

Lessons from John 1 – 11

Chapter 1

1. The Pre-existence and Deity of Christ (vv. 1–3)

- **The Lesson:** Jesus is not a created being, but the co-eternal Creator. SDA teaching affirms that 100% of creation was made by Him. As noted in the writings of SDA co-founder Ellen G. White, the very hands that were later nailed to the cross were the same hands that formed Adam in the Garden of Eden.

2. The Nature of Spiritual Rebirth (vv. 12–13)

- **The Lesson:** Being a child of God comes not through genealogy, nationality, or mere human will, but through a supernatural spiritual rebirth. The SDA perspective highlights that salvation is both a one-time acceptance of Jesus and an ongoing, lifelong relationship of faith in Him.

3. Grace Replacing the Law (v. 17)

- **The Lesson:** *“For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.”* Rather than abolishing the moral law (the Ten Commandments), Adventists understand this verse to mean that the legalistic, shadow-filled ceremonies of the Old Testament were replaced and fulfilled by the reality of Christ's grace. He reveals the true, loving character of the Father.

4. The Power of Personal Witnessing (vv. 35–51)

- **The Lesson:** John the Baptist deflected attention from himself to exalt Jesus as the “Lamb of God” (v. 29). Similarly, when Andrew and Philip met Jesus, their immediate response was to invite others to *“Come and see”* (vv. 39, 46). SDA lessons emphasize that every believer is called to be an active, living witness of Christ's transforming power in their daily lives.

Chapter 2

1. The Wedding in Cana: Abundance and Transformation (Verses 1-11)

- **The Setting:** Jesus honored the institution of marriage by attending a community wedding. Ellen G. White's commentary in *The Desire of Ages* notes that He did not isolate Himself from human joy; rather, His presence sanctioned social relationships and modeled how to engage with others positively.
- **The Miracle of Unfermented Wine:** Consistent with SDA health principles, the "wine" Jesus created was unfermented, pure grape juice—the "fruit of the vine"—which represented His life-giving blood.
- **Symbolism:** The six large stone pots used for the miracle were designated for Jewish purification rituals. By using them, Jesus demonstrated that His New Covenant replaces mere outward rituals with inward grace and transformation.

2. The Cleansing of the Temple: Righteous Zeal (Verses 12-17)

- **The Zeal of Christ:** Upon entering the temple, Jesus found it turned into a bustling, corrupt marketplace. Filled with righteous indignation, He drove out the money

changers. This highlights that true honor for God cannot coexist with selfish greed or the exploitation of others.

- **The SDA Perspective:** This event symbolizes the necessary purification of the church and individual hearts. Just as Jesus cleansed the physical temple, He desires to cleanse the "temple of the Holy Spirit" (the human body and mind) of all worldly defilements.

3. Knowing the Heart (Verses 23-25)

- **Divine Discernment:** When many in Jerusalem professed to believe in Jesus because of His miracles, He did not entrust Himself to them because He "knew all men".
- **The Lesson:** God is not fooled by superficial faith or outward professions of religion. He searches the motives of the heart, requiring an authentic, inward transformation rather than a momentary emotional response to wonders.

Chapter 3

1. The Necessity of the New Birth (vv. 1-8)

- **Reason over Religion:** As a respected Pharisee and ruler of the Jews, Nicodemus likely believed his heritage and strict Torah observance guaranteed him a place in the kingdom of God. Jesus shattered this assumption by stating that "*Ye must be born again*" (John 3:7, KJV).
- **Water and Spirit:** In SDA theology, being "born of water and of the Spirit" (John 3:5, KJV) points to baptism by immersion (the physical testimony of a clean heart) and the transforming work of the Holy Spirit inside the believer.
- **No Human Effort:** The new birth is not an emotional climax or something you can achieve on your own; it is a fundamental, divine change of heart and character wrought by the Holy Spirit.

2. The Cross as the Ultimate Demonstration of Love (vv. 14-15)

- **The Bronze Serpent:** Jesus points Nicodemus back to the Old Testament story in Numbers 21, where Moses lifted up a serpent on a pole. Those who had been bitten by poisonous snakes were healed simply by looking at it.
- **Look and Live:** Jesus prophesies His own crucifixion by stating that the Son of Man must be lifted up. This highlights the SDA belief that salvation requires more than just acknowledging God; it requires an active, saving faith that looks upon the crucified Savior.

