

# ***In the Crucible with Christ Indestructible Hope***

Lesson #7 for August 13, 2022

Scriptures: Habakkuk 1:1-4; Job 38-41; Isaiah 41:8-14; Jeremiah 29:1-10; Hebrews 12:1-13; Romans 5:5.

1. Seventh-day Adventists believe that just before the second coming of Christ, there will be a time of trouble such as never was since this world was created. That sounds scary.
2. What grounds do we have for hope when we face such a crisis? C. S. Lewis wrote about a make-believe lion. Wanting to meet that lion, someone asked if the lion was safe. The person was told that he's not safe, "but he's good."
3. Do you have a personal relationship with God that is sufficient that you can trust Him no matter what happens?

Even though we don't always understand God and He seems to do unpredictable things, that doesn't mean that God is against us. It simply means that we don't have the full picture yet. But we struggle with the idea that for us to have peace, confidence, and hope, God must be understandable and predictable. He needs to be, in our thinking, "safe." As such, we set ourselves up for disappointment.—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide\** for Sabbath Afternoon, August 13.

4. Human beings live on the average 60 to 80 years, depending on which part of the world s/he lives. That is, assuming s/he survives through the first five years which are the most dangerous years in most parts of the world. Thus, to our thinking, we tend to have a fairly short lifespan. We want things to happen right now. We do not want to have to think about what will happen a long time from now. We may not even be alive then.
5. But, true Christians with a full understanding of Scripture know that the problems we face in our world did not start on this planet.

**Revelation 12:7:** Then **war broke out in heaven.** Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, who fought back with his angels.—American Bible Society. (1992). *The Holy Bible: The Good News Translation\** (2nd ed., Revelation 12:7). New York: American Bible Society [abbreviated as *Good News Bible*].<sup>††</sup> [What kind of weapons were used in that war?]<sup>‡</sup>

6. The problems we face in this world affect not only us but also all other creatures, even plants and insects; sooner or later, we all die.

**Romans 8:22:** For we know that up to the present time all of creation groans with pain, like the pain of childbirth.—*Good News Bible.\**

7. So, how should we respond when we know these things are true? These kinds of questions have been raised by faithful believers for many centuries. Notice these words from **Habakkuk.**

**Habakkuk 1:1-4:** <sup>1</sup>This is the message that the LORD revealed to the prophet Habakkuk.

<sup>2</sup> O LORD, how long must I call for help before you listen, before you save us from violence? <sup>3</sup>Why do you make me see such trouble? How can you endure to look on such wrongdoing? Destruction and violence are all round me, and there is fighting and quarrelling everywhere. <sup>4</sup>The law is weak and useless, and

justice is never done. Evil people get the better of the righteous, and so justice is perverted.—*Good News Bible*.\*

8. While we do not know exactly when Habakkuk was born or when he died, from his words we know that he lived a short time before Babylon invaded Judah and conquered the country on three different occasions. Those invasions began in 605 B.C.
9. If one trusts God to be on his/her side and take good care of him/her and if one had a complaint such as Habakkuk's, wouldn't you expect God to come to your rescue? Notice what happened.

**Habakkuk 1:5-11:** <sup>5</sup> Then the LORD said to his people, "Keep watching the nations round you, and you will be astonished at what you see. I am going to do something that you will not believe when you hear about it. **6I am bringing the Babylonians to power, those fierce, restless people.** They are marching out across the world to conquer other lands. <sup>7</sup>They spread fear and terror, and in their pride they are a law to themselves.

<sup>8</sup> "Their horses are faster than leopards, fiercer than hungry wolves. Their horsemen come riding from distant lands; their horses paw the ground. They come swooping down like eagles attacking their prey.

