The late 1800s and early 1900s were critical times in the development of the identity of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Ellen White began to emphasize the topic of righteousness by faith, especially in the book, *Desire of Ages*. Parallel to this critical period in Adventist theology was also the development of an Adventist philosophy of education. The first collection of Ellen White’s articles on Christian education was published in 1886, entitled “Selections From the Testimonies Concerning the Subject of Education.” That work was expanded in the 1890s. Her classic work on the topic, *Education*, came out in 1903, while *Counsels to Parents, Teachers and Students* was issued in 1913. A collection of seventy-four Ellen White articles on education, arranged chronologically from 1872 to 1915, is reprinted in *Fundamentals of Christian Education*, published in 1923.

What does all of this mean? For us as Seventh-day Adventists, education is as much a part of our identity as our theology. Education is as important to Adventist theology as redemption, because “in the highest sense the work of education and the work of redemption are one, for in education, as in redemption, ‘other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ’ ” (*Education*, 30).

This week, the emphasis of our study will be on the unique elements of Adventist theology and philosophy of education by looking at a passage in Scripture that deals with calling and is specifically important to the Seventh-day Adventist Church itself.
Write out Revelation 14:6–12 from the translation of your choice. You may also re-write the passage in your own words, outline, or mind-map the chapter.
THE EDUCATION OF THE REDEEMED

The book of Revelation is rarely looked upon as a book that addresses the topic of education. Revelation 14, however, could be considered one of the most critical chapters in all of Scripture for Seventh-day Adventists. It is the everlasting gospel that Adventists are called to preach to the world. It has a three-fold message delivered by three symbolic angels or messengers: (1) fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; (2) Babylon is fallen, is fallen; and, (3) if anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives his mark on his forehead or on his hand, he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God (Revelation 14:6–11).

Let us address the first five verses of Revelation 14. It is important to note that it speaks of a group of people who are redeemed from the earth. The text also says that these individuals have not been defiled, meaning that they practice a real and true religion—the kind that the good Samaritan practiced in last week's lesson. One of the identifying marks of this group known as the 144,000 is that they follow the Lamb wherever He goes. They are in constant communion with God in every aspect of life. They have developed the habit of not compartmentalizing their lives, but instead have mastered the ability to commune with God and love Him with all of their mind, soul, and strength. Finally, they are truthful. These individuals are morally upright. By beholding the character of God, they have become changed into His image.

Upon close inspection, Revelation 14 is saturated with education. It is true education that has prepared this distinguished group of people to stand on Mount Zion, having the Father's name written on their foreheads, meaning the character of God imprinted in their minds. Isn't this the ultimate goal of education? The real purpose of education is the redemption of humanity!

The significance of the Adventist philosophy of education lies in its dual emphasis on creation and redemption. The Sabbath is the weekly reminder of creation and the second coming of Jesus Christ, the culmination of redemption. Communion with God was established at creation and it gives us the assurance that we can do all things through Christ (Phil. 4:13). Redemption's work ends when Jesus comes in the clouds of glory and reminds us of the work of godliness that must take place in our lives and in the lives of those for whom we labor.

The people of Revelation 14 are in fact individuals who have been beneficiaries of the true Adventist philosophy of education. This is not to say that all of the 144,000 were students enrolled in Adventist academies. It simply means that the principles given to the church on education will be reflected in God's people when He comes again.
REDEMPTION AND EDUCATION

Revelation 14:6 is the foundation of the three messages given by angels in the chapter. The term angel simply means messenger. Angels flying in heaven with a loud voice give metaphorical expression to the fact that these messengers have an imperative message that must be expressed urgently and immediately. According to John, the message is none other than the gospel.

Notice that the first angel breaks down the foundation of the gospel into three specific sections: (1) fear God and give glory to Him, (2) for the hour of His judgment has come, and (3) worship God because He is the Creator.

_Fear God and Give Glory to Him_

To fear God and give Him glory is the gospel’s immediate and direct call to action. It is what God needs us to do. As we studied in lesson 4, the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom that education seeks to impart to the student. We fear God by seeking after Him in sincerity (Josh. 24:14). To fear God means to obey Him and to seek after godliness (Deut. 6:2; 10:12). Faithfulness to God is an act of fearing Him (Deut. 10:20). We are fearing God when we choose not to rebel against Him (1 Sam. 12:24) but surrender ourselves in humility to His will in our lives.

