

Making Friends for God: The Joy of Sharing in His Mission

A Message Worth Sharing

Lesson #12 for September 19, 2020

Scriptures: 2 Peter 1:12,16-21; Revelation 14:6-12,14-20; 19:11-18; Ecclesiastes 12:13-14.

1. As a church, we Seventh-day Adventists believe that **our primary mission is to present to the world the three angels' messages of Revelation 14:6-12**. Do we understand those messages? Do we know how to present them in a winsome way? What do they say about Jesus? If the book of Revelation is both a revelation *of* Jesus Christ and a revelation *from* Jesus Christ, what does that tell us?
2. Christ's life and death were supposed to be for the benefit of every person and every being who has ever lived. The gospel reaches out to every language group, culture, and societal background. It tells us that Jesus won!

Christ was treated as we deserve, that we might be treated as He deserves. He was condemned for our sins, in which He had no share, that we might be justified by His righteousness, in which we had no share. He suffered the death which was ours, that we might receive the life which was His. "With His stripes we are healed." [Isaiah 53:5-6]—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages** 25.2.‡

But the plan of redemption had a yet broader and deeper purpose than the salvation of man. It was not for this alone that Christ came to the earth; it was not merely that the inhabitants of this little world might regard the law of God as it should be regarded; but it was to vindicate the character of God before the universe. To this result of His great sacrifice—**its influence upon the intelligences of other worlds, as well as upon man**—the Saviour looked forward when just before His crucifixion He said: "Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all unto Me." John 12:31, 32. **The act of Christ in dying for the salvation of man would not only make heaven accessible to men, but before all the universe it would justify God and His Son in their dealing with the rebellion of Satan.** It would establish the perpetuity of the law of God and would reveal the nature and the results of sin.—Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets** 68.2-69.0 (1890). Compare *Reflecting Christ* 50.3 (1985) [which quotes John 12:31-32 from the *KJV* printed version saying, "will draw all *men* unto Me" with italics in the *KJV* indicating that word was added by the translators].^{†§}

3. There are two main focal points in the history of the Bible: (1) The first coming of Jesus, and (2) The second coming of Jesus which is still in the future. How are these messages relevant to us today?
4. We believe that God is love. We believe and teach that God loves each one of us. God knows what is coming, even in our day. So, as we look back over the biblical history, we see that in places like Isaiah 46:9-10 and Amos 3:7, God promised that He will tell us what is coming in advance. This is not so that we can write tomorrow's newspapers. Instead, it is so that, as John 13:19 tells us, when it comes to pass, we can know that God was prepared and knew about it.
5. The expression *present truth* is precious and very important to Seventh-day Adventists.

2 Peter 1:12-15: ¹² And so I will always remind you of these matters, even though you already know them and are firmly grounded in the truth you have received. ¹³ **I think it only right for me to stir up your memory of these matters as long as I am still alive.** ¹⁴ **I know that I shall soon put off this mortal body, as our Lord Jesus Christ plainly told me.** ¹⁵ **I will do my best, then, to provide a way for you to remember these matters at all times after my death.** —American Bible Society. (1992). *The Holy Bible: The Good News Translation** (2nd ed., 2 Peter 1:12-15). New York: American Bible Society.†

2 Peter 1:12: Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the **present truth**.—*The Holy Bible: King James Version.** (2009). (Electronic Edition of the 1900 Authorized Version., 2 Peter 1:12). Bellingham, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.†

6. And what was that **present truth** that Peter was thinking about? In Peter's day, it was the truth about the life and death of Jesus Christ. In our day, it is the truth about living during the times of the pre-advent judgment and preparing for the second coming.
7. But, God is always free and fair. He gives each one of us an opportunity to choose whether we want to live a life like His life when He was on this earth, or if we want to die the death He died, separated from His Father and our Father.

Romans 3:23; 6:23: ^{3:23} Everyone has sinned and is far away from God's saving presence.... ^{6:23} **For sin pays its wage—death; but God's free gift is eternal life in union with Christ Jesus our Lord.**—*Good News Bible.**†

8. The book of Revelation completely baffles many people. They do not understand the beasts or the symbols; but, it is possible for those who take time to study Revelation carefully to see the grand, overall theme.
9. What would you say if someone asked you, "What is going to happen to our world?" Is the message of Revelation, especially Revelation 12-14, clear in your mind? Remember that Revelation 14:6-12, known as *the three angels' messages*, is supposed to be our end-time message for the world. Are we sharing it? In a winsome manner? We should be!
10. While the Gospels focused primarily on the first coming of Jesus, the book of Revelation is almost entirely focused on His second coming. Each of the major prophetic groupings in the book end with a climax occurring at the second coming.