<sup>9</sup> "Their armies advance in violent conquest, and everyone is terrified as they approach. Their captives are as numerous as grains of sand. <sup>10</sup>They treat kings with contempt and laugh at high officials. No fortress can stop them—they pile up earth against it and capture it. <sup>11</sup>Then they sweep on like the wind and are gone, **these men whose power is their god.**"—*Good News Bible*.\*†

10. The Babylonians were warlike people. They built the first real empire in our world; they conquered nations on every side.
11. Prior to the rise of Babylon, the northern kingdom of Israel had been conquered and the people scattered across the Assyrian kingdom in 723/722 B.C. The southern kingdom of Judah where Habakkuk lived had survived for an additional 115 years. So, how would you respond? Look at Habakkuk's response.

**Habakkuk 1:12-17:** <sup>12</sup> LORD, from the very beginning you are God. You are my God, holy and eternal. LORD, my God and protector, you have chosen the Babylonians and made them strong so that they can punish us. <sup>13</sup>But how can you stand these treacherous, evil men? Your eyes are too holy to look at evil, and you cannot stand the sight of people doing wrong. **So why are you silent while they destroy people who are more righteous than they are?**

<sup>14</sup> How can you treat people like fish or like a swarm of insects that have no ruler to direct them? <sup>15</sup>The Babylonians catch people with hooks, as though they were fish. They drag them off in nets and shout for joy over their catch! <sup>16</sup>They even worship their nets and offer sacrifices to them, because their nets provide them with the best of everything.

<sup>17</sup> Are they going to use their swords for ever [*sic*] and keep on destroying nations without mercy?—*Good News Bible*.\*††

12. The LORD gave Habakkuk His response.

**Habakkuk 2:1-4:** <sup>1</sup> I will climb my watchtower and wait to see what the LORD will tell me to say and what answer he will give to my complaint.

<sup>2</sup> The LORD gave me this answer: “Write down clearly on clay tablets what I reveal to you, so that it can be read at a glance. <sup>3</sup>**Put it in writing, because it is not yet time for it to come true. But the time is coming quickly, and what I show you will come true. It may seem slow in coming, but wait for it; it will certainly take place, and it will not be delayed.** <sup>4</sup>And this is the message: <sup>4</sup> **‘Those who are evil will not survive, but those who are righteous will live because they are faithful to God.’**”—*Good News Bible*.<sup>\*†</sup>  
[See Romans 1:17. God’s people are righteous because of their faith, and they live by it.]<sup>‡</sup>

13. **It is important to notice that Habakkuk 2:4 is quoted several times by Paul as one of the key texts for his understanding of the plan of salvation.**

14. The problem is that we human beings are very impatient; we want things to happen now!

15. Most Christians will agree that God is preparing a place for us to live forever with Him in heaven. There will be no death, no crying, no disease, no sin; it will be a perfect environment. But, we do not want to think about what comes between now and then.

16. **So, why would it be necessary for us to go through a time of trouble on this earth in order to prepare us for living in a perfect environment?**

17. We may be surrounded by evil now; but, we have no idea what is coming! Could it be worse than the Holocaust? World War II? Or, the black plague in the Middle Ages? Jesus Himself compared our day to the days of Noah! (Luke 17:26-27) What does that imply?

18. We need always to remember the context of the great controversy in each situation. God has already won the great controversy; but, this has made the Devil angry, and he is all the more determined to delay God’s final victory because he cannot win in the end.

19. Look at the incredible conclusion to Habakkuk’s book in his prayer to God.

**Habakkuk 3:16-19:** <sup>16</sup> I hear all this, and I tremble;

my lips quiver with fear.

My body goes limp,

and my feet stumble beneath me.

**I will quietly wait for the time to come  
when God will punish those who attack us.**

<sup>17</sup> **Even though the fig trees have no fruit**

**and no grapes grow on the vines,**

**even though the olive crop fails**

**and the fields produce no corn,**

**even though the sheep all die**

**and the cattle stalls are empty,**

<sup>18</sup> **I will still be joyful and glad,**

**because the LORD God is my saviour.**

<sup>19</sup> **The Sovereign LORD gives me strength.**

**He makes me sure-footed as a deer,**

**and keeps me safe on the mountains.**—*Good News Bible*.<sup>\*†</sup>

20. How could one avoid starvation in such a situation? This demonstrates that Habakkuk had some idea about the plan of salvation and the great controversy even in his day!

