

Preparation for the End Time ***Worship the Creator***

Lesson #8 for May 26, 2018

Scriptures: Revelation 14:6-12; Matthew 24:14; Galatians 3:22; Luke 23:32-43; Genesis 22:12.

1. What is *present truth*? At one time, Seventh-day Adventists had a journal by the name of *Present Truth*. As a church we believe that God is continually adding new information to our store of knowledge. New revelations are made; however, they do not replace or change the old. From the time of the first gospel promise as recorded in Genesis 3:15, our understanding of the gospel has increased. There was that first covenant or promise to Abraham repeated to Isaac and Jacob and later superseded by the second covenant in Jeremiah 31:31-34. There is no evidence that the writers of the Old Testament had any idea that there would be any more than one coming of the Messiah. They believed that all the prophecies in the Old Testament would be fulfilled at Christ's first coming. When we come to the New Testament, we realize that none of the authors of books in the New Testament had any idea about the millennium or a third coming until late in the 90s A.D. when God revealed that information to His friend John.
2. Seventh-day Adventists have believed from the beginning of our church that the three angels' messages of Revelation 14:6-12 is our special message that we are to give to the world. It certainly should be considered *present truth*. But, in order to correctly represent those three messages to the world, we need to have a better understanding of the rest of Scripture, especially the Old Testament. Revelation has hundreds of references to it.
3. In this lesson we are going to focus especially on the first angel's message recorded in Revelation 14:6-7.
4. Read Revelation 14:6; Matthew 24:14; and 28:19-20. These verses make it very clear that it has always been God's intention for the gospel to go to all peoples, everywhere—to every nation, tribe, language, and people. Are we ready to take up the challenge of presenting that message to all around us? Is that *present truth* for our day?

Galatians 3:22: But the scripture says that **the whole world is under the power of sin**; and so the gift which is promised on the basis of faith in Jesus Christ is given to those who believe.—American Bible Society. (1992). *The Holy Bible: The Good News Translation** (2nd ed., Galatians 3:22). New York: American Bible Society. [Bold type is added.]

5. The fact that every human being is a sinner makes it absolutely essential that the remedy to sin be presented to each one. God is not happy to have any of His children die an eternal death. God's solution to the sin problem was sending His Son to this earth to live and die as a human being. (Romans 8:3)
6. Seventh-day Adventists have the most universal evangelistic program of any church. While Roman Catholics are in more countries, their organizations are divided into subunits which do not have the same leadership. Seventh-day Adventists do not belong to the World Council of Churches (WCC). The WCC has divided up the world so that each church which belongs to the World Council of Churches is assigned a specific area in which to work. As Seventh-day Adventists, we believe that our message must go to everyone.
7. So, why do we believe it is so important for us to share the gospel? In addition to the help it might be to those to whom we speak, we know that trying to explain what one believes is

one of the best ways to find out whether or not we really understand it.

8. Read **Luke 23:32-43**:³² Two other men, both of them criminals, were also led out to be put to death with Jesus.³³ When they came to the place called “The Skull”, they crucified Jesus there, and the two criminals, one on his right and the other on his left.³⁴ Jesus said, “Forgive them, Father! They don’t know what they are doing.”

They divided his clothes among themselves by throwing dice.³⁵ The people stood there watching while the Jewish leaders jeered at him: “He saved others; let him save himself if he is the Messiah whom God has chosen!”

³⁶ The soldiers also mocked him: they came up to him and offered him cheap wine,³⁷ and said, “Save yourself if you are the king of the Jews!”

³⁸ Above him were written these words: “This is the King of the Jews.”

³⁹ One of the criminals hanging there hurled insults at him: “Aren’t you the Messiah? Save yourself and us!”

⁴⁰ The other one, however, rebuked him, saying, “Don’t you fear God? You received the same sentence he did.⁴¹ Ours, however, is only right, because we are getting what we deserve for what we did; but he has done no wrong.”

⁴² And he said to Jesus, “Remember me, Jesus, when you come as King!”

⁴³ Jesus said to him, “I promise you that today you will be in Paradise with me.”—*Good News Bible** (Luke 23:32-43).