Most of all, to fear God means to have faith in His character: to trust Him (Ps. 115:11), to believe that His mercy toward us endures forever (Ps. 118:4) and to be satisfied (Ps. 34:9) because we trust that He has our best interests in mind. In education as in the context of the gospel, the goal of the fear of God is a mature faith: “Here is the patience of the saints; here are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus” (Rev. 14:12).

_Judgment Has Come_

“The hour of His judgment has come” refers to the fact that there is a time limit to redemption. The life that we have is probationary, for God will and must put an end to sin and death. Redemption has an expiration date, and now is the time to take hold of God’s redemptive power. From an Adventist perspective, education and redemption are the same. Thus, the everlasting gospel is an urgent and immediate call to educate!

_Worship the Creator_

The call to worship is a call to remember our Creator. We worship God because He created us and because He created everything we need to sustain and enjoy the life we live.

As a memorial of creation, God instituted the Sabbath. Unlike the year or month, nothing in nature identifies the need for a seven-day week except the Word of God spoken at creation regarding the Sabbath. The everlasting gospel of Revelation calls us to worship the Creator on the seventh-day Sabbath to remember that we are not our own.

Likewise, the first work of education is to introduce the student to a knowledge of God as our Creator. In the gospel as in education, creation and redemption are the foundation.
What relationship do the following verses have with the primary passage?

Ecclesiastes 12:1–14  
Genesis 7:1–24  
Daniel 1:3–20

What other verses/promises come to mind in connecting education and redemption?

Review your memorized verse from Revelation 14:6–12.
A HISTORICAL FULFILLMENT

Seventh-day Adventists have believed that the message of Revelation 14 is an end-time message which began its historical fulfillment in A.D. 1844.

As far back as Revelation 2, God tells His church in Ephesus that it has lost its first love (Rev. 2:4). Speaking of this church, Ellen White states: “The love that constrained the Saviour to die for us was not revealed in its fullness in their lives; and hence they were unable to bring honor to the name of the Redeemer. And as they lost their first love, they increased in a knowledge of scientific theories originated by the father of lies” (Manuscript 11, 1906).

From the second to the sixth centuries A.D., a gradual change came with a shift of Sabbath from the seventh day of the week to the first. The implications of this shift were momentously catastrophic. By shifting to a non-six-day-creation-based Sabbath, the church began to pave the way for macroevolutionary science. This reflection was made in the book Life Sketches, when Ellen White wrote, “I was shown that if the true Sabbath had been kept, there would never have been an infidel or an atheist. The observance of the Sabbath would have preserved the world from idolatry” (Life Sketches, 96).

What followed next was the accommodating of Scripture to the findings of human discoveries in science. Augustine, the bishop of Hippo (A.D. 354–430), led the initial discussion between science and Scripture. Eventually, Johann Salomo Semler led the German rationalism movement, which included the idea that Scripture and the Word of God were not the same. Because, under this thinking, the Bible was no longer considered to be the propositional Word of God, the claims it made regarding origins were open to revisions made by scientific findings. By 1785 the father of modern geology, James Hutton, introduced the notion of deep time, which had theological implications that ultimately declared biblical literalism to be dead.

Upon this foundation, the fathers of modern theology began to build their arguments that science and religion must be separated. It was in this context that Charles R. Darwin (1809–1882) began to replace the idea of divine creation of the human race with an accidental force of nature. Ultimately, some theologians would go as far as to conclude that belief in creation was damaging to Christian thinking.

Darwin questions creation in his initial sketch outline of his future work, On the Origin of Species in 1844. The same year also finds Revelation 14’s fulfillment in history, responding to Darwin’s challenge of creation. Revelation 14:7 almost perfectly references Exodus 20:11 in its creation verbiage. However, there is a slight difference in the final phrasing. Whereas Exodus calls us to worship Him who made heaven, earth, the sea and “all that is in them” (20:11), Revelation calls us to worship Him who made heaven, earth, the sea, and “the springs of water” (Rev. 14:7). The latter is a reference to Genesis talking about the fountains of the great deep being broken up during the global flood (Gen. 7:11).