21. What did Oswald Chamber have in mind when he wrote the following?

Oswald Chambers wrote, “**Have you been asking God what He is going to do? He will never tell you. God does not tell you what He is going to do; He reveals to you Who He is.**”—*My Utmost for His Highest* (Uhrichsville, OH: Barbour & Company, Inc., 1963), January 2.—[as quoted in *Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*\* for Monday, August 8].<sup>†‡§</sup>

22. There are certain things that we know for sure if we are faithful Bible believers. Through the life and death of Jesus Christ, God has won the great controversy. He will be the final Ruler of the universe. Although things may look bad today, the end will never be in doubt!
23. Another person whose life illustrates some of the issues that we talk about in this discussion is **Job**.
24. We know nothing about Job’s life before the book began except that he was married, had a number of children and friends, and was very wealthy. But, then God had that discussion with the Devil in heaven, and “all hell broke loose” for Job. Was that fair? Who was it that first heard about the discussion in heaven? He lost all his wealth. He lost his children. Even his wife said: “You are still as faithful as ever, aren’t you? Why don’t you curse God and die?” (Job 2:9, *GNB*\*) After 35 chapters of discussions between Job and his four friends, God suddenly entered the conversation. He started to ask a number of questions—60 jaw-dropping questions! See Job 38-39.
25. It is interesting to notice that if you read through the book of Job, you realize **it was Job’s friends who thought they had all the answers!** But, Job repeatedly said, “If I just knew...” Then in Job 40, Job said:
- Job 40:3-5:** <sup>3-4</sup> I spoke foolishly, LORD. What can I answer?  
I will not try to say anything else.  
<sup>5</sup> I have already said more than I should.—*Good News Bible*.\*
26. Then God raised many more questions. Do you think those questions were addressed to Job? And, only to Job? Or, were they addressed also to Job’s “friends”? Did those friends hear the questions from God, just as Job did? Or, not? How did Moses learn of this story? Finally, we come to:
- Job 42:1-6:** Then Job answered the LORD.  
<sup>2</sup> I know, LORD, that you are all-powerful;  
that you can do everything you want.  
<sup>3</sup> You ask how I dare question your wisdom  
when I am so very ignorant.  
I talked about things I did not understand,  
about marvels too great for me to know.  
<sup>4</sup> You told me to listen while you spoke  
and to try to answer your questions.  
<sup>5</sup> **In the past I knew only what others had told me,  
but now I have seen you with my own eyes.**  
<sup>6</sup> So I am ashamed of all I have said [What does that mean?]  
and repent in dust and ashes.—*Good News Bible*.<sup>†‡</sup>
27. At least, Job was willing to admit that he did not have all the answers! He bowed humbly before God and essentially said: “I’m sorry that I have said so much.”

28. While it is true that Job “repented” near the end of the discussion, it was Job’s friends who were the real culprits and needed to repent. Notice what God said about them!

**Job 42:7-8:** <sup>7</sup> After the LORD had finished speaking to Job, he said to Eliphaz, “**I am angry with you and your two friends, because you did not speak the truth about me, as my servant Job did.** <sup>8</sup>Now take seven bulls and seven rams to Job and offer them as a sacrifice for yourselves. Job will pray for you, and **I will answer his prayer and not disgrace you as you deserve. You did not speak the truth about me as he did.**”—*Good News Bible*.<sup>\*†</sup>

29. It is interesting to notice that God never answered any of the “why” questions, either those of Job or of Job’s friends.

This story reveals a fascinating paradox. Hope and encouragement can spring from the realization that we know so little. Instinctively, we try to find comfort by knowing everything, and so we become discouraged when we cannot know. But sometimes God highlights our ignorance so that we may realize that human hope can find security only in a Being much greater than ourselves.—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*\* for Monday, August 8.

30. Are there things happening in our day that are hard to understand? Does it help to understand the great controversy and God’s position in the universe? Does it help to know that even though we cannot see God, He is walking beside us every day?