3. The Centrality of Grace (v. 16)

- John 3:16 ("*For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son...*") is the cornerstone of the Gospel. In SDA teachings, this verse outlines the ultimate sacrifice of God the Father and highlights that His love is all-encompassing, unearned, and offered unconditionally to all of humanity.

4. Living in the Light (vv. 19-21)

- Jesus states that men "*loved darkness rather than light*" (John 3:19, KJV). The SDA perspective emphasizes that true conversion results in a visible shift in lifestyle. Those who are born again do not hide their deeds but willingly bring their lives into harmony with the will of God, allowing the Holy Spirit to guide their daily walk.

Chapter 4

1. Breaking Social and Cultural Barriers

- **The Context:** Jesus "must needs go through Samaria" (John 4:4, KJV). While traditional Jews traveled miles out of their way to avoid Samaria, Jesus went directly there.
- **The Lesson:** SDA theology emphasizes that God's mission field has no boundaries. Christ came to break down prejudices of race, social status, and gender. He treated the Samaritan woman—an outcast in her society—with immense respect and dignity, showing that the gospel is for everyone.

2. The Living Water

- **The Context:** Jesus offers the woman "living water" (John 4:10, KJV) that will become a "well of water springing up into everlasting life" (John 4:14, KJV).
- **The Lesson:** While physical water satisfies temporary, earthly thirst, Jesus offers the Holy Spirit and eternal life. SDA teaching stresses that only Christ can permanently satisfy the deep spiritual hunger and emptiness of the human heart.

3. True Worship in Spirit and Truth

- **The Context:** Jesus declares that the time has come when true worshippers will "worship the Father in spirit and in truth" (John 4:23, KJV).
- **The Lesson:** In the writings of Ellen G. White (often referenced in SDA studies, such as in *The Desire of Ages*), this passage emphasizes that true worship isn't tied to a specific geographic location, building, or rigid ritual. It requires sincerity of heart (worshipping in spirit) and an alignment with the teachings of God's Word (worshipping in truth).

4. Personal Evangelism and Testimony

- **The Context:** The woman leaves her waterpot behind and runs to her village, saying, "Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did" (John 4:29, KJV).
- **The Lesson:** The Samaritan woman serves as a model for lay evangelism. As highlighted in SDA Sabbath School studies, once she had a personal encounter with Jesus, she was compelled to share her testimony and invite her community to "come and see". Her witness resulted in an entire town accepting Christ.

5. Spiritual Sustenance over Physical Needs

- **The Context:** When the disciples urge Jesus to eat, He tells them, "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work" (John 4:34, KJV).

- **The Lesson:** Jesus draws His ultimate strength, joy, and satisfaction from doing His Father's will and saving souls. SDA commentaries point to this as the ultimate example of a surrendered life dedicated to God's mission.

6. Healing of the Nobleman's Son

- **The Context:** The chapter closes with Jesus healing the nobleman's son from a distance at Cana (John 4:46-54, KJV).
- **The Lesson:** This miracle demonstrates the power of the spoken Word of God. SDA lessons point out that the nobleman had to learn true faith by trusting Jesus' word alone, without needing to see outward signs first.

Chapter 5

1. The Healing at the Pool of Bethesda (John 5:1-9)

- **The Grace of God:** The paralyzed man had been ill for 38 years and did not even ask Jesus for healing. Jesus sought him out and healed him purely out of unmerited grace.
- **Faith and Action:** Jesus told the man to "Rise, take up thy bed, and walk" (v. 8). SDA teachings point out that faith is not just a feeling; it involves the active choice to obey God's word, and the power to obey is given simultaneously with the command.

2. The Sabbath Controversy (John 5:10-18)

- **The True Meaning of the Sabbath:** The religious leaders viewed the man carrying his bed on the Sabbath as a violation of their strict, man-made traditions. Jesus used this moment to redefine the Sabbath, showing that it is a day for divine mercy and rescuing life.
- **The Creator at Work:** Jesus defended His actions by stating, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work" (v. 17). Because God has never stopped sustaining the universe—even on the Sabbath—Jesus, as the Creator, was acting in perfect harmony with His Father.

3. "Sin No More" (John 5:14)

- **The Root of Suffering:** When Jesus finds the man later in the temple, He warns him, "Sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee."
- **Total Restoration:** The SDA perspective, informed by Ellen G. White's writings in *The Desire of Ages*, suggests that the man's physical affliction may have been the result of a sinful lifestyle. Jesus was offering him total healing—both physically and spiritually—warning against taking God's grace for granted.

