



## Oneness in Christ Lesson 1 4Q 2018 Creation and Fall

By Tim Jennings

Announcement:

Last weekend I had the privilege of speaking at Crossroads Community Church in Georgetown, Delaware. What a great experience.

This group of believers began about 10 years ago meeting in an old auto parts store with about 100 people. They grew so quickly that soon they were having four services each weekend. So, they bought property and built a large facility, which is still growing. Their current auditorium holds 800 and they are again holding four services each weekend, one on Saturday and three on Sunday each week to accommodate the crowds.

Their focus is on healing the hearts of people to love God and love others. In the past they have been asked by some, “what is your doctrinal statement” and their answer is “the Bible.” This has resulted in some visitors getting upset.

I immediately thought of something EG White, one of the founders of the SDA church, wrote back in 1885:

**The Bible, and the Bible alone, is to be our creed, the sole bond of union; all who bow to this holy word will be in harmony.** Our own views and ideas must not control our efforts. Man is fallible, but God's word is infallible. Instead of wrangling with one another, let men exalt the Lord. Let us meet all opposition as did our Master, saying, "It is written." Let us lift up the banner on which is inscribed, **The Bible our rule of faith and discipline.**

{RH, December 15, 1885 par. 16}

I was so impressed with how this group has put this principle into practice—and not surprisingly there was a spirit of love, unity, peace—but also critical reasoning and thinking.

A few points from their website:

### ***Who We Are***

*At CCC, we believe the issue is always the heart...*

### ***What We Do***

*We are a church body, created to share the love of Jesus Christ. Our heart's desire is to grow, serve, and spread the Word of God...*



### ***Why We Do It***

#### ***Mission Statement***

*Crossroad Community Church, a nonprofit corporation, is established to provide a place of worship and fellowship with our Heavenly Father and fellow Christians... It is our responsibility and privilege to propagate the gospel of Jesus Christ by all available means, both at home and in foreign lands.*

#### ***What You Can Do***

*Visit us!*

*When you visit Crossroad Community Church, we are not expecting anything from you. We, as a church body, welcome all to our congregation. We understand that we have a style of how we run our church, and we understand that this style is not for everyone. We believe that Jesus Christ has enabled us to enter heaven, and we rejoice in that. When you visit Crossroad Community Church, you are welcome to sit or stand as we sing. You are welcome to clap or listen. You are welcome to wear jeans or a suit. Do what is comfortable for you. We simply ask that your actions not impede others who are worshiping.*

This group of Christians genuinely love God and are seeking to make God first in their lives, in how they live and treat others.

I was reading in the book *The Great Controversy* about Wycliffe, and he read the following:

**The great movement that Wycliffe inaugurated, which was to liberate the conscience and the intellect, and set free the nations so long bound to the triumphal car of Rome, had its spring in the Bible. Here was the source of that stream of blessing, which, like the water of life, has flowed down the ages since the fourteenth century. Wycliffe accepted the Holy Scriptures with implicit faith as the inspired revelation of God's will, a sufficient rule of faith and practice. He had been educated to regard the Church of Rome as the divine, infallible authority, and to accept with unquestioning reverence the established teachings and customs of a thousand years; but he turned away from all these to listen to God's holy word.**

This was the authority which he urged the people to acknowledge. Instead of the church speaking through the pope, **he declared the only true authority to be the voice of God speaking through His word. And he taught not only that the Bible is a perfect revelation of God's will, but that the Holy Spirit is its only interpreter, and that every man is, by the study of its teachings, to learn his duty for himself. Thus he turned the minds of men from the pope and the Church of Rome to the word of God.** {GC 93.2}

Is this principle still applicable today? Should we turn the minds of people away from church authority, church dogma, church creeds and to the Bible? Does this apply only to the Roman church or to any church?

If we take this position and promote the Bible as our rule of authority and turn people away from church councils, creeds, traditions, and back to the Bible are we uniting or dividing?



As we talk about unity this quarter, consider what unity actually means. The introduction to the study guide points out that Fundamental Belief number 14 of the SDA church states, “In Christ we are a new creation; distinctions of race, culture, learning, and nationality and differences between high and low, rich and poor, male and female, must not be divisive among us.”

What about denominational divisions — can we be united in Christ and be from different denominations?

What types of differences do not cause divisions to Christian unity and what types of differences do cause divisions in Christian unity?

Can two people hold to different understanding of various doctrines and be united in Christ?

Can two people attest to the same doctrinal statements yet be divided?

This leads us into our lesson...

## **INTRODUCTION to the Study Guide**

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The lesson states, “The church is God’s family on earth...” then asks, “But what do we mean by church? Who belongs to the church?”