**Isaiah 41:13:** “I am the LORD your God;

I strengthen you and say,

‘Do not be afraid; I will help you.’ ”—*Good News Bible*.\*

31. When God seems far away, who is it that has moved? God does not change, and He has not moved; so, if it seems like He is far away, it is because we have moved.

32. There are many passages in the Bible, suggesting that we need not be afraid and that we need to have hope. For example, see **Isaiah 41:8-14**.

33. In Isaiah’s day, the Assyrians were attacking and conquering the northern kingdom which was just a few miles away from Isaiah’s home. There was reason to be afraid.

34. Think what a difference it would make to recognize that God is not only all-powerful, living light-years away, but also that He is standing next to us and ready to help! Whenever you feel like there is a challenge or problem, try to remember that God has already won the great controversy and that He wants to hold your hand. See what a difference that makes.

35. Someone in the days of Daniel, Ezekiel, and Jeremiah wrote this psalm:

**Psalms 137:1-9:** <sup>1</sup> By the rivers of Babylon we sat down;

there we wept when we remembered Zion.

<sup>2</sup> On the willows near by

we hung up our harps.

<sup>3</sup> Those who captured us told us to sing;

they told us to entertain them:

“Sing us a song about Zion.”

<sup>4</sup> How can we sing a song to the LORD

in a foreign land?....

<sup>8</sup> **Babylon, you will be destroyed.**

**Happy are those who pay you back**

**for what you have done to us C  
9 who take your babies  
and smash them against a rock.**—*Good News Bible*.\*†

36. Is it God's plan that our enemies have their babies "smashed against a rock"?
37. **Jeremiah** lived through all three invasions and sieges of Judah and Jerusalem. After all the long sieges, the lack of food, and constantly living in fear for one's life, Jeremiah wrote:

**Jeremiah 29:1-13:** <sup>1</sup> I wrote a letter to the priests, the prophets, the leaders of the people, and to all the others whom Nebuchadnezzar had taken away as prisoners from Jerusalem to Babylon. . . .

<sup>4</sup> "The LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says to all those people whom he allowed Nebuchadnezzar to take away as prisoners from Jerusalem to Babylon: <sup>5</sup> 'Build houses and settle down. Plant gardens and eat what you grow in them. <sup>6</sup>Marry and have children. Then let your children get married, so that they also may have children. **You must increase in numbers and not decrease.** <sup>7</sup>Work for the good of the cities where I have made you go as prisoners. Pray to me on their behalf, because if they are prosperous, you will be prosperous too. <sup>8</sup>**I, the LORD, the God of Israel, warn you not to let yourselves be deceived by the prophets who live among you or by any others who claim they can predict the future. Do not pay any attention to their dreams.** <sup>9</sup>**They are telling you lies in my name. I did not send them.** I, the LORD Almighty, have spoken.' [If Jeremiah was far from Babylon, why did God send the captives a message through him?]

<sup>10</sup> "**The LORD says, 'When Babylon's seventy years are over, I will show my concern for you and keep my promise to bring you back home.** <sup>11</sup>I alone know the plans I have for you, plans to bring you prosperity and not disaster, plans to bring about the future you hope for. <sup>12</sup>Then you will call to me. You will come and pray to me, and I will answer you. <sup>13</sup>You will seek me, and you will find me because you will seek me with all your heart.'"—*Good News Bible*.\*†† [Only a small percentage of the Jews returned from Babylon or Persia.]‡

38. Seventy years may seem like a long time to us; however, to God, it is just a short time. But, God's promise was that one day, the seventy years of captivity would be over.
39. Notice the details of the promises that God made to them:

- (1) God told them in Jeremiah 29:4 that He was the one who was responsible for carrying them into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon. God did not abandon them.
- (2) God told them that while they were going to be in Babylonian exile for a number of years, they should not give up hope; God was still with them.
- (3) Finally, God said that after 70 years, He was going to give them an opportunity to return to their homeland. Notice that God explained that He was in charge of their past, their present, and even their future. Then, He gave them this great promise:

