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**Editorial Office:** 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904  
Email: goldsteinc@gc.adventist.org

**Principal Contributor**  
Ekkehardt Mueller

**Editorial Production Manager**  
Soraya Homayouni Parish

**Editor**  
Clifford Goldstein

**Art and Design**  
Lars Justinen

**Associate Editor**  
Lyndelle Brower Chiomenti

**Pacific Press® Coordinator**  
Paul A. Hey

1. **Key Text, Lesson Aim, and Outline:** Tanja Saldaña, freelance writer, Woodbine, Md, U.S.A.
2. **The Commentary:** Otis Coutsoumpos, freelance writer, Silver Spring, Md., U.S.A.
3. **The Inductive Bible-Study Method:** Alan Hecht, library director, Rebok Memorial Library, General Conference, Silver Spring, Md., U.S.A.
4. **The Focus-on-Witnessing Approach:** Tresa Beard, freelance writer, Springboro, Ohio, U.S.A.
5. **The Life-Application Approach:** Fylvia Kline, freelance writer, Burtonsville, Md., U.S.A.

The Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide is prepared by the Office of the Adult Bible Study Guide of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. The preparation of the guides is under the general direction of a worldwide Sabbath School Manuscript Evaluation Committee, whose members serve as consulting editors. The published guide reflects the input of the committee and thus does not solely or necessarily represent the intent of the authors.

## How to Use This Teachers Edition

The teachers comments demonstrate different methods of teaching the Standard Bible Study Guide. Five parts make up the teachers comments:

**1. Key Text, Lesson Aim, and Outline:** The key text is taken from the standard edition guide. The lesson aim is designed to (a) help class participants *understand* and *know* about the lesson material, (b) evoke an appropriate *feeling* about the lesson material that complements the lesson content and helps to internalize it, and (c) help class participants *apply* the lesson material to their daily lives. The lesson outline may not always follow exactly the material that appears in the standard guide. It may reflect additional perspectives as it attempts to stimulate class discussion.

**2. The Commentary** follows the traditional teaching methods of Sabbath School. It explains Bible passages and provides appropriate information leading to spiritual applications.

**3. The Inductive Bible-Study Method** emphasizes careful, methodical discovery of the meaning in a text. The teacher encourages and supports the learner's investigation and discovery, using distinctive approaches: (a) Study a text thoroughly and systematically before drawing a conclusion. (b) Look for textual meaning carefully and thoroughly; understand the passage in context; avoid misquoting the author. We must not develop opinions without biblical proof. (c) Share insights through group discussion as students examine a Bible passage together. (d) Apply the text to life today. (e) Allow the Holy Spirit to minister to class members during Bible study.

**4. The Focus-on-Witnessing Approach** should be used in conjunction with other methods of Bible study to demonstrate how particular passages of Scripture can be used to encourage people to commit their lives to Christ and to nurture spiritual life once it has been awakened.

**5. The Life-Application Approach** demonstrates how issues that grow out of Bible study can be shared in a small-group setting. This section uses an approach suitable for discussion in a small group in which interpersonal sharing and dialogue are key elements.

**Use a combination of teaching methods.** Within one class period it is often possible to draw from all five methods demonstrated in the teachers comments. Some teachers will prefer to focus on one method of teaching, drawing heavily on the material in the teachers comments.

**For a listing of the individuals appointed by the General Conference to write the teachers comments for the current Bible Study Guide, please refer to page 1.**

## *The Rest of the Story*

**T**he heavens declare the glory of God” (Ps. 19:1). And they do, at least to a point. What Christian hasn’t looked up into the sky on a night in which the stars shimmered in a panoply of outrageous incandescence and not come away awed by the power and the greatness of God?

The heavens do have a story to tell. Or, perhaps, more precisely, they reveal that a story has already been told. By looking at the heavens, we can catch parts of the plot but not the whole narrative itself. No matter how far our telescopes peer into the cosmos, they can reveal only so much, because only so much is revealed there. The rest of the story—the story of the Incarnation, the story of Redemption, the story of Jesus and the eternal life He offers—these are not found in the heavens, no matter how much of God’s glory is, otherwise, declared there.

Yet, what the heavens do not tell us, the Holy Scriptures do. The details not written in the stars are written, instead, in God’s Word. Scripture takes us places where rocket ships and telescopes can never go. The Bible reveals things Hubble, no matter how focused and finely tuned its lenses, will never detect.

For instance, the book of Hebrews, the topic of this quarter’s Bible Study Guide, gives us a window into the universe, a view of the heavens that would otherwise remain hidden, despite the efforts of the world’s greatest astrophysicists and astronomers.

“Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them” (Heb. 7:25).

“Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man” (Heb. 8:1, 2).

“But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us” (Heb. 9:11, 12).

These are truths about the heavens that the heavens themselves—no matter how deeply and intently we peer into them—could never reveal.

Though shrouded in some mysteries (Who wrote it? When was it written? To whom was it addressed? What specific problems was it confronting?), the book of Hebrews radiates with light, truth, and details regarding salvation history, regarding what Jesus has done for us, what He is doing for us now, and what He will do for us throughout eternity. It reveals not only what Christ accomplished by His life and death (Heb. 1:3; 2:9; 7:27; 9:12, 28) but it presents the most explicit

explanation of Christ as our High Priest in the heavenly sanctuary (Heb. 2:17, 18; 4:15, 16; 7:25; 9:24) found anywhere else in Scripture.

Though the Scriptures do give us scattered glimpses into heaven, no other book takes us so deeply, and intimately, into heavenly places while simultaneously giving us such a clear explanation of what we see when we are there.

Before starting this quarter's Bible Study Guide, read through the entire book of Hebrews. Tremble at its fierce warnings against apostasy and backsliding, heed its emotional exhortations to faithfulness and obedience, but—most of all—rejoice in the hope, in the promises, in the assurance that exudes from every page of this faith-affirming book, which boldly declares to us “Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us” (Heb. 9:24). And if Christ is now standing in the presence of God “for us”—what have we to fear?

As you read, notice two outstanding and undeniable truths within these sacred pages: the reality of Christ's ministry in the heavenly sanctuary and the importance of that ministry to His people on earth—truths that we as Seventh-day Adventists have been proclaiming unabashedly to the world. In Hebrews, we find key elements of our sanctuary message, and that message is nothing if not the Cross revealed in the only context that can fully reveal it: that of the heavenly sanctuary, where Christ now ministers His blood in our behalf, “having obtained eternal redemption for us” (Heb. 9:12) through His life and death here on the earth.

Hebrews is all about Jesus, a fuller and clear revelation of Jesus. That is the direction this study takes: We will focus on Jesus as He appears in Hebrews. “Jesus, Our King”; “Jesus, Our High Priest”; “Jesus, Our Assurance”; “Jesus, Our Sacrifice and Salvation”—these are some of the weekly topics we will study in the powerful exhortation to faithfulness and obedience that is at the heart of Hebrews.

This quarter's author is Dr. Ekkehardt Mueller, a native of Germany and now an associate director of the Biblical Research Institute at the General Conference, in Silver Spring, Maryland. A New Testament scholar, Dr. Mueller takes us on an incredible voyage into the heavens themselves, where Jesus, our High Priest, “ever liveth to make intercession” for us, a truth about the heavens the heavens themselves can never reveal.

That is why it has to be told to us, which is exactly what Hebrews does. This quarter, let us listen carefully to what it says.