The lesson mentions the local community of believers, the building in which people meet, but says, “The church is about people, not about buildings.”

And then says, “Yet, all these definitions are incomplete. The church is the people of God all over the earth. And though Christ has faithful followers in various denominations (many of whom will in the final crisis join the remnant [Rev 18:1-14]), this quarter we are going to focus on our church, the Seventh-day Adventist Church, and what unity in Christ means for us.”

Before we get into the specifics for the SDA church, what do you think of the idea that people who are Christ’s faithful followers are somehow, not yet part of the remnant? What would constitute being part of the remnant?

A.W Tozer wrote the following about the remnant:

- I am alarmed because it has been true since Pentecost that such a vast number of people who call themselves Christians—the overwhelming majority—are nominal, and only a remnant is saved.
- There has always been a small remnant, and they have been in the midst of all the rest. A million might wish with their lips and worship with their lips, but only a small fragment truly worship in their hearts in a way that honors and pleases God.
- Where is the remnant? Where can we find them? As soon as we bring this subject up,



immediately all the half-saved and the one percent saved—the backsliders, the borderline, the church members, the professors, and those who have no witness of the Spirit to their redemption—begin to squirm and quote Scripture. And one Scripture they quote is “Judge not, that you be not judged.” (Matthew 7:1)

- The man who belongs to the remnant is not asking if he belongs to the remnant; he is hoping and believing and trusting and seeking and longing and comparing himself not with somebody else but with the Savior.
- So the thing to do is not to look for the remnant; the thing to do is to beware of presumption and self-righteousness and to compare yourself only to Jesus. Then, when you have done that, say, “I am an unprofitable servant.” (quoted from *The Quotable Tozer* compiled by James L. Snyder, Bethany House, 2018, p. 285-286)

Who are the remnant? Revelation 12:17 states about the remnant at the end:

Then the dragon was enraged at the woman and went off to make war against the rest of her offspring—those who obey God’s commandments and hold to the testimony of Jesus.

Who constitutes the remnant? What are the qualifying features?

What does it mean to obey the commandments of God?

What does it mean to hold to the testimony of Jesus?

What do you say to someone who says, that the following is what it means to obey the commandments of God:

Jesus replied: ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’<sup>38</sup> This is the first and greatest commandment.<sup>39</sup> And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’<sup>40</sup> All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.  
Mt 22:37-39

Would people who fulfill Christ’s description be part of the remnant?

Have you heard some say, that to love God means to obey, which means to observe the 7<sup>th</sup> day Sabbath?

Then, were the Jews who put Christ on the Cross and wanted Him off before sunset Friday so they could keep the Sabbath, loving God?

What about the Pharisees who didn’t want Jesus to heal people on Sabbath—they said there are 6 days in the week to heal people, don’t do it on Sabbath—were they part of the remnant?



Why do you think Jesus healed chronic conditions, people who had been sick for decades, on the Sabbath?

So, are we part of the remnant if we refuse to help people on Sabbath in order to honor God by observing the Sabbath?

What is Sabbath observance in a way that makes one part of the remnant?

Can a person be part of the remnant and not observe the Bible Sabbath?

What about the second feature, of the remnant, that they hold to the testimony of Jesus.

What does this mean?

Some have suggested the remnant is the denominational organization that has the Bible Sabbath, all 10 of the 10 commandments, and also has the gift of prophecy manifested in their organization.

So, if this is true, does being part of the remnant then mean joining the right denomination?

Can one be part of the remnant by joining a denomination?

Why do some want denominational affiliation to be synonymous with being part of the remnant?

For the same reason the church of the Dark Ages wanted people to believe that you had to adhere to their rules, rituals, sacraments in order to be saved—it gives the organization power over people, keeps people afraid of organizational authority, reduces questioning and thinking, and increases the organization's power-base.

So, would the remnant be those who are like Christ in character, thus the law is written on their hearts and minds, i.e. the law of love, and they give the same testimony about God, His character, methods, design laws and principles that Jesus gave?

Then, if someone had the right day of worship, but had the wrong character, like those who crucified Christ—would they be part of the remnant?

If someone had the right day of worship, but practiced the methods of coercion and force would they be part of the remnant?

If someone has the right day of worship, but misrepresents God as authoritarian and the inflictor of pain and punishment and from whom we need to be protected, would they be part of the remnant?

If someone has, what you consider the wrong day of worship, but has a renewed heart to love God and others, and would give their lives for others, and they say of God and His character what is right,



would they be part of the remnant?

If we love others, can we have unity even if we don't agree on doctrine, like the day of worship?

