

# ***Preparation for the End Time Salvation and the End Time***

Lesson #4 for April 28, 2018

Scriptures: John 1:1-3; 14:9; Zephaniah 3:17; Romans 8:38-39; Psalm 91:15-16; Revelation 14:6-7; Ephesians 1:4-5; 1 John 4:10.

1. For a number of reasons, Christianity is unique among the religions of the world. Other religions challenge their believers to live better lives in order to save themselves. Christ not only asked us to live better lives, but also He came and showed us the way and died to demonstrate the truth about God and answer the questions Satan had raised in the great controversy. (See Romans 8:3; 5:8; Hebrews 7:25; 1 Peter 1:3.)

If you would gather together everything that is good and holy and noble and lovely in man and then present the subject to the angels of God as acting a part in the salvation of the human soul or in merit, the proposition would be rejected as treason.—Ellen G. White, *Faith and Works*\* 24.1.

2. As Jesus was giving His final instructions to His disciples on that eventful evening in the upper room, He spoke about how we can go to the Father. As we know, Philip said: “Lord, show us the Father; that is all we need.” (John 14:8, *GNB*\*) Look at Jesus’s response.

**John 14:9:** Jesus answered, “For a long time I have been with you all; yet you do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. Why, then, do you say, ‘Show us the Father’?”—American Bible Society. (1992). *The Holy Bible: The Good News Translation*\* (2nd ed., John 14:9). New York: American Bible Society.

3. Many Christian groups say that the God of the Old Testament is a God of vengeance, fire, and justice; many of them choose not to study the Old Testament. By contrast, they see the New Testament as full of mercy and grace and forgiveness. However, the Bible does not agree with that dichotomy. The primary reason why Jesus came to this world was to teach us the truth about God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Had God the Father come to our world and dwelt among us, humbling Himself, veiling His glory, that humanity might look upon Him, the history that we have of the life of Christ would not have been changed.... In every act of Jesus, in every lesson of His instruction, we are to see and hear and recognize God. In sight, in hearing, in effect, it is the voice and movements of the Father.—Ellen G. White, *Letter 83*\*, 1895; *That I May Know Him*\* 338.4; *21MR*\* 393.1.

The law of Jehovah was burdened with needless exactions and traditions, and **God was represented as severe, exacting, revengeful, and arbitrary.** He was pictured as one who could take pleasure in the sufferings of his creatures. The very attributes that belonged to the character of Satan, the evil one represented as belonging to the character of God. **Jesus came to teach men of the Father, to correctly represent him before the fallen children of earth.** Angels could not fully portray the character of God, but Christ, who was a living impersonation of God, could not fail to accomplish the work. **The only way in which he could set and keep men right was to make himself visible and familiar to their eyes....**

**Christ exalted the character of God, attributing to him the praise, and giving to him the credit, of the whole purpose of his own mission on earth,—to set men right through the revelation of God. In Christ was arrayed before men the paternal grace and the matchless perfections of the Father. In his prayer just before his crucifixion, he declared, “I have manifested thy name.” “I have glorified thee on the earth; I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.” When the object of his mission was attained,—the revelation of God to the world,—the Son of God announced that his work was accomplished, and that the character of the Father was made manifest to men.—Ellen G. White, *The Signs of the Times*,\* January 20, 1890, par. 6,9. **Contrast** *ST* December 4, 1893; *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 18, 358.3-359.1; *RH*, August 14, 1900; *YL*, November 21, 1883; *RH*, November 1, 1892, par. 12.**

The earth was dark through misapprehension of God. That the gloomy shadows might be lightened, that the world might be brought back to God, Satan’s deceptive power was to be broken.—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*\* 22.1. [Bold type is added.]

4. Do we recognize that the main reason why Jesus came to this earth was to reveal the truth about the Father? What misunderstandings and misconceptions do we have about the Father? Are we ever inclined to suggest that He is arbitrary, exacting, vengeful, unforgiving, even severe, as has been implied, even suggested by many in the past, especially Satan?
5. Careful students of the Bible will obviously recognize that circumstances were different in the Old Testament than they were in the New Testament. The way Jesus appeared on Mount Sinai as recorded in Exodus is quite different from the way He spoke to the crowds in Galilee. But, He was the same Person, the same God. The One who came down on Mount Sinai is the One who hung on the cross.