**Jeremiah 29:11-14:** <sup>11</sup> "I alone know the plans I have for you, plans to bring you prosperity and not disaster, plans to bring about the future you hope for. <sup>12</sup>Then you will call to me. You will come and pray to me, and I will answer you. <sup>13</sup>You will seek me, and you will find me because you will seek me with all your heart. <sup>14</sup>Yes, I say, you will find me, and I will restore you to your land. I will gather

you from every country and from every place to which I have scattered you, and I will bring you back to the land from which I had sent you away into exile. I, the LORD, have spoken.”—*Good News Bible*.\*

40. Do you as a Seventh-day Adventist Christian believe that those promises given to the Jews in the days of Jeremiah could apply to us in our day? Try reading Jeremiah 29:11-14 and putting your name in each place after the word *you*.
41. Moving to the New Testament, we notice that the **author of Hebrews, who was probably Paul**, said that we need the discipline that we go through.

**Hebrews 12:5-13:** <sup>5</sup>Have you forgotten the encouraging words which God speaks to you as his sons and daughters?

“My child, pay attention when the Lord corrects you, and **do not be discouraged when he rebukes you.**

<sup>6</sup> **Because the Lord corrects everyone he loves, and punishes everyone he accepts as his child.”**

<sup>7</sup> Endure what you suffer as being a father’s punishment; **your suffering shows that God is treating you as his children.** Was there ever a child who was not punished by his father? <sup>8</sup>If you are not punished, as all his children are, it means you are not real children, but bastards. <sup>9</sup>In the case of our human fathers, they punished us and we respected them. How much more, then, should we submit to our spiritual Father and live! <sup>10</sup>Our human fathers punished us for a short time, as it seemed right to them; but God does it for our own good, so that we may share his holiness. <sup>11</sup>**When we are punished, it seems to us at the time something to make us sad, not glad. Later, however, those who have been disciplined by such punishment reap the peaceful reward of a righteous life.**

<sup>12</sup> Lift up your tired hands, then, and strengthen your trembling knees! <sup>13</sup>Keep walking on straight paths, so that the lame foot may not be disabled, but instead be healed.—*Good News Bible*.\*†

42. This passage is full of references to discipline of various kinds. In the Greek world in which Paul was writing, these words were synonymous with the word for *education*. God is educating us by giving examples of faith. See Hebrews 11. If we have problems with our faith, or in trusting God, the key is to fix our eyes upon Jesus (Hebrews 12:2) who is a great Example when times are difficult. We need to keep our eyes fixed on Jesus, remembering all that He went through. He came from heaven voluntarily to live the life He lived and die the death He died on this earth. It was not just to pay some kind of penalty for sin! He knew that at any moment, He could have abandoned us and gone back to heaven. But, He did not. What kind of courage should that give us? Have we ever been so troubled by things that we were near the point of death?
43. Notice the important points made in Hebrews 12:1-13: (1) God is the source of our discipline. (2) Our response should be to endure and to learn respect, but to submit to His training. (3) What is the goal of His discipline? It is for our own good; it is the peaceful reward of a righteous life.
44. Looking again at Hebrews 12:1-13, notice a list of things that are given as examples and grounds for hope: (1) The example of Jesus. (2) The cloud of witnesses in Hebrews 11. (3)

Jesus did not give up because of the cross. (4) Jesus is now seated at the right hand of God. (5) God has encouraging words for us. (6) Your suffering shows that God is treating you as His children. (7) God disciplines us for our own good, so that we may share His holiness, the peaceful reward of a righteous life. (8) The lame foot may not be disabled, but instead be healed.

45. God intends for us to continue our education for eternity. Think of the school that Adam and Eve had in the Garden of Eden. God plans to reestablish that school as soon as He can get His faithful people prepared to enter His kingdom.
46. In that school, we will learn about the roles that our guardian angels have played. Imagine learning about all they know about us. How would you like to talk to your guardian angel?