4. Christ's Equality with the Father (John 5:19-29)

- **The Source of Life:** Jesus emphatically declares that the Father has given Him "to have life in himself" (v. 26). This firmly establishes Christ's divine nature.
- **The Resurrection:** Jesus highlights His ultimate power over both physical life and the resurrection of the dead at the last day (v. 25-29), vindicating His claims of being the Messiah.

5. The Four Witnesses (John 5:30-47)

- To counter the accusations of the Jewish leaders, Jesus presents four unmistakable testimonies pointing to His divinity:
 1. **John the Baptist** (v. 33)
 2. **His own miracles** (v. 36)
 3. **God the Father** (v. 37)
 4. **The Scriptures** (v. 39)
- **The Lesson on Unbelief:** Jesus scolds the religious leaders for studying the scriptures but failing to recognize Him, showing that head-knowledge without a heart-connection to God leads to rejection and spiritual death.

Chapter 6

1. The Danger of Materialism and Misplaced Motives

- **The Context:** Jesus fed the multitude (John 6:1-14) and walked on water (John 6:16-21), but the crowd followed Him to Capernaum primarily to receive another free meal.
- **The Lesson:** Jesus rebuked this mindset, saying, "*Labor not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life*" (John 6:27, KJV). SDA teaching stresses that spiritual blindness occurs when we focus on temporal, earthly rewards rather than our ultimate need for salvation.

2. The True Manna vs. Earthly Desires

- **The Context:** The crowd demanded another miracle, pointing out that Moses gave their ancestors manna in the wilderness (John 6:30-31).
- **The Lesson:** Jesus corrected them, explaining that Moses did not provide the manna; it was God. Furthermore, He declared Himself the true Bread from Heaven (John 6:35). SDA scholars emphasize that while earthly food sustains the body temporarily, Christ alone provides eternal life.

3. Eating His Flesh and Drinking His Blood

- **The Context:** Jesus made a challenging statement: "*Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you*" (John 6:53, KJV).
- **The Lesson:** Many in the crowd took this literally and were offended, eventually turning away from Him (John 6:66). SDA theology interprets this metaphorically. To "eat" and "drink" Christ is to fully internalize His Word, study His teachings, and appropriate His righteousness into our daily lives by faith.

4. Faith in the Face of "Hard Sayings"

- **The Context:** When many disciples left, Jesus asked the Twelve if they would also go away (John 6:67). Peter responded, "*Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life*" (John 6:68, KJV).

- **The Lesson:** SDA teachings highlight Peter's unwavering commitment to the Word. Even when Jesus's teachings are difficult to understand or run counter to popular culture, true believers must stand firm, trusting in Christ's divinity and the assurance of salvation.

Chapter 7

1. Living by God's Timing (verses 1-10)

- **The Lesson:** Jesus' brothers mocked His timing and urged Him to seek public glory. Jesus refused, stating, *"My time is not yet come"* (John 7:6).
- **SDA Perspective:** Adventists understand this as a vital lesson in patience and surrender. True disciples must not run ahead of God's will simply for human recognition or validation. Jesus aligned His life with the Father's predetermined schedule, ultimately focused on His divine mission, not worldly popularity.

2. Obedience as the Key to Discernment (verses 14-17)

- **The Lesson:** When Jesus taught in the temple, the leaders marveled at His wisdom. Jesus declared: *"If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine"* (John 7:17).
- **SDA Perspective:** Understanding spiritual truth requires more than intellect; it requires a submissive heart. Adventists emphasize that spiritual discernment is granted to those who are actively practicing and willing to obey God's will.

3. God's Law over Human Tradition (verses 19-24)

- **The Lesson:** Jesus defended His healing on the Sabbath by challenging the religious leaders: *"Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment"* (John 7:24).
- **SDA Perspective:** This highlights the Seventh-day Adventist commitment to the true, merciful spirit of the Sabbath. Jesus revealed that doing good and bringing healing align with God's law, exposing the hypocrisy of legalism that elevated man-made traditions above God's divine character.

4. The Promise of the Holy Spirit (verses 37-39)

- **The Lesson:** On the last day of the feast, Jesus cried out: *"If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink"* (John 7:37). John explains this refers to the Holy Spirit, which believers were to receive after Jesus was glorified.
- **SDA Perspective:** This is a central theme in Adventist theology. It points forward to the "latter rain" and the continual need for the Holy Spirit in the lives of believers to empower them for holy living and witness. The Spirit is depicted as a refreshing, unstoppable force welling up from within the believer.

