can learn the answer by looking at His plan for the family (Genesis 2:21–24) and for the Sabbath in Eden. God made the Sabbath for all people to enjoy, as Jesus tells us in Mark 2:27, 28. Before God chose Israel to be His people and before there was any sin, God made the seventh day holy. God’s act shows us that the Sabbath is for everyone. The Sabbath is a powerful truth. Try to see in your mind how different life will be if we all keep the Sabbath! God made the Sabbath a day of rest. He made the Sabbath to remind humans of their connection to Him and to each other. “God made the Sabbath and the family in Eden. In God’s plan the two are joined together by ties that cannot be broken. On the Sabbath day, more than any other day, we can live the life of Eden. God planned for members of the family to work and study together. God planned for every father to be the holy leader of his own family. And God planned for both father and mother to be the teachers and companions of their children.”—Ellen G. White, *Child Guidance [showing the way]*, page 535, adapted.



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### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- ① God made Eve from Adam’s side. How does that word picture show us the love connection that God wants a husband and wife to have? God wants to have a love connection with His people too. What does the love connection between a husband and wife tell us about the connection that God wants to have with His people?
- ② The story about the Tower of Babel shows us that God did not plan for humans to speak different languages or to belong to separate race groups. How can we find a way around these separations today? How can we experience agreement, even when the church is made up of people of many countries and languages?
- ③ God chose Seventh-day Adventists the same as He chose Old Testament Israel to serve Him. What lessons can we learn from Old Testament Israel to help us serve and obey God today?