Revelation 1:7: Look, he is coming on the clouds! Everyone will see him, including those who pierced him. All peoples on earth will mourn over him. So shall it be!—*Good News Bible.**

11. See also Revelation 11:15; 14:14-20; 19:11-18. These passages and others in Revelation encourage us to come and learn the truth about God. The book of Revelation also spells out many of the details of the Devil's deceptions down through the ages. We can rest assured that God's plan will succeed. God has never failed.
12. And so, He encourages us to say, along with the angels, these words:

Revelation 22:7,12,17,20: ⁷ "Listen!" says Jesus. "I am coming soon! Happy are those who obey the prophetic words in this book!"...

¹² "Listen!" says Jesus. "I am coming soon! I will bring my rewards with me,

to give to each one according to what he has done....”

¹⁷ The Spirit and the Bride say, “Come!”

Everyone who hears this must also say, “Come!”

Come, whoever is thirsty; accept the water of life as a gift, whoever wants it....

²⁰ He who gives his testimony to all this says, “Yes indeed! I am coming soon!”

So be it. Come, Lord Jesus!—*Good News Bible*.*

13. Why do you think several New Testament authors suggested that Jesus is coming very soon? Does 2000 years seem like “soon”? Or, “very soon”? Does that make it hard to convince our friends to take the book of Revelation seriously?
14. The very center of the book of Revelation is in the very center of Revelation 12. Chapters 12-14 go together. Chapter 12 gives us a bird’s eye view of the great controversy while chapter 13 presents Satan’s side in that controversy. Chapter 14 presents God’s answers to Satan’s challenges, and it is our job to carry God’s answers to the world.
15. Following the giving of God’s answers as recorded in Revelation 14:6-12, we see in verses 14-20 that it is time for the grain and the grapes to be harvested. Read Matthew 13:37-43 and Mark 4:29. Compare these two passages with Revelation 14:6-12.

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.—*King James Version*.^{*†}

16. There is an interesting question that arises in the interpretation of Revelation 14:7.
17. What does *the hour of his judgment* mean? Does it mean, as many have suspected, that the time has come for God to judge us? In light of Romans 3:4, does it mean, the hour for us to be judged? Or, the hour for God to be judged? Or, both?

Romans 3:4: God must be true, even though every human being is a liar. As the scripture says,

“You must be shown to be right when you speak;
you must win your case when you are being tried.”—*Good News Bible**

18. Revelation 14:6-12, the three angels’ messages, are a rallying cry for Seventh-day Adventists.

In a special sense Seventh-day Adventists have been set in the world as watchmen and light bearers. To them has been entrusted the last warning for a perishing world. On them is shining wonderful light from the word of God. They have been given a work of the most solemn import—the proclamation of the first, second, and third angels’ messages. There is no other work of so great importance. They are to allow nothing else to absorb their attention.—Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*,* vol. 9, 19.1 (1909). Compare *Evangelism* 119.3-120.0.

19. In light of Revelation 14:6, are we supposed to be afraid of God?

To “fear God” has to do with how we think. It is an appeal to live to please God and to place Him first in all of our thoughts. It is an attitude of obedience that leads us to live godly lives (*Prov. 3:7, Acts 9:31, 1 Pet. 2:17*). This

message also invites us to “give glory” to God. Giving glory to God relates to what we do in every aspect of our lives.—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Wednesday, September 16.[§]

20. How much time have you committed to understanding and spreading the truth about the three angels’ messages? What has God told us about our responsibilities?

1 Corinthians 6:19-20: ¹⁹Don’t you know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who lives in you and who was given to you by God? You do not belong to yourselves but to God; ²⁰he bought you for a price. So use your bodies for God’s glory.—*Good News Bible*.*

In an age of moral irresponsibility, when millions of people feel that they are accountable to no one but themselves, this judgment-hour message reminds us that we are responsible for our actions. There is a relationship between an attitude of reverence for God, obedience to God, and the judgment. Obedience is the fruit of a saving relationship with Jesus. Only His righteousness is good enough to pass the judgment, and, in His righteousness, we are secure. Through His righteousness we live to glorify His name in all that we do.—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Wednesday, September 16.