I can tell you that when we genuinely love God and practice God's principles we can have unity with people also genuinely love God and practice His principles even if they baptize differently, go to church on a different day, do communion differently—but when the love of God is not in the heart then there is no unity, even if all agree on the same doctrines.

We can see the principles of refusing to value truth and failure to love others causing division outside the church as well:

September 11, 2018 a Tucker Carlson Report on Fox News Tucker said the following (don't focus on the specific issue, but the methods employed and the conclusions Tucker draws):

<http://www.foxnews.com/us/2018/09/12/evergreen-state-sees-catastrophic-drop-in-enrollment-after-social-justice-meltdown.html>

“A tenured Brown professor called Lisa Littman found that teenagers who say they want to switch genders say they are often influenced, not surprisingly, by friends and social media, like all young people are. The study was solid enough to be picked up by a reputable scientific journal. In fact, Brown's PR department sounded a press release promoting the study. But then activists descended. They were offended by the conclusions of the study, not because the conclusions were wrong, no one even argued they were wrong, but because the conclusions were ideologically inconvenient and therefore unacceptable. They demanded that the data be suppressed and remarkable Brown caved to their demands. The university yanked the press release and apologized for sending it in the first place.

This is not really about Brown. This is what it looks like when reason itself dies—politics trumps science, empirical conclusions are banned, acknowledging reality itself becomes a criminal act, superstition reigns, the Dark Ages arrive. This is what they told you the Christian Right wanted to do—they were lying. As soon as they did it themselves.”

This is not about the gender issue, but about how people deal with different opinions—do we allow for evidence based, reasoned discourse, or do we allow mob rule, hysteria, emotionalism. Does what is politically correct overrule rational thought?

And this type of repression of evidence, of reality itself being criminalized, of superstition reigning happens on both sides, left and right, it happens wherever error is defended and truth is feared.

Is this evidence of what Scripture has warned will happen at the end of time? Is this evidence of a beastly system at work? Can we see it if it doesn't manifest itself on the specific issue we have been taught to look for?



## SABBATH

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Read memory text, “Then [God] brought [Abraham]...” Who are these descendants referred to in this verse?

According to Paul:

It is not as though God’s word had failed. For not all who are descended from Israel are Israel.<sup>7</sup> Nor because they are his descendants are they all Abraham’s children. On the contrary, “It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned.”<sup>8</sup> In other words, **it is not the natural children who are God’s children, but it is the children of the promise who are regarded as Abraham’s offspring.** Rom 9:6-8

This interaction between the Jewish leadership and Jesus:

“**Abraham is our father,**” they answered.

“**If you were Abraham’s children,**” said Jesus, “**then you would do the things Abraham did.**”<sup>40</sup> As it is, you are determined to kill me, a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God. Abraham did not do such things.<sup>41</sup> You are doing the things your own father does.”

“We are not illegitimate children,” they protested. “The only Father we have is God himself.”

<sup>42</sup> Jesus said to them, “If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and now am here. I have not come on my own; but he sent me.”<sup>43</sup> Why is my language not clear to you? Because you are unable to hear what I say.<sup>44</sup> **You belong to your father, the devil,** and you want to carry out your father’s desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.<sup>1</sup>

So, who are the descendants of Abraham? Those who are like Abraham in character, i.e. those who trust God and are transformed to be like Jesus!

This is hugely important today because millions have missed this reality and think that something other than character transformation matters—either being a genetic descendant of Abraham or some legal process where one is adopted into the legal family of God thus becoming a legal descendant of Abraham.

No! The only way one is a genuine, in reality, descendant of Abraham in the way the Bible means is that they have the same character and practice the same methods in relationship with God that

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<sup>1</sup> *The Holy Bible: New International Version.* (1984). (Jn 8:39–44). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.





Abraham did.

The lesson points out that God created humanity sinless and it was God's goal for human beings to be united in love. But because of sin division has happened.

What caused sin to enter into humanity?

Lies believed break the circle of love and trust...

What is the solution?

Truth will set you free—the truth believed destroys lies and restores trust...

What truth? The truth about God!

## **SUNDAY**

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Read first paragraph, "A clear message flowing..." This is well said! Do you hear the description of the law of love in this paragraph?

And what is revealed when things operate like God intended?

Human beings were created in the image of God—what does this mean?

In what ways did God create Adam and Eve in His image?