**John 5:39:** “You study the Scriptures, because you think that in them you will find eternal life. And **these very Scriptures speak about me!**”—*Good News Bible*\* (John 5:39).

**Luke 24:44:** Then he said to them, “These are the very things I told you about while I was still with you: **everything written about me in the Law of Moses, the writings of the prophets, and the Psalms had to come true.**”—*Good News Bible*\* (Luke 24:44).

**1 Corinthians 10:1-4:** I want you to remember, my brothers and sisters, what happened to our ancestors who followed Moses. They were all under the protection of the cloud, and all passed safely through the Red Sea. <sup>2</sup>In the cloud and in the sea they were all baptized as followers of Moses. <sup>3</sup>All ate the same spiritual bread <sup>4</sup>and drank the same spiritual drink. **They drank from the spiritual rock that went with them; and that rock was Christ himself.**—*Good News Bible*\* (1 Corinthians 10:1-4). [Bold type is added.]

6. Even in the Old Testament, we discover that God is slow to anger, (Psalm 145:8) faithful, with unfailing love, (Psalm 143:8) He delights in His followers, (Psalm 147:11) He has every intention of prospering His people and giving them hope, (Jeremiah 29:11) and He looks forward to the day when He will no longer need to rebuke His people but will rejoice over them with singing. (Zephaniah 3:17) These are verses from the Old Testament.

7. Are we prepared to think of all the implications of the fact that Jesus is in no way different from the Father? If there really is no difference between Jesus the Son and God the Father, does Jesus really need to plead with the Father on our behalf? (See Romans 8:34 and **John 16:25-27**.) What does that mean? Jesus Himself said He will not plead with the Father for us because it is not necessary; the Father Himself loves us. (John 3:16)
8. However, we know that sin has created an enormous separation between us and our God. (Isaiah 59:2) Unless something is done about that separation, we are hopelessly lost. And God did what it took. (Romans 8:3) The Creator (John 1:1-3,14) became a Human Being and died the death of a traitor, even a common criminal. (Philippians 2:5-8) So, what do we learn from that? Could there be any question about God's love any longer?
9. From the time Jesus came to this earth up to our present time, there have been those who do not believe that Jesus Christ could be fully human and fully divine at the same time. It is just too large a gap for them to wrap their minds around.

In Christ is life, original, unborrowed, underived. "He that hath the Son hath life." 1 John 5:12. The divinity of Christ is the believer's assurance of eternal life.—Ellen G. White, *Desire of Ages*\* 530.3.

10. But, that same God came down to this earth and risked everything on behalf of God and heaven and the universe, becoming a baby Boy, born of a sinful, teenage human mother. And what did He prove by doing that?

He came to the world to display the glory of God, that man might be uplifted by its restoring power. God was manifested in Him that He might be manifested in them. **Jesus revealed no qualities, and exercised no powers, that men may not have through faith in Him. His perfect humanity is that which all His followers may possess, if they will be in subjection to God as He was.**—*Ibid.*\* 664.4. [Bold type is added.]

11. This means that the One who could speak the command and create a world (Psalm 33:6,9; Hebrews 1:3) allowed Himself to become a helpless baby Boy, lying in a manger. (Luke 2:16) Did Jesus actually realize that He could speak the word and create a world?

**Romans 8:38-39:** <sup>38</sup> For I am certain that nothing can separate us from his love: neither death nor life, neither angels nor other heavenly rulers or powers, neither the present nor the future, <sup>39</sup>neither the world above nor the world below—there is nothing in all creation that will ever be able to separate us from the love of God which is ours through Christ Jesus our Lord.—*Good News Bible*\* (Romans 8:38-39).

12. Is that really possible? Given this truth about God, why would anyone choose to be separated from the love of God?
13. The third Member of the Godhead known as the Holy Spirit or the Holy Ghost has been very much misunderstood down through history.

But Scripture proves His personhood. Christians are baptized in His name along with the Father and Son (*Matt. 28:19*). The Spirit glorifies Christ (*John 16:14*). The Spirit convicts people (*John 16:8*). He can be grieved (*Eph. 4:30*). He is a Comforter (*John 14:16*), Helper (*NKJV*), and Counselor (*RSV*). He teaches (*Luke 12:12*), intercedes (*Rom. 8:26*), and sanctifies (*1 Pet. 1:2*). Christ said the Spirit guides people into all truth (*John 16:13*).