[From the writings of Ellen G. White=EGW:] There every power will be developed, every capability increased. The grandest enterprises will be carried forward, the loftiest aspirations will be reached, the highest ambitions realized. And still there will arise new heights to surmount, new wonders to admire, new truths to comprehend, fresh objects to call forth the powers of body and mind and soul.—Ellen G. White, *Education*\* 307.4.‡

[EGW:] The badge of Christianity is not an outward sign, not the wearing of a cross or a crown, but it is that which reveals the union of man with God. **By the power of His grace manifested in the transformation of character the world is to be convinced that God has sent His Son as its Redeemer.** No other influence that can surround the human soul has such power as the influence of an unselfish life. **The strongest argument in favor of the gospel is a loving and lovable Christian....**

**The fact that we are called upon to endure trial shows that the Lord Jesus sees in us something precious which He desires to develop. If He saw in us nothing whereby He might glorify His name, He would not spend time in refining us. He does not cast worthless stones into His furnace. It is valuable ore that He refines.** The blacksmith puts the iron and steel into the fire that he may know what manner of metal they are. The Lord allows His chosen ones to be placed in the furnace of affliction to prove what temper they are of and whether they can be fashioned for His work.—Ellen G. White, *Ministry of Healing*\* 470.1-471.2.†‡

47. Several lessons emerge in our present study: (1) God widens our horizons so we may locate ourselves and our experience within the larger framework of the plan of salvation and the great controversy. (2) God presents Himself to us as the Creator and the Redeemer, the One who loves us and is present with us at all times. (3) God reveals to us His plans with us and for us. We are not expendable elements in the crisis.
48. Look at the promises that Jesus made.

**John 10:10-15,28-29:** <sup>10</sup> “The thief comes only in order to steal, kill, and destroy. **I have come in order that you might have life—life in all its fullness.**

<sup>11</sup> “I am the good shepherd, who is willing to die for the sheep. <sup>12</sup>When the hired man, who is not a shepherd and does not own the sheep, sees a wolf coming, he leaves the sheep and runs away; so the wolf snatches the sheep and scatters them. <sup>13</sup>The hired man runs away because he is only a hired man and does not care about the sheep. <sup>14-15</sup>**I am the good shepherd.** As the Father

knows me and I know the Father, in the same way I know my sheep and they know me. And I am willing to die for them....

<sup>28</sup> “I give them eternal life, and they shall never die. No one can snatch them away from me. <sup>29</sup>What my Father has given me is greater than everything, and no one can snatch them away from the Father’s care.”—*Good News Bible*.<sup>\*†</sup>

49. Paul wrote a great deal about faith, hope, and love. (1 Corinthians 13:13) There are many other verses that talk about hope; all of those verses look beyond our present troubles to the future country, our eternal kingdom.

**Hebrews 11:1:** To have faith is to be sure of the things we hope for, to be certain of the things we cannot see.—*Good News Bible*.<sup>\*</sup>

50. Think of the examples of the faithful mentioned in Hebrews 11:33-39. Paul suffered a great deal. We have looked at some of the passages that describe his difficulties early in his life. But, Paul gloried in his sufferings because he believed that suffering produces perseverance, perseverance produces character, and character produces hope. (Romans 5:4) Hope is also discussed in Romans 12:12; 2 Corinthians 4:9; Hebrews 12:5; and Romans 8:20-27.

51. As we have already mentioned, patiently looking forward to a future reward is difficult for us impatient humans.

52. A fairly complete list of what the Bible says about hope can be seen in these passages.

[From the Bible study guide:] **Biblical hope is anchored in God, not in ourselves** (*Ps. 42:11, 2 Cor. 1:9, 1 Tim. 6:17*). All three Persons of the Godhead are part of the fountain of hope. **God the Father** “loved us and gave us eternal comfort and good hope through grace” (*2 Thess. 2:16, ESV; see also 1 Tim. 4:10, Titus 1:2*). **Christ Jesus and His gospel of grace are our hope** (*Eph. 1:12, Col. 1:27, 1 Tim. 1:1, 2 Tim. 1:1*). **The Holy Spirit brings and maintains hope in the lives of the believers** (*Rom. 5:5, Rom. 15:13, Gal. 5:5*). Without God, there is no hope in life, no covenant, and thus, we are estranged from God (*Eph. 2:12, 1 Thess. 4:13*); but in Christ, we all have the same hope given by God to Israel through the gospel (*Eph. 3:6, Col. 1:23*). The apostle Peter tells us that God is our Father who gave us a “living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead” (*1 Pet. 1:3, NKJV*).