9. Notice these words from Ellen White about the thief.

To Jesus in His agony on the cross there came one gleam of comfort. It was the prayer of the penitent thief. Both the men who were crucified with Jesus had at first railed upon Him; and one under his suffering only became more desperate and defiant. But not so with his companion. **This man was not a hardened criminal; he had been led astray by evil associations, but he was less guilty than many of those who stood beside the cross reviling the Saviour. He had seen and heard Jesus, and had been convicted by His teaching, but he had been turned away from Him by the priests and rulers. Seeking to stifle conviction, he had plunged deeper and deeper into sin, until he was arrested, tried as a criminal, and condemned to die on the cross.** In the judgment hall and on the way to Calvary he had been in company with Jesus. He had heard Pilate declare, “I find no fault in Him.” John 19:4. He had marked His [750] godlike bearing, and His pitying forgiveness of His tormentors. On the cross he sees the many great religionists shoot out the tongue with scorn, and ridicule the Lord Jesus. He sees the wagging heads. He hears the upbraiding speeches taken up by his companion in guilt: “If Thou be Christ, save Thyself and us.” **Among the passers-by he hears many defending Jesus. He hears them repeat His words, and tell of His works. The conviction comes back to him that this is the Christ. Turning to his fellow criminal he says, “Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation?” The dying thieves have no longer anything to fear from man. But upon one of them presses the conviction that there is a God to fear, a future to cause him to tremble. And now, all sin-polluted as it is, his life history is about to close. “And we indeed justly,” he moans; “for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this Man hath**

done nothing amiss.” [Luke 23:41]—Ellen G. White, *Desire of Ages** 749.3.
[Bold type and content in brackets are added.]

10. The story of the thief on the cross and Jesus’s message to him is one that brings hope to many people. But, why did Jesus speak those words to him? Jesus did not say: “I’m sorry! You had your chance when you learned about Me previously!” He did not say: “Unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.” (Matthew 5:20, *NKJV**) Jesus did not mention the thief’s past mistakes. He assured him right there on the cross that his sins, his crimes, his faults were forgiven; and, thus, one day he would be with Christ in paradise. (Luke 23:43)
11. Was that message to the dying thief on the cross the essence of the gospel? Many would say it is. But, forgiveness is not a guarantee of salvation. God is Forgiveness Personified. **He forgave those who were nailing Him to the cross even though they did not ask Him to.** (Luke 23:33) The real gospel, the real good news, is not that God forgives us when we ask Him; it is the truth about God and His universal forgiveness. God never holds a grudge. But, contrary to what many people believe, forgiveness does not guarantee salvation. It is not God’s unwillingness to forgive that keeps us out of heaven but our unfitness to be there. If we choose Satan’s side, the side of rebellion against God, we will become like him.

Satan sees that his voluntary rebellion has unfitted him for heaven. He has trained his powers to war against God; the purity, peace, and harmony of heaven would be to him supreme torture. His accusations against the mercy and justice of God are now silenced. The reproach which he has endeavored to cast upon Jehovah rests wholly upon himself. And now Satan bows down and confesses the justice of his sentence.—Ellen G. White, *Spirit of Prophecy*,* vol. 4, 486.1 (1884); *Great Controversy** 670.2 (1888); *DD** 58.1; *FLB** 356.5; *Hvn** 127.2; *Mar** 345.6; *SR** 427.2. [Bold type is added.]

This is talking about events at the third coming of Jesus.

12. What does it mean to *fear God*?

Revelation 14:7: Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.—*The Holy Bible: King James Version*.* (2009). (Electronic Edition of the 1900 Authorized Version., Revelation 14:7). Bellingham, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

13. What does *fearing God* have to do with giving Him glory? The best way to honor God’s name is to tell others the truth about Him, His character, and His government.
14. So, what does *fear* mean in such a context? Read Genesis 22:12; Exodus 20:18-20; Job 1:9; Ecclesiastes 12:13; Proverbs 9:10; and Matthew 5:16. Contrast 1 John 4:18.
15. To many people the *fear of God* is linked to obeying Him. Do we need to be afraid of God to obey Him? What does it mean to be in awe of God? Or, to reverence Him? We need to recognize that we are fallen sinners. We deserve nothing but death. Do we recognize that each day as we realize the sinfulness of our actions? Do we believe that God is just and righteous? What should a fear of God lead us to do? Is it possible to “scare the hell” out of people? The fear of God should lead us first to the foot of the cross. When we feel overwhelmed with a sense of our sins, forgiveness is a true blessing. That fear should not persist; but, it should lead us to go to God, asking His forgiveness and with the help of the Holy Spirit to change our ways. Otherwise, we are lost souls. (See Matthew 10:28.)
16. Real fear may drive us to the foot of the cross; but, it will never lead all the way to salvation.