- Intelligence—the ability to reason and think
- The power of choice—which means the ability to love, to self-sacrifice
- The power to procreate—to create beings in their own image
- The power to create and build—art, music, etc.
- Dominion—lower life forms to govern and rule over—to work to give energy of one's self toward the welfare of others
- Co-equals to enter into genuine unity of love, bonding and fellowship so that the two become one
- The ability to experience pain and heartache as well as joy and reward

Read last paragraph, "God is love..." This is again well said and has huge functional (operational) implications.

Can love exist in isolation? Or, as the lesson states, does love require relationship?

Therefore, if God is love, God cannot be a singularity, but must be a plurality, thus the Trinity—the smallest number for genuine selfless love—three.





Can you get love by threat, demand, coercion, intimidation, punishment? Thus, understanding the operational nature of love, many false doctrines in Christianity can be quickly eliminated. God cannot be saying love me or I will kill you—all such concepts are seen to be lies of Satan.

God can be saying, love me and let me heal you, because if you don't, you are going to die from your terminal condition. But God cannot be the source of inflicted death and still be a God of love—all such ideas are lies.

So, the penal substitutionary view of God is proven to be a lie, an infection to God's church and an obstruction to the remnant's ability to finish the work of preparing the world for Christ's return. We must reject this lie and come back to God as our Creator and Savior.

## MONDAY

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Read first paragraph, "The consequence of the Fall...." What is the primary drive on planet earth today? Survival of the fittest, which Paul describes as....???? The law of sin and death, which is the opposite of the law of love.

And Paul describes in Romans 8 how all nature groans under the weight of sin.

Many get confused about this, because sin has been taught through the false human imperial/imposed law concept and many are taught we are born legally guilty and condemned by God and under a legal death sentence. And many get confused and ask, what about babies, what did they do wrong?

When we return to God's design law, we understand we are not born legally guilty, we are born terminal—with a condition, we as individuals, did NOT choose, but which, without remedy, will destroy us.

Thus, Oswald Chambers wrote in *My Utmost for His Highest*:

**The Bible does not say that God punished the human race for one man's sin**, but that the nature of sin, namely, my claim to my right to myself, entered into the human race through one man. But it also says that another **Man took upon Himself the sin of the human race and put it away** — an infinitely more profound revelation...

**Sin is something I am born with** and cannot touch— only God touches sin through redemption. It is through the Cross of Christ that God redeemed the entire human race from the possibility of damnation through the heredity of sin. **God nowhere holds a person responsible for having the heredity of sin, and does not condemn anyone because of it.** Condemnation comes when I realize that Jesus Christ came to deliver me from this heredity of sin, and **yet I refuse to let Him do so.** From that moment I begin to get the seal of damnation.



**“This is the condemnation [and the critical moment], that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light . . .” (John 3:19)**

Thus, condemnation doesn't come at birth, condemnation comes when we reject the Remedy of Jesus Christ, sent by God to cure our condition.

In the third paragraph the lesson points out that human wickedness led to the flood—why?

How do you explain the reason for the flood through the truth of God's design law?

The lesson asks about what things contribute to disharmony and what actions can be taken to restore harmony with people with whom you are not currently in harmony?

What about this?

Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? <sup>15</sup> What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? <sup>16</sup> What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said: “I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people.”

<sup>17</sup>“Therefore come out from them and be separate, says the Lord. 2Cor 6:14-17

From the book *Patriarchs and Prophets*:

The Bible plainly teaches that **there can be no harmony between the people of God and the world.** "Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you" (1 John 3:13). Our Saviour says, "Ye know that it hated Me before it hated you" (John 15:18). **Satan works through the ungodly, under cover of a pretended friendship, to allure God's people into sin that he may separate them from Him;** and when their defense is removed, then he will lead his agents to turn against them and seek to accomplish their destruction.--PP 559 (1890)

Was Jesus able to have harmony with Judas, Caiaphas, Pilate? So, is it always possible to restore harmony?

Genuine harmony is only possible when operating upon God's design law—harmony cannot be established while in violation of God's design law. Confederacies and alliances can be established in violations of God's design law, but not genuine harmony because selfishness still reigns in the hearts and will eventually cause disunity.

## **TUESDAY**

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Why did God confuse the languages at Babel?



Bottom pink section asks, “What are practical steps we can take to help heal the divisions of race, culture, and language that hurt us even in the church?”

When we get back to design law it all falls into place...but when we operate on imposed law divisions always occur.

Did you notice the lesson didn't include divisions based on gender and roles in the church—do we not want unity on this issue?

Is salvation, being part of God's kingdom and usefulness in God's cause, about gender or about character?

## WEDNESDAY

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The lesson points out that Abraham was justified by faith—what does this mean? How do you explain it?

What law lens to you explain it through?