21. In how many different ways are we supposed to worship God? Certainly, one of the main ways is in how we relate to Him during the Sabbath hours which are set aside for worshipping Him. Read Revelation 4:11; Genesis 2:1-3; and Exodus 20:8-11.
22. It should be no surprise to any of us that in light of God’s plan for the holy Sabbath, Satan has attacked it in every way that he can imagine.
23. All the way back 2000 years ago in the days of John, God recognized that there would be many different churches active in our world. He also recognized that there would be many forms of deception that we need to avoid.

Revelation 14:8: 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!”—*Good News Bible*.*

Revelation 17:3-6: ³ The Spirit took control of me, and the angel carried me to a desert. There I saw a woman sitting on a **red beast** that had names insulting to God written all over it; **the beast had seven heads and ten horns**. [See Revelation 12:3.] ⁴The woman was dressed in purple and scarlet, and covered with gold ornaments, precious stones, and pearls. In her hand she held a gold cup full of obscene and filthy things, the result of her immorality. ⁵**On her forehead was written a name that has a secret meaning: “Great Babylon, the mother of all the prostitutes and perverts in the world.”** ⁶**And I saw that the woman was drunk with the blood of God’s people and the blood of those who were killed because they had been loyal to Jesus.**—*Good News Bible*.*[†] [What church could this be?][‡]

Revelation 18:1-4: ^{18:1} After this I saw another angel coming down out of heaven. He had great authority, and his splendour brightened the whole earth. ²He cried out in a loud voice: “She has fallen! Great Babylon has fallen! She is now haunted by demons and unclean spirits; all kinds of filthy and hateful birds live in her. ³For all the nations have drunk her wine—the strong wine of

her immoral lust. The kings of the earth practiced sexual immorality with her, and the merchants of the world grew rich from her unrestrained lust.”

⁴ Then I heard another voice from heaven, saying:

“Come out, my people! Come out from her!

You must not take part in her sins;

you must not share in her punishment!”—*Good News Bible*.*

In the book of Revelation, the term “Babylon” represents a false system of religion based on human works, man-made traditions, and false doctrines. It exalts human beings and their self-righteousness above Jesus and His sinless life. It places the commands of human religious teachers above the commands of God. Babylon was the center of idolatry, sun worship, and the false teaching of the immortality of the soul. This false religious system has subtly integrated many of ancient Babylon’s religious practices into its worship. God’s last-day message to our dying planet is the message of Jesus and His righteousness. It echoes heaven’s appeal: “‘Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen. . . . Come out of her, my people’ ” (*Rev. 18:2, 4*). **God has divinely raised up the Seventh-day Adventist Church to exalt the message of Christ in all of its fullness. To exalt Jesus is to lift up everything He taught.** It is to proclaim the One who is “the way, the truth, and the life” (*John 14:6*). It is to expose the errors of Babylon in contrast to the truths of Jesus.—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Thursday, September 17.^{†§}

24. Review Revelation 13 and 14. Several very important facts should be apparent: (1) Satan will use several assistants in his efforts to deceive and confuse humans. (2) Satan’s efforts will be inordinately successful! Revelation 13 says, in effect, that **everyone will wonder after the beast**. (3) But then, Revelation 14 talks about God’s responses to those claims from the Devil. And **God tells us clearly that we must come out from those deceptive practices and organizations and worship the true coming King**. This will not be easy. He warned us in **Revelation 14:12**: “This calls for endurance on the part of God’s people, those who obey God’s commandments and are faithful to Jesus.”—*Good News Bible*.*