The significance of this trip through history is that a parallel exists between the two systems of education. On one hand, secular scholars build upon each other to discount creation and redemption, which are founded on the person of Jesus Christ. On the other hand, God’s end-time gospel message is an endorsement of the Genesis flood that not only reminds us of judgment but also of Jesus the Creator.

The message of Revelation 14, therefore, is not only uniquely important to Adventist preaching, but it is equally important to the Adventist understanding of education, for the link that binds them together is the foundation of the person of Jesus Christ in both.
THE HIGHEST WORK OF EDUCATION

“They were humble and unlearned men, those fishers of Galilee; but Christ, the light of the world, was abundantly able to qualify them for the position for which He had chosen them. The Saviour did not despise education; for when controlled by the love of God, and devoted to His service, intellectual culture is a blessing. But He passed by the wise men of His time, because they were so self-confident that they could not sympathize with suffering humanity, and become colaborers with the Man of Nazareth. In their bigotry they scorned to be taught by Christ. The Lord Jesus seeks the co-operation of those who will become unobstructed channels for the communication of His grace. The first thing to be learned by all who would become workers together with God is the lesson of self-distrust; then they are prepared to have imparted to them the character of Christ. This is not to be gained through education in the most scientific schools. It is the fruit of wisdom that is obtained from the divine Teacher alone.

“Jesus chose unlearned fishermen because they had not been schooled in the traditions and erroneous customs of their time. They were men of native ability, and they were humble and teachable,—men whom He could educate for His work. In the common walks of life there is many a man patiently treading the round of daily toil, unconscious that he possesses powers which, if called into action, would raise him to an equality with the world’s most honored men.

“It is not the highest work of education to communicate knowledge merely, but to impart that vitalizing energy which is received through the contact of mind with mind, and soul with soul. It is only life that can beget life. What privilege, then, was theirs who for three years were in daily contact with that divine life from which has flowed every life-giving impulse that has blessed the world! . . .

“In the apostles of our Lord there was nothing to bring glory to themselves. It was evident that the success of their labors was due only to God. The lives of these men, the characters they developed, and the mighty work that God wrought through them, are a testimony to what He will do for all who are teachable and obedient.

“He who loves Christ the most will do the greatest amount of good. There is no limit to the usefulness of one who, by putting self aside, makes room for the working of the Holy Spirit upon his heart, and lives a life wholly consecrated to God. If men will endure the necessary discipline, without complaining or fainting by the way, God will teach them hour by hour, and day by day. He longs to reveal His grace. If His people will remove the obstructions, He will pour forth the waters of salvation in abundant streams through the human channels. If men in humble life were encouraged to do all the good they could do, if restraining hands were not laid upon them to repress their zeal, there would be a hundred workers for Christ where now there is one.

“God takes men as they are, and educates them for His service, if they will yield themselves to Him. The Spirit of God, received into the soul, will quicken all its faculties. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the mind that is devoted unreservedly to God develops harmoniously, and is strengthened to comprehend and fulfill the requirements of God. The weak, vacillating character becomes changed to one of strength and steadfastness. Continual devotion establishes so close a relation between Jesus and His disciple that the Christian becomes like Him in mind and character. Through a connection with Christ he will have clearer and broader views. His discernment will be more penetrative, his judgment better balanced. He who longs to be of service to Christ is so quickened by the life-giving power of the Sun of Righteousness that he is enabled to bear much fruit to the glory of God.

(The Desire of Ages, 249–251)
Explain briefly the Adventist philosophy of education.

How do today’s secular educational institutions reflect this philosophy?

How do today’s Adventist educational institutions reflect this philosophy?

How is real, true education so different from the education of today?

What areas of your life have you been inspired to be more “educated” in?

What does the Adventist philosophy of education contribute to world issues?

Does Adventism stress its distinctive too much? Why or why not?

How can Adventism’s contribution to education shine as much as its theology and its health message?

How are you and how are you not an educated Adventist?