It is only as we gain an appreciation for God and come to love, trust, honor, and respect Him that we begin to realize the real healing that is salvation. God wants us to be His friends not just His trembling, fearful servants. Notice these words from Jesus Himself.

John 15:15: “I do not call you servants any longer, because servants do not know what their master is doing. Instead, I call you friends, because I have told you everything I have heard from my Father.”—*Good News Bible** (John 15:15).

17. Anyone who has an understanding of the plan of salvation and our future home in heaven will recognize that God cannot afford to admit anyone there who will disrupt the harmony of heaven and restart the great controversy. So, God will conduct a pre-advent judgment—which is going on right now—to make sure that everyone is treated fairly but correctly. Is that why the first of the three angels’ messages includes very specific instructions about a coming judgment? Does judgment ever sound like good news? God’s judgment can only be good news if we understand it correctly. While Satan is doing everything he possibly can to accuse us, (Zechariah 3:1-5; Revelation 12:10) all three Members of the Godhead are on our side. (Romans 8:26,31-35) Jesus Himself and the Holy Spirit are pleading our cases in opposition to the statements of Satan. The Father is not the one who accuses us; it is only the Devil who is accusing us. But, the Father will make sure that everyone is treated fairly. So, what happens in the judgment?
18. **Matthew 12:36-37:** ³⁶ “You can be sure that on Judgement Day everyone will have to give account of every useless word he has ever spoken. ³⁷Your words will be used to judge you—to declare you either innocent or guilty.”—*Ibid.** (Matthew 12:36-37).
19. **Revelation 20:12-13:** ¹²And I saw the dead, great and small alike, standing before the throne. Books were opened, and then another book was opened, the book of the living. The dead were judged according to what they had done, as recorded in the books. ¹³Then the sea gave up its dead. Death and the world of the dead also gave up the dead they held. And all were judged according to what they had done.—*Ibid.** (Revelation 20:12-13).
20. If we recognize that God knows even the number of hairs on our heads, we certainly must recognize that He knows all about our secret thoughts and even motives. So, it is true; the good news is to know that when we come to Him in humble reverence and ask for forgiveness and healing, as Paul stated there is “no condemnation” (Romans 8:1) anymore.
Man cannot meet these charges himself. In his sin-stained garments, confessing his guilt, he stands before God. But Jesus our Advocate presents an effectual plea in behalf of all who by repentance and faith have committed the keeping of their souls to Him. **He pleads their cause and vanquishes their accuser [Satan] by the mighty arguments of Calvary.** His perfect obedience to God’s law, even unto the death of the cross, has given Him all power in heaven and in earth, and He claims of His Father mercy and reconciliation for guilty man.—Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church,** vol. 5, 470.2. [Bold type and content in brackets are added.]
21. Considering how gracious and generous God has been in His dealings with us, how could we be anything other than generous and forgiving of those who have wronged us? If we can become partakers of the divine nature, we will be like God who is Forgiveness Personified; and forgiveness will come automatically.
22. Read again Revelation 14:6-7. What are the major points in these two verses?

1. An angel is flying to earth with good news.
 2. That good news is for everyone. We need to share that message.
 3. Honor, respect, and reverence God.
 4. The time has come for God's judgment—His judgment of us and our judgment of Him.
 5. Worship the Creator of all things.
23. The initial reason why we need to worship God is because He is our Creator. But, if God were the kind of person Satan has made Him out to be, who would want to live with Him? By recognizing God as our Creator, first of all, we recognize our position as His creatures, seeking to be made in His image. By worshiping God as our Creator, we acknowledge our total dependence upon Him for everything, even life and breath. (Acts 17:25,28)

Read **Revelation 14:8-11**: ⁸ A second angel followed the first one, saying, "She has fallen! Great Babylon has fallen! She made all peoples drink her wine—the strong wine of her immoral lust!"