God has called His church in this day, as He called ancient Israel, to stand as a light in the earth. By the mighty cleaver of truth, the messages of the first, second, and third angels, He has separated them from the churches and from the world to bring them into a sacred nearness to Himself. He has made them the depositaries of His law and has committed to them the great truths of prophecy for this time. Like the holy oracles committed to ancient Israel, these are a sacred trust to be communicated to the world. The three angels of Revelation 14 represent the people who accept the light of God’s messages and go forth as His agents to sound the warning throughout the length and breadth of the earth. Christ declares to His followers: “Ye are the light of the world.” [Matthew 5:14] To every soul that accepts Jesus the cross of Calvary speaks: “Behold the worth of the soul: ‘Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.’” [Mark 16:15] Nothing is to be permitted to hinder this work. It is the all-important work for [all] time; it is to be far-reaching as eternity. The love that Jesus manifested for the souls of men

in the sacrifice which He made for their redemption, will actuate all His followers.—Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*,* vol. 5, 455.2-456.0.‡

Christ accepts, oh, so gladly! every human agency that is surrendered to Him. He brings the human into union with the divine, that He may communicate to the world the mysteries of incarnate love. Talk it, pray it, sing it, fill the world with the message of His truth, and keep pressing on into the regions beyond.—Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*,* vol. 9, 30.2. Compare *Signs of the Times*, February 10, 1909, par. 11.

25. Why do you think God has found it necessary to ask us to set aside one-seventh of our time to worship and honor Him? Do we need that time to study and prepare for the deceptions that the Devil is going to bring on this earth at the end of time? See Isaiah 58.
26. In Revelation 13 and 14, we read about *the mark of the beast* and *the seal of God*. **In several places in Scripture, the seal of God has been identified as the seventh-day Sabbath. It includes our full understanding of all the implications of believing in the true Sabbath.**
27. By contrast, ***the mark of the beast* is Satan's end-time deception.**
28. For an excellent presentation on the mark of the beast see:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hNpQNJG4mCk>
29. We have seen how the early disciples and the apostles were absolutely excited about presenting the gospel as they understood it. They considered it to be “present truth.” Didn't most of them believe that Jesus would return very soon, maybe even in their day? Were they deceived? If we seek to teach people in our day that the coming of Jesus Christ is very soon, are we deceived?
30. What does Revelation say about who is behind these revelations?

Revelation 1:1-3: ¹This book is the record of the events that Jesus Christ revealed. **God gave him this revelation in order to show his servants what must happen very soon.** Christ made these things known to his servant John by sending his angel to him, ²and John has told all that he has seen. This is his report concerning the message from God and the truth revealed by Jesus Christ. ³Happy is the one who reads this book, and happy are those who listen to the words of this prophetic message and obey what is written in this book! For the time is near when all these things will happen.—*Good News Bible*.*†

Revelation 1:1-3: ¹ THE Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John: ² Who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw. ³ Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.—*King James Version*.*

31. **The everlasting gospel must be about God because we are very late comers to the universe. Therefore, the gospel cannot be only, or even primarily, about how God saves us. An everlasting gospel must speak to the past, the present, and the future. We will spend the rest of eternity studying the plan of salvation.**

The death of Christ upon the cross made sure the destruction of him who has

the power of death, who was the originator of sin. When Satan is destroyed, there will be none to tempt to evil; the atonement will never need to be repeated; and there will be no danger of another rebellion in the universe of God. **That which alone can effectually restrain from sin in this world of darkness, will prevent sin in heaven. The significance of the death of Christ will be seen by saints and angels. Fallen men could not have a home in the paradise of God without the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. Shall we not then exalt the cross of Christ? The angels ascribe honor and glory to Christ, for even they are not secure except by looking to the sufferings of the Son of God. It is through the efficacy of the cross that the angels of heaven are guarded from apostasy. Without the cross they would be no more secure against evil than were the angels before the fall of Satan. Angelic perfection failed in heaven. Human perfection failed in Eden, the paradise of bliss. All who wish for security in earth or heaven must look to the Lamb of God. The plan of salvation, making manifest the justice and love of God, provides an eternal safeguard against defection in unfallen worlds, as well as among those who shall be redeemed by the blood of the Lamb.**—Ellen G. White, *The Signs of the Times*,* December 30, 1889, par. 4; 5SDABC* 1132.8-9.† Compare Ephesians 1:9-10; 3:9-10; and *Signs of the Times*, January 20, 1890.