In short, the Holy Spirit is God, as are the Father and the Son. Together, they are One God.—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide\** for Tuesday, April 24.

14. The Holy Spirit does many wonderful things for us. For example, see Luke 12:12; John 16:8-13; and Acts 13:24.
15. The Holy Spirit has taken up the work left by Jesus when He was on this earth. That work is simply to reveal the truth about God and to lead us into that truth.

We have been [137] brought together as a school, and **we need to realize that the Holy Spirit, who is as much a person as God is a person, is walking through these grounds, unseen by human eyes**; that the Lord God is our Keeper and Helper. He hears every word we utter and knows every thought of the mind.—Ellen G. White, *Sermons and Talks*,\* vol. 2, 136.6-137.0; *Ms 66*,\* 1899, 4 (Talk, April 15, 1899); *7MR*\* 299.2; *Evangelism*\* 616.5. [Bold type is added.]

16. Perhaps, the greatest evidence of the personhood of the Holy Spirit and that He is God is the incarnation of Christ. We are told (Matthew 1:20) that Jesus was born of the Holy Spirit. While we cannot begin to understand how that actually happened, one thing is absolutely certain: It required divine power. Notice the interesting and almost conflicting things that the Holy Spirit did in connection with the ministry of Christ. First of all, He condensed all of divinity into some kind of a sequence of DNA that could be combined with the DNA of Mary, a poor, weak human being, to form a baby Boy who was both God and man! Then, He took that human Jesus and made Him available to us as Christians around the world. (John 8:24,28,58) Jesus told the Sanhedrin three times that He was God, and they wanted to stone Him! He also frequently called Himself “the Son of Man” (Matthew 8:20; 9:6; 10:23; Mark 2:28; Luke 17:20) which means that He was a Human Being.

The Godhead was stirred with pity for the race, and the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit gave Themselves to the working out of the plan of redemption.—Ellen G. White, *Counsels on Health*\* 222.2; *AG*\* 190.2; *7SDABC*\* 442.1; *RH*,\* May 2, 1912, par. 3; *Pamphlet 148*,\* 5.3 (1901).

17. All three Members of the Godhead are working for us. What a comforting thought that is. So, what is the evidence?

**Romans 8:26-35:** <sup>26</sup> **In the same way the Spirit also comes to help us**, weak as we are. For we do not know how we ought to pray; the Spirit himself pleads with God for us in groans that words cannot express....

**If God is for us, who can be against us?** <sup>32</sup>Certainly not God, who did not even keep back his own Son, but offered him for us all! He gave us his Son—will he not also freely give us all things? <sup>33</sup>Who will accuse God’s chosen people? God himself declares them not guilty! <sup>34</sup>Who, then, will condemn them? **Not Christ Jesus, who died, or rather, who was raised to life and is at the right-hand side of God, pleading with him for us!** <sup>35</sup>Who, then, can separate us from the love of Christ?—*Good News Bible*\* (Romans 8:26-35). [Bold type is added.]

18. Many Seventh-day Adventists wonder if it is even possible for them to be saved. The instructions and the commands that God has given in the Bible seem to be just too much. (Matthew 7:14)