⁹ A third angel followed the first two, saying in a loud voice, "Whoever worships the beast and its image and receives the mark on their forehead or on their hand ¹⁰will themselves drink God's wine, the wine of his fury, which he has poured at full strength into the cup of his anger! All who do this will be tormented in fire and sulphur before the holy angels and the Lamb. ¹¹The smoke of the fire that torments them goes up for ever and ever. There is no relief day or night for those who worship the beast and its image, for anyone who has the mark of its name."—*Good News Bible** (Revelation 14:8-11).

24. Our initial response to the very strong language in the second and third angels' messages should be to remember Satan's threat recorded in Revelation 13:15-17.

¹⁵The second beast was allowed to breathe life into the image of the first beast, so that the image could talk and **put to death all those who would not worship it.** ¹⁶The beast forced all the people, small and great, rich and poor, slave and free, to have a mark placed on their right hands or on their foreheads. ¹⁷No one could buy or sell without having this mark, that is, the beast's name or the number that stands for the name.—*Ibid.** (Revelation 13:15-17). [Bold type is added.]

25. So, which of these two "threats" do you think is more serious? Which side would you like to be on? It seems that no matter which side you choose, the other side is determined to get you!
26. We must know that as the world's history comes to an end, the Devil will be doing everything he possibly can to force as many people as possible to respect him, reverence him, and even worship him. No wonder God has said that it is so important that we worship only God.
27. Any serious Bible student should recognize the close link between Revelation 14:7 and Exodus 20:8-11.
28. Why do you think Revelation 14:7 mentions the *fountains of water*? Is there something special about *fountains of water* that we need to know about?
29. Do you think it is reasonable for the Seventh-day Adventist Church in our day to take the three angels' messages as its prime message to the world? Are we doing that? Do you feel that you could competently explain each of the three angels' messages in a way that makes God look good? Or, are these messages specifically intended to scare people? In Revelation

13 Satan threatens us with starvation by cutting off our ability to buy and sell. In Revelation 14 God says that if we receive Satan's mark and join his side, we will be eternally lost. How are we supposed to respond?

30. Read again Revelation 14:7; compare Daniel 7:9-11,25-26. Daniel 7 and Daniel 8 tell us about a little horn. The work of that little horn is spelled out in considerably more detail in Revelation 13. By carefully comparing the messages in Daniel 7 and 8 with the message in Revelation 13, it is very clear that the little horn and the first beast in Revelation 13 are the same power and represent the teachings and doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church.
31. It should be clear that Roman Catholics believe that the pope has usurped the role of God on this earth. Is that why we need to tell everyone to, once again, honor, fear, and respect the only true God?
32. Are we prepared to honor God and give glory to Him? The best way to give glory to God is to share His good news with those around us. How many of the people that you associate with on a day-by-day basis really believe in creation? How many of them are not sure that God even exists?
33. The Bible study guide reminds us that "the biblical concept of 'fear of God' has nothing to do with superstitious feelings or with the absurd idea that we should serve God by being afraid of Him."—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 107.
34. How does it make you feel to recognize that God can see every single one of your secret thoughts and motives? Does that scare you? Ecclesiastes 12:13-14, *NKJV** tells us: "Fear God... For God will bring every work into judgment, including every secret thing, Whether good or evil." Ecclesiastes begins by saying nothing matters and ends by saying everything matters!
35. Read Nehemiah 9:6. Nehemiah suggested we should worship God because He is the Creator of all things. A similar sentiment is reflected by the 24 elders standing around the throne of God in heaven. (Revelation 4:11, *NKJV*)

The importance of the Sabbath as the memorial of creation is that it keeps ever present the true reason why worship is due to God.—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy** 437.2.

36. Every Sabbath, do we recognize all that we owe to God? Is He worthy of our worship?
37. Seventh-day Adventists believe that the Jewish annual festivals—especially the Day of Atonement—are a type of the history of our world. Just as the Jews were supposed to request forgiveness for all their sins and offer sacrifices, as needed, to cleanse everything at the end of the Levitical year, so we are supposed to prepare ourselves for the second coming of Jesus Christ in this antitypical day of atonement.
38. Some have suggested that the addition of the expression *the springs of water* in Revelation 14:7 reminds us that a large part of why the world we now live in is the way it is because of the flood.
39. Three days were allowed for the children of Israel to cleanse the camp to make their final sacrifices and prepare for the Day of Atonement. We believe that the antitypical day of atonement began on October 22, 1844. Are we preparing ourselves for the second coming of Jesus Christ by cleansing our lives from sin?

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