5. The Danger of Prejudice (verses 40-52)

- **The Lesson:** The crowds were divided. Some believed He was the Christ, while others rejected Him simply based on His Galilean origins.
- **SDA Perspective:** We are cautioned against forming prejudices and rejecting truth based on preconceived ideas or worldly status. The temple guards, originally sent

to arrest Jesus, were so moved by His character that they declared, "*Never man spake like this man*" (John 7:46).

Chapter 8

1. Grace, Dignity, and Judgment: The Woman Taken in Adultery (vv. 1-11)

- **The Trap:** The Pharisees brought the woman to the temple to test Jesus, hoping He would violate the Mosaic law or Roman rule.
- **Protecting Dignity:** Jesus wrote their own secret sins in the dust, shifting the focus from her guilt to their hypocrisy. Ellen G. White notes in *The Desire of Ages* that this was often a setup. He avoided public humiliation while allowing the accusers' own consciences to convict them.
- **Justice and Mercy:** Jesus did not condone the sin ("sin no more"), but He demonstrated true righteousness by refusing to condemn the repentant sinner. He modeled how the church should treat those struggling with sin.

2. The Light of the World (v. 12)

- By declaring, "I am the light of the world," Jesus positioned Himself as the source of all truth. SDA teachings emphasize that Jesus represents God's character of love in stark contrast to the dark deception of Satan's kingdom in the Great Controversy.

3. True Discipleship and Freedom (vv. 31-36)

- **Abiding in Truth:** Jesus tells the Jews who believed in Him, "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (vv. 31-32).
- **The SDA View:** Faith and obedience are viewed as two sides of the same coin. Merely believing isn't enough; a true disciple *abides* (continually obeys and follows) in Christ's teachings.

4. The Great Controversy and Slavery to Sin (vv. 34-47)

- Jesus sharply contrasts the children of God with the children of darkness. He identifies Satan as a liar and a murderer from the beginning, challenging the Pharisees who boasted of their lineage but were actually serving the enemy. This underscores the ongoing cosmic battle between truth and deception.

5. The Eternal "I AM" (v. 58)

- Jesus declares, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am." (v. 58).
- **The Deity of Christ:** By using the title "I AM," Jesus explicitly claimed to be the eternal God—the same divine entity who spoke to Moses from the burning bush. The Pharisees understood the gravity of this statement and sought to stone Him for perceived blasphemy.

Chapter 9

1. Suffering, Sin, and God's Sovereignty (vv. 1-5)

When the disciples asked whose sin caused the man's blindness, Jesus corrected their theology: **"Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him"** (John 9:3, KJV).

- **SDA Insight:** God does not author suffering, but in His sovereignty, He overrules adversity to display His grace. This man's disability was not a punishment, but a platform for God to reveal His power.

2. The Healing Method: The Creator at Work (vv. 6-7)

Jesus spat on the ground, made clay with the spittle, anointed the man's eyes, and told him to wash in the pool of Siloam.

- **SDA Insight:** The use of clay and the command to wash at "Siloam" (meaning *Sent*) points to Christ as the Creator. Just as God formed Adam from the dust of the earth (Genesis 2:7), Jesus the Creator was forming new eyes for the blind man. There was no inherent healing virtue in the mud; the power was entirely in Christ's word.

3. The True Meaning of the Sabbath (vv. 13-16)

Because Jesus performed this miracle on the Sabbath, the Pharisees condemned Him as a sinner for "breaking" their rigid, man-made Sabbath rules.

- **SDA Insight:** This event directly illustrates a core Adventist belief regarding the Sabbath: *it was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath*. Jesus, as Lord of the Sabbath, showed that the Sabbath is a day for divine healing, deliverance, and showing practical compassion.

4. Fear vs. Boldness in Witnessing (vv. 18-34)

The religious leaders interrogated the man's parents, who gave evasive answers out of fear of being cast out of the synagogue. However, the healed man displayed immense courage, answering the Pharisees with his own transformative experience: **"One thing I do know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see"** (John 9:25, KJV).

- **SDA Insight:** The man's life was changed, and no theological argument from the Pharisees could erase that fact. Ellen G. White, a foundational figure of the SDA Church, often highlights that a true, lived testimony of Christ's grace is the most effective and undeniable weapon against skepticism.

5. Spiritual Blindness vs. Spiritual Sight (vv. 35-41)

When Jesus found the man later, He revealed Himself as the Son of God, and the man worshipped Him. Jesus concluded the chapter by condemning the Pharisees, stating that those who claim to see but reject Him are actually blind, while those who acknowledge their blindness receive spiritual sight.