19. But, to be prepared for the end time, people must have the assurance of their salvation in the present time. They must be convinced that God is working for them in every way necessary. And they must stand up to the Devil without being afraid.
20. Look at some passages suggesting how God works to preserve us. See Psalm 91:15-16; Joel 2:31-32; John 10:28; Romans 10:9-13; and 1 John 5:11-13. Do we really believe that all who ask the Lord for help will be saved? Do we believe that God has made salvation freely available to every person who will accept it? God will do everything necessary to help us if we are willing to work with Him and live the kind of lives that will prepare us for His second coming.
21. How “old” is the gospel? Read Revelation 14:6-7. Why do you think John under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit called the gospel an “everlasting” gospel?
22. First of all, it reminds us that God does not change. Before our world was created, God recognized that sin could arise, and He made all the necessary preparations.  
**Ephesians 1:4-5:** <sup>4</sup>Even before the world was made, God had already chosen us to be his through our union with Christ, so that we would be holy and without fault before him. Because of his love <sup>5</sup>God had already decided that through Jesus Christ he would make us his sons and daughters—this was his pleasure and purpose.—*Good News Bible\** (Ephesians 1:4-5).
23. Do you accept the fact that you were chosen? That you are predestined? That it was God’s purpose to adopt you into His family? See also 2 Thessalonians 2:13 and 2 Timothy 1:9. The only thing God asks of us is to accept His offer. Of course, that means that we are willing to take Him seriously and take His requests seriously. Why don’t we believe it?
24. However, we must not take the approach that we are “once saved, always saved.” As free as salvation is, God does not ask us to be presumptuous. See Matthew 7:21-23. Try to imagine the shock of those people who believe that they have done miraculous things in the name of God; and yet, God says to them: “Go away; I never knew you!”
25. They failed to do at least two things: (1) They sought to perform miracles probably for their own glory; and (2) Their emphasis was always on themselves. We need to look away from ourselves to Jesus Christ for all our needs.
26. Martin Luther is reported to have said: “When I look to myself, I don’t know how I can be saved. When I look to Jesus, I don’t know how I can be lost.” Could you honestly repeat those words?
27. If people are lost in the end, it will not be because God has failed to provide the necessary means; it will be because they made the wrong choices—repeatedly. Unless one has the knowledge of the great controversy that we have, many of these things might be hard to understand.
28. Do we adequately appreciate God’s love for us? Why does God love us? Are you fully familiar with the evidence from Scripture that God loves you? (1 John 4:8,16)
29. If you fully recognize that God loves you, does that automatically make you love your neighbor? Shouldn’t that love overflow to those around us? If God saves you, are you in any way responsible for the salvation of your neighbor?
30. Many religious groups describe some kind of emotional or mystical experience as part of their religion. Christianity is based on the beautiful history of the most amazing Life that has ever been lived on this earth. It is based in reality; the real “reality show”!

31. We may recognize that salvation is based on God's free gift. But, then we must recognize that salvation will not be fully realized until the end of time when we are taken to heaven by Christ.
32. Considering what we expect to see happen at the end of time, how should our lives be different? How should we grow? The world in which we live is largely materialistic. Everything seems to be based on the here and now, sound bites, entertainment, and getting ahead at work.
33. How can we get people who are stuck in this rut to look beyond the here and now? They need to be shaken up about their need for salvation. See Revelation 3:14-22 where it talks about God's end-time church. Do they understand God's love for them? Many of them do not even believe the creation story. What do you say to that group? (1 Peter 3:15)
34. Personally, we need to recognize that God will never save us because we somehow earn salvation or merit it because of a certain thing or certain things that we do or have done. God saves us because He loves us, and it is for His own name's sake. We are the trophies of His plan of salvation.
35. As we have already noted in Romans 8:26-35, love is the predominant characteristic of the Holy Spirit as well as of the Father and the Son. Both Christ and the Holy Spirit are referred to as *Comforters/Advocates*. (John 14:16,26; 1 John 2:1) The Greek word *Paracletos* or *Comforter* is translated in the Greek *Septuagint (LXX)* from the Hebrew word *nakham*, meaning "to console." (Jeremiah 16:7; Hosea 13:14; Isaiah 57:18)
36. The reason why it is safe and certain that salvation is available is that it is an act of God. While it has implications for how we live our lives here and now, a long-term application is that we will live with God forever. We can look forward to the time when Jesus will appear (Luke 17:24) and the entire heavens will be full of bright shining angels so that every eye will see Him. (Revelation 1:7) No false christ will ever be able to duplicate such a coming.
37. Sometimes, it may seem like human life is just running around in mad circles. God provides a way out. And it is a glorious, wonderful way out!
38. Seventh-day Adventists have a two-part name. Some of us tend to put too much emphasis on the *Seventh-day* part, focusing on this world and how good we are at obeying God's commands, all ten of the Ten Commandments. Others may want to overemphasize the *Adventist* part of our name and focus only on what is coming in the future. It is really important that we understand both aspects of our name and their implications and live accordingly.
39. We have covered an enormous amount of material in this lesson. Do you have any question about the fact that Jesus came primarily to teach us the truth about God? Do we really believe that Jesus is just like His Father? Or, that the Father is just like Jesus? Do we really believe that salvation is a free gift from God that we only have to accept? Do we understand what *accepting* means? Do our lives demonstrate that understanding the truth about God and His love is our first priority?

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