The lesson references Romans 4:1-3, NIV:

What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather, discovered in this matter? <sup>2</sup> If, in fact, Abraham was justified by works, he had something to boast about—but not before God. <sup>3</sup> What does the Scripture say? “Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness.”

Hmmm... does this make it clear? Or do the legal biases of the translator come in?

Does “credited to” make it sound like he got credit for something he didn't actually have in his account. Like a credit card, you get credit, but you don't actually have the money?

That is not what the Greek actually means. The Greek means accounting like an accountant does. So, other translations which read accounted as righteous are better, but still get misunderstood. The Greek means that you only account what actually exists in reality. You do not account \$5.00 in your bank account unless there is actually \$5.00 in the bank account. Thus, God didn't give Abraham credit, **but actually filled Abraham with a gift of a new heart and right spirit**, because Abraham trusted God and gave God permission to work in his heart and this is why God accounted, or reckoned, that Abraham was righteous, because Abraham had actually been changed by God from unrighteous to righteous.

The penal substitutionary view is a lie and a fraud and cheats people out of the real healing and transformation by getting them to accept a false legal replacement to genuine healing. It would be like a person dying of cancer being tricked into accepting a piece of paper with a written statement of



health on it, instead of a remedy that would cure the cancer.

So, Romans 4:1-3 from *The Remedy*:

What about our father Abraham: what did he understand about this issue? <sup>2</sup>If Abraham was somehow healed by his own efforts at keeping a set of rules or performing certain rituals, then he would have his own healing formula to promote, and would not need trust in God. <sup>3</sup>But what does the Scripture say? "Abraham trusted God, and his trust was recognized as righteousness because the distrust caused through Satan's lies had been removed, and through trust he was endowed with a new heart, right motives and Christlike principles."

## THURSDAY

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Read first paragraph, "In calling Abraham..." For what purpose was Israel called?

The lesson rightly points out that Israel was called to be God's representatives on earth to preserve a true knowledge of God and bring all human beings back to God.

The lesson goes on to say, "God withheld from them nothing favorable to the formation of character that would make them representatives of Himself."

What was their purpose? How did they do?

What about the purpose of the Christian church today? How are we doing?

Read last paragraph, "Their obedience..." What law?

Why would they be successful?

What lessons would be taught?

How do we understand what we read in the history of ancient Israel as recorded in Scripture?

Read bottom pink section, "What parallels..."

Are there any parallels in the attacks and methods of Satan in both groups?

## FRIDAY

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read questions 1 and 2



## ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Watch *The Dr. Tim Jennings Show* on **WBTN.TV Network**. Go to [TimJenningsMD.com](http://TimJenningsMD.com) for more info.

**September 27-29, 2018:** Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Mega National Conference of the American Association of Christian Counselors in Dallas, TX

**September 30-Oct 2, 2018:** Dr. Jennings will be speaking at NAD of SDA Mental Health Education retreat for pastors at Kettering, OH.

**October 19, 20, 2018:** Dr. Jennings will be doing a seminar at Camelback SDA church, in Phoenix, AZ.

**November 9,10 2018:** Dr. Jennings will be doing two presentations at Houston, TX, in conjunction with the AACC

**December 1, 2018:** Dr. Jennings will be doing an Aging Brain seminar in Dallas, TX. Organized by the Arlington SDA church.

**January 4-6, 2019:** Dr. Jennings will be speaking for the Florida Conference of SDA Women's Convention in Orlando, FL.

**February 2-3, 2019:** Dr. Jennings will be speaking Christ's Church of Oronogo, MO.

**February 22-March 9, 2019:** Dr. Jennings will be in Australia speaking in Brisbane, Toowoomba, Adelaide, Avondale, Sydney, Livingston, Perth, and Melbourne.

*In partnership with Come and Reason Ministries and Hixson United Methodist Church  
**Mental Health Matters** Community Gatherings for Help, Hope and Healing*

### **The Science of Belief Thursday, October 12, 2018**

In this seminar we will examine the science of belief and demonstrate how modern quantum understanding provides a scientific basis for the impact belief, including prayer, has on our physical health and can even impact the physical world around us.

### **Guilt Resolution Thursday, November 8, 2018**

Do you struggle with guilt? Discover the difference between legitimate and illegitimate guilt and how to resolve each and how to prevent people from manipulating you with guilt.

### **The God-Shaped Brain Thursday, December 13, 2018**

Our brains are in a constant state of flux. Moment by moment new connections are forming, idle tracks are being pruned back and brain circuits are changing. Discover how our beliefs change our brain wiring, our physical health, and even which genes are turned on or turned off. Do your beliefs matter – more than you ever knew!