- **SDA Insight:** The Pharisees' greatest sin was their pride. They believed they had the ultimate truth, but in reality, they were spiritually blind. The blind man, however, started with physical darkness and ended up recognizing Jesus as his Savior.

Chapter 10

The Door to the Sheepfold (vv. 1–9)

- **Exclusive Access:** Jesus declares, *"I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved"* (John 10:9). Salvation is found exclusively through Christ, not through human institutions, rigid rituals, or other religious systems.
- **Rebuking False Shepherds:** Jesus contrasts His legitimate, loving leadership with "thieves and robbers" (John 10:8). In harmony with the writings of Ellen G. White, this underscores that leaders who seek personal gain, power, or prestige over the spiritual welfare of the flock are acting contrary to God's will.

The Good Shepherd (vv. 10–18)

- **Abundant Life:** Jesus promises, *"I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly"* (John 10:10). This abundant life isn't just a promise of future heaven, but a present experience of grace, peace, and spiritual victory.
- **The Ultimate Sacrifice:** Unlike a "hireling" who runs when danger approaches, the Good Shepherd willingly lays down His life for the sheep (John 10:11-15). This points directly to the core of the **Plan of Redemption**, where Christ bore the penalty for sin to buy our freedom.

Knowing the Voice (vv. 27–30)

- **Intimate Relationship:** *"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me"* (John 10:27). A vital lesson here is the importance of daily, personal communion with Christ. By studying Scripture, believers develop spiritual discernment to distinguish His voice of truth from the clamor of the enemy.
- **Eternal Security:** Jesus assures His followers that they are secure in His and the Father's hands, and *"no man is able to pluck them out"* (John 10:28-29). The believer's assurance rests entirely on Christ's power and faithfulness.

Chapter 11

1. The State of the Dead as a "Sleep" (John 11:11-14)

- **The Concept:** When Jesus told His disciples, "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep," He was using the common biblical metaphor for death.
- **SDA Explanation:** Adventists hold that the dead are unconscious and await a literal resurrection. Jesus was directly pointing to this truth. The disciples initially misunderstood Him to mean normal biological rest, so Jesus plainly told them, "Lazarus is dead." For the SDA believer, death is a dreamless rest, free from pain, awaiting the return of Christ.

2. The Nature of the Resurrection (John 11:23-26)

- **The Claim:** Martha acknowledged the doctrine of the final resurrection at "the last day." Jesus responded, "I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live."
- **SDA Explanation:** Jesus clarified that resurrection is not just an abstract end-times event, but a person. He possesses intrinsic authority over life and death. Adventists emphasize that believers do not go immediately to heaven at death; rather, their hope is pinned entirely on Jesus calling them from the grave at His Second Coming.

3. God's Delays Are Not Denials (John 11:5-6)

- **The Delay:** Despite loving Mary, Martha, and Lazarus, Jesus deliberately stayed where He was for two more days before heading to Bethany.
- **SDA Explanation:** This teaches that God's silence or delay during times of heartbreak is not a lack of love, but a deliberate preparation for a greater revelation of His glory. In human experience, answered prayers often feel delayed, but God operates according to a divine timeline meant to strengthen faith.

4. The Humanity and Divinity of Christ (John 11:33-35)

- **The Emotion:** In verse 35, the KJV records the shortest verse in the Bible: "Jesus wept."
- **SDA Explanation:** This text provides a stunning view of Jesus. It displays His full humanity—sharing intimately in our grief, weeping at the devastation sin brought upon humanity. Yet, moments later, He demonstrates His full divinity by calling a decomposing man back to life with a single, authoritative command.

5. Faith Over Circumstances (John 11:39-40)

- **The Miracle:** Martha hesitated to roll away the stone due to the stench of decay, but Jesus reminded her, "Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?"
- **SDA Explanation:** The miracle was physically impossible by human logic, much like the reality of resurrecting the dead at the end of time. Adventists draw the lesson that faith requires trusting the Word of God even when circumstances look hopeless and human reason fails.

6. The Consequence of Unbelief (John 11:47-53)

- **The Plot:** Instead of accepting Jesus as the Messiah after witnessing this unparalleled miracle, the religious leaders plotted to kill Him, fearing political and structural ruin.
- **SDA Explanation:** This demonstrates the hardness of the human heart. Miracles alone are not always enough to change a person. Faith must be rooted in a genuine surrender to Jesus as the Messiah.