32. Angelic perfection failed in heaven, and God “had to” allow that sin of Lucifer to “go to seed” so that: (1) We as well as sinless creatures in the past and in the future can see the results of rebellion and separation from God; and (2) It is also to confirm that God allows freedom for us to choose His way or Satan’s way. Sin “could” rise again; however, God will not need to let any new sin or rebellion go to seed again because the “museum of sin” and the “museum of the plan of salvation” will be preserved for all to see for all eternity.

33. Ellen G. White stated the everlasting gospel in this way:

The plan for our redemption was not an afterthought, a plan formulated after the fall of Adam. It was a revelation of “the mystery which hath been kept in silence through times eternal.” Romans 16:25, R. V. It was an unfolding of the principles that from eternal ages have been the foundation of God’s throne. From the beginning, God and Christ knew of the apostasy of Satan, and of the fall of man through the deceptive power of the apostate. God did not ordain that sin should exist, but He foresaw its existence, and made provision to meet the terrible emergency. So great was His love for the world, that He covenanted to give His only-begotten Son, “that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” John 3:16.—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages** 22.2.

34. Our world is starved for genuine acceptance and love. The gospel provides forgiveness, belonging, grace, and life-changing power. God has gone to extraordinary lengths to win back His estranged children.

The death of the martyrs can bear no comparison with the agony endured by the Son of God. And we should take larger, broader, and deeper views of the life, sufferings, and death, of God’s dear Son. When the atoning sacrifice shall be viewed correctly, the salvation of souls will be felt to be of infinite value. In comparison with the enterprise of everlasting life, every other sinks into insignificance. But how have the counsels of this loving Saviour been

despised. The heart's devotion has been to the world, and selfish interests have closed the door against the Son of God. Hollow hypocrisy and pride, selfishness and gain, envy, malice and passion, have so filled the hearts of many that Christ can have no room.—Ellen G. White, *PH169** 15.1 (1869).

The **wrath of God against sin**, the terrible manifestation of His displeasure because of iniquity, filled the soul of His Son with consternation. All His life Christ had been publishing to a fallen world the good news of the Father's mercy and pardoning love. Salvation for the chief of sinners was His theme. But now with the terrible weight of guilt He bears, He cannot see the Father's reconciling face [especially while on the cross]. **The withdrawal of the divine countenance from the Saviour in this hour of supreme anguish pierced His heart with a sorrow that can never be fully understood by man. So great was this agony that His physical pain was hardly felt.**—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages** 753.1.[†] [Notice what happened when God's "wrath" was displayed. Jesus feared that this separation would be eternal.][‡]

35. The first angel's message calls on us to make God supreme in our lives. Think of the world around us and what is most important to them. How could a world so centered on self ever inherit the kingdom of God and His love?
36. Having God as the center of our lives will be manifest in everything we do, including diet, dress, entertainment, and our choices in music.
37. Revelation 14:7 is an appeal for us to choose God and not Darwin!

Creation speaks of our value in God's sight. It speaks of our worth to Him. We are not alone in the universe. We are not some speck of cosmic dust. No, God created us. He fashioned us. He made us. We did not evolve. We are not a genetic accident. **Creation is at the heart of all true worship.** The Sabbath speaks of a Creator's care and a Redeemer's love. It reminds us that we are not cosmic orphans on some spinning globe of rock. It points us to a Creator who created us with a purpose and loved us too much to abandon us when we drifted from that purpose. The Sabbath reminds us of the One who has provided all the good things of life for us. **Sabbath is an eternal symbol of our rest in Him.**—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 161.[†]

38. How would you deal with these questions?
 1. What difference does the end-time message of Revelation practically make in our day-to-day lives?
 2. Describe aspects of this first angel's message that impress you most.
 3. Suppose you have a friend who knows little about the Bible but has heard about the prophecies of Revelation and does not know how to make sense of them. How can the message of Revelation 14:6, 7 be the key that unlocks the theme of the entire book of Revelation?—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 162.

© 2020, Kenneth Hart, MD, MA, MPH. Permission is hereby granted for any noncommercial use of these materials. Free distribution of all or of a portion of this material such as to a Bible study class is encouraged. *Electronic version. †Bold type is added. ‡Text in brackets is added. §Italic type is in the source. Info@theox.org

Last Modified: July 27, 2020

Z:\My Documents\WP\SSSTG-Hart\Witnessing - God' Mission\SS-12-Witnessing-2020_09_19-Fin+.wpd