

Central Study Hour – Sabbath School Lesson Notes

“Oneness in Christ”: Lesson 8, “Unity in Faith”

Sabbath Afternoon: Read the Title. Agreeing on Biblical teachings is essential to unity as a church. However, in the light of the present conflict between the NAD and the GC, it seems obvious that we need agreement on church order as well.

Unity in the SDA church was threatened in 1888 over theological debate. “Their hostile attitudes toward each other destroyed their fellowship and friendship and thus marred the unity and mission of the church.” Of course, “love for Jesus” should be seen in our actions, “especially when we disagree,” but that was lost in 1888.

Read the last paragraph of the narrative.

So, what doctrines form the core of SDA beliefs? Creation and the Sabbath, the Gospel, the Godhead, The Sanctuary and the Judgment; The State of the dead, Resurrection and the Second Coming; the Great Controversy motif, the Historicist School of Interpretation of Bible Prophecy. Are each of the above essential for unity in the church? What value is there in having a group of people who agree biblically about what they consider are important doctrines?

SUNDAY: “Salvation in Jesus”

This is about the first advent of Jesus, the gospel.

What importance does Peter give to Jesus in his understanding of the plan of salvation?

Read Acts 4:10-12. Only through the crucified & risen LORD, Jesus Christ, can anyone be saved.

Read Acts 10:43. All the OT prophets told of Him & that those who would believe in Him would receive remission of sins.

Share highlights as desired from the middle paragraph.

What do the following passages teach about the meaning of Jesus’ death and resurrection?

Read Romans 3:24-25. “We are *justified freely* by His grace” through His sacrifice for forgiveness of sin.

Read 1 John 2:2. His sacrifice for sin is *for the whole world*.

Read 1 John 4:9-10. *Because God loves us*, He sent His Son to be the sacrifice.

What is Satan’s counterfeit for the above truths? That we must earn God’s favor. So sad.

Read 1 Peter 2:21-24. *What ideas are included in the gospel according to these verses?* Christ left us an example that we should trust God, be dead to sin, and live unto righteousness.

What is Satan’s counterfeit for this? That we really can’t follow Jesus’ example. It’s impossible.

Read the final paragraph.

What emphasis do SDA’s have differently from other Christian organizations? The Sanctuary & Holiness, Overcoming, Living in the Judgment Hour & during the Close of Probation.

How united is our church on these points of truth? We are not very united. Some don’t even believe in the judgment (especially that it began in 1844). Many don’t believe we can overcome sin, but that we will keep sinning right up to Jesus’ 2nd coming.

MONDAY: "Second Coming of Christ"

Share Highlights from the first paragraph.

What are the counterfeits of the second coming? 1.) A spiritual coming, that is, Jesus already came into my heart. 2.) Secret rapture. 3.) Could time setting be kind of a counterfeit?

What do the following passages teach about the manner of Christ's return?

Acts 1:11. It's a visible return.

Matthew 24:26-27. Not a secret, but as the lightning from the east to west.

Rev. 1:7. Everyone will see it.

1 Thess. 4:13-18. Jesus will descend with a shout, voice of the archangel, & trumpets blowing.

Rev. 19:11-16. Jesus will be leading the army of heaven to smite the nations of the earth.

How united are SDA's on the second coming? Better. Just a few time setters sometimes.

(If time, share highlights from the last paragraph and discuss the questions from the box at the bottom.)

TUESDAY: "Jesus' Ministry in the Heavenly Sanctuary"

Share the highlights from the first paragraph and read the second paragraph.

Does the Bible actually teach that there is a sanctuary in heaven? What do the following passages teach concerning Jesus' priestly ministry in heaven?

Read Hebrews 4:14-16. He faced temptations as we have (without sin) and understands our struggles. He knows how to help us.

Read Hebrews 7:25. He lives to intercede for us.

Read Hebrews 8:1-2, 6. Jesus is in the true tabernacle as our mediator.

Read Hebrews 9:11-12, 23-24, 28. His own shed blood authorizes His work in the sanctuary in heaven for our eternal redemption. Because of that one sacrifice, He will appear the second time to complete the plan of salvation.

Read 1 John 1:9-2:2. When we confess our sins, He will forgive and cleanse us. He is our advocate if we sin – for the whole world.

"Since His ascension, the heavenly sanctuary is the place where Christ conducts His priestly ministry for our salvation." Hebrews 4:16 says that we can come boldly to Him for help.

Read the 1st part of the fourth paragraph ("As the earthly tabernacle....Jesus the mediator").

What is Satan's counterfeit for the Holy place ministry of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary? False priests, confessional, false mediators. Blind trust in pastors.

Read the 2nd part of the fourth paragraph ("Since 1844, Jesus' ministry....plan of salvation.").

The emphasis is on overcoming & holiness because of the judgment & the coming close of probation. We want our sins to be blotted out forever.

Are SDA's united in our understanding of the judgment? Our official teaching on this is sure, but as a people we are not united on this at all.

Why are we not united on the judgment? It's because there is a counterfeit teaching. The counterfeit is the teaching that the plan of salvation was all finished at the cross. If that is true, no judgment is needed before Jesus' second coming.

WEDNESDAY: "The Sabbath"

Read the first paragraph.

Read Gen. 2:1-3. The meaning of the Sabbath is rooted in creation.

Read the second paragraph.

What do the following passages teach about the meaning of the Sabbath?

Exodus 20:8-11. Verse 11 looks to the LORD as Creator. Only He can be God because only He can create. The Sabbath celebrates the Creator!

Deuteronomy 5:12-15. Verse 15 looks to the LORD as Redeemer/Saviour. Only He can truly save us. The Sabbath celebrates salvation through Christ!

Ezekiel 20:12, 20. This passage looks for relationship with God as Lord. He is the One who can make His people holy. The Sabbath celebrates sanctification through Christ and the Holy Spirit!

Share highlights from the 3rd and 4th paragraphs.

Are SDA's united on the Sabbath? Yes, on the correct day. Not as strong on the meaning of the Sabbath. Not united on how to observe the Sabbath.

What is Satan's counterfeit for the Sabbath? Sunday sacredness, every day or any day can be one's Sabbath, Jesus is my Sabbath.

Ask the question in the box at the bottom of the page. Coming together for worship.

THURSDAY: "Death and Resurrection"

Share highlights from the first and second paragraph.

What do these passages tell us about life after death and when immortality will be given to human beings?

1 Corinthians 15:51-54. In the twinkling of an eye (in an instant), the dead in Christ will be raised up at the last trumpet blast and put on immortality.

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18. When the LORD descends with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and the blast of the trumpets, the dead in Christ will rise and be caught up to be with the LORD.

Read the first part of the last paragraph ("The apostle Paul....at the resurrection").

Are SDA's united on this view of death and the resurrection? Unity is good on this teaching.

What is Satan's counterfeit? The belief in the immortality of the soul.

Read the last full sentence of the final paragraph.

Read the questions in the box at the bottom of the page. We are united in our hope in the resurrection at the second coming of Christ. We are reminded at every SDA funeral.

Conclusion: If time, discuss the Discussion Questions #2 and/or #3 on Friday's page.

Close by sharing the summary. The point is that it is important to understand these biblical teachings. They are essential to our unity as a church.