The content of biblical hope is God’s promise of saving us from sin, death, and suffering through Jesus Christ. Matthew quotes Isaiah to describe Jesus as the Hope of the nations (*Isa. 42:1-4, Matt. 12:21*). Jesus says that Abraham hoped to see the day of the Messiah (*John 8:56*). That is the hope of righteousness by faith (*Gal. 5:5*).

God’s hope is already valid for our present life. Our hope is fixed on salvation through the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross. This hope gives us, in this life, numerous benefits, both spiritual (such as a relationship with God) and psychological (peace, optimism, etc.). The “hope of the glory of God” (*Rom. 5:2*) is the justification of sinners by grace through faith, by which God gives us peace in Jesus Christ (*Rom. 5:2, 3*). This hope “does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us” (*Rom. 5:5, NKJV*). So, this hope is not a false one. Rather, this hope is based on God’s concrete actions; that is, just at the right time, “Christ died for the ungodly” (*Rom. 5:6, NKJV*). Thus, Jesus demonstrated His love for

us (*Rom. 5:8*), saving us from our sins and reconciling us with God (*Rom. 5:9-11*).

But Christ's first advent and His sacrifice on the cross are not the end of the redemption story. The apostle Paul tells us that **"if in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable"** (*1 Cor. 15:19, NKJV*). For this reason, **our hope is anchored in the resurrected Lord Jesus Christ**, who will resurrect us for an eternal and glorious life (*Col. 1:5, 27; Titus 1:2; Titus 3:7; Heb. 10:23; see also 2 Cor. 1:9, 1 Tim. 4:8*). Paul declared that he was persecuted because of the hope of the resurrection (*Acts 23:6, Acts 24:15*). The resurrection was not an invention of Paul but was the same hope that God gave to the fathers of Israel (*Acts 26:6; Acts 28:20*). According to Paul, Abraham became the father of many nations because, "against all hope" (*Rom. 4:18, NIV*), he "believed in hope" (*Rom. 4:18*), trusting in the "God who gives life to the dead and calls into being that which does not exist" (*Rom. 4:17, AMP*). The hope of resurrection will be consummated at the second coming of Jesus, which itself is the "blessed hope" of the Christian (*Titus 2:13*).

It was precisely this hope that constituted the call, identity, ethos, life, and mission of the nation of Israel (*Acts 26:7*). This hope of salvation that God offers us through Christ reached humanity through the patriarchs, Israel, and later the church (*Rom. 15:4, 1 Cor. 1:7, Eph. 2:12*). We are participants in distributing God's hope to all the people. God promised Eve that her Seed would save the world (*Gen. 3:15*). God promised Abraham that blessings and salvation for the nations would come through him; that is, through his Seed (*Gen. 12:3, 7; Gen. 18:18; Rom. 9:4; Gal. 3:8, 15, 16*). God promised David that his Seed would sit forever on the throne (*Rom. 15:12; see Isa. 11:1, 2; 2 Sam. 22:51*).

Paul invokes hope in his blessing upon God's people amid suffering: "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit" (*Rom. 15:13, NKJV; 2 Thess. 2:16*). Hope serves as the helmet in the armor of the Christian (*1 Thess. 5:8*).—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide\** 95-96.<sup>†§</sup>

53. In conclusion, think of the experience of **Daniel**. He thought he was just about to go back to Jerusalem at the close of the 70-year prophecy of Jeremiah. And then, God said, "No," there were to be 70 more weeks of years and 2300 years in total before the whole problem of the great controversy over God's character and government would be solved! And after that, there was to be a period of time for the final judgment to take place.
54. Has God given us adequate reasons for hope? In light of all this ammunition from the Bible, are we prepared to stand firm during these final days of this world's history?

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