

Forever With Jesus



SABBATH—JUNE 20

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON: Psalm 80; 1 Thesalonians 4:17; Revelation 21:9–11; Isaiah 25:8; Matthew 11:28–30.

MEMORY VERSE: “My friends, we are already children of God. We do not yet [already] know clearly [really] what we will become. But we do know this [promise]: when Christ [Jesus] returns [comes back] to this world [earth], we will become like [the same as] him. We will be like him because we will see him as he really is” (1 John 3:2, EASY).



Keeping our eyes on Jesus isn't always easy in this life.

WHAT will happen in your future? Do you think it will be exciting? Scary? Wonderful? Whatever happens, you can trust Jesus and the things He says (Revelation 3:14). For sure, hard times will come (Matthew 24:21, 22). But Jesus promises that He won't leave us (Hebrews 13:5). Jesus always will do what He says. Now and forever (Hebrews 10:23). He promises, “ ‘But God will save the person who remains strong until the end’ ” (Matthew 24:13, EASY).

We don't know how long we will live. But we do know we should keep our eyes on Jesus. Keeping our eyes on Jesus isn't always easy in this life. So many things try to take our attention away from Jesus. But with David we may say, “I always look to the LORD for help. Only he can free me from my troubles” (Psalm 25:15, ERV).

This week, let's learn about the reward of heaven (Matthew 5:12; Revelation 22:12). How wonderful will it be finally to be with the God who made us, died for us, and saved us. He's coming back for us soon. We need to hold on in faith until then.

LIVING TODAY (Psalm 80)

When we look around, we see that this earth is in trouble. The signs that Jesus told us about are happening in front of our eyes. Wars, food shortages, disease, earthquakes, and suffering (Matthew 24:6–11) are getting worse as time continues. Yes, we live in terrible times. That’s why we need a living relationship with God.

The Bible says, “The end of all things is near. So be watchful and control yourselves. Then you may pray” (1 Peter 4:7, NIV). Now more than ever, we must keep our minds and our personal relationship with God strong. We don’t know how much longer our lives will continue. Our lives are really short, even if we live a long time. “You who say, ‘Today or tomorrow we will go to this city and stay a year and make money.’ You do not know about tomorrow. What is your life? It is like [the same as] fog. You see it and soon it is gone” (James 4:13, 14, NIV). We know this warning is true, right? You who are reading these words now may not be alive before the day ends. We live on a planet filled with sin. So, we must make sure that our relationship with God is strong. Always remember your need of Him and His saving love.

Psalm 80 is a beautiful prayer to God. Read the whole poem and think about verses 1–3, 14–17, 18, and 19. Put the word “I” or “me” where it says “me” or “us.” Of course, Psalm 80 was written in a different time and place than our own. But how does this poem show your own experience with God?

We all need new spiritual life. We easily forget the things God does for us now and in the past. Did you ever say the same thing the poet says in Psalm 80:19? “O Lord God of all [everyone], bring us back [make us new again] to You. Make Your face shine [may you be pleased with; smile] upon [on] us, and we will be saved” (NIV). You must accept what Jesus did for you at the cross. You must believe He forgives your sins. Believe that He puts on you His life of perfect obedience, the same as clothes. When you know these things, you can trust that He saves you!

Jesus saves us with His life of perfect obedience. Knowing this Bible truth, what does it mean that God’s face “shines” on us?



Wars, food shortages, disease, earthquakes, and suffering (Matthew 24:6–11) are getting worse as time continues.

FINALLY FACE-TO-FACE (1 Thessalonians 4:17)

God made us to be in a close relationship with Him (Genesis 2:7). Since the time when God first made us, He gave everything to heal our broken relationship with Him (John 3:16). God put the wish for heaven in our hearts. Even so, we have trouble understanding everything God did and will do from the beginning to the end of time (Ecclesiastes 3:11). We're part of the worldwide war between good and evil. This war is happening all around us. And in us. But too often we don't take the time to think about the price God paid to save us so that He may accept us again. Too often, we are so busy with our problems in this life. We don't remember that "the home where we belong is in heaven. We are waiting for the Lord Jesus Christ to come from there. He is the one who will come from heaven and save us. He will change these weak bodies that we have now on this earth. He will make them become strong and beautiful, like [the same as] his own body that he has in heaven" (Philippians 3:20, 21, EASY).



**As Jesus comes closer,
we'll hear His shout.
He will blow the trumpet.**

We are getting closer to the end of human history. Soon a small dark cloud will appear in the eastern sky. As the cloud comes closer, it will grow more and more white and bright. Then we'll see who sits on the cloud: someone "who looked like [the same as] the Son of Man. He had a gold crown on his head and a sharp sickle in his hand" (Revelation 14:14, ERV). Thousands and thousands of angels will come with Jesus (Matthew 25:31). Every person will see Jesus come (Revelation 1:7). As Jesus comes closer, we'll hear His shout. He will blow the trumpet. The graves will open. The dead will wake up first and join Jesus in the clouds (1 Thessalonians 4:16). The dead will know the voice of Jesus when He shouts for them to wake up (John 5:28).

What will happen next? Read 1 Thessalonians 4:17 for the answer. What does Philippians 2:10, 11 say will also happen?

We will see Jesus. Really see Him. Isn't that wonderful? We will hear His voice. We will confess He is Lord. Before His coming, we prayed to Him. We talked to other people about Him. Now we will see Him face-to-face. We can trust this promise (Revelation 22:6).

In that instant, when we see Jesus face-to-face (Revelation 22:4), we will know He was worth the wait.

THE BRIDE (Revelation 21:9–11)

John was sent to the Island of Patmos. There, God gave John a vision about heaven.

Read Revelation 21:9–11. What symbol do you read about in these verses? Why do you think John used it?

John uses the symbol of a bride. The bride is beautiful. On her wedding day, everyone wants to look at her. A wedding is a symbol for a new life together for the bride and groom. In the same way, we will start a new life with God when He comes back for us.

Jesus is getting a place ready for us (John 14:1–3). We can't imagine its beauty in our minds. "Human language can't explain the reward that God will give His people. Only the people who see heaven will understand. No human mind can now know the beauty and majesty of heaven."—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, page 675, adapted.

For sure, we really can't understand the beauty of heaven or of the new earth right now. God shows John a vision of a special 'wedding' to help us. God also invites us to "think about the things that are in heaven, not about things that are on earth" (Colossians 3:2, WE).

God is carefully getting everything ready for this special 'wedding.' He doesn't want us to be surprised with what will happen (read Matthew 22:1–14; Matthew 25:1–13).

Everyone in heaven will watch this 'wedding' happen. God invites us to be His guests. We will join with God's bride. The bride is a symbol for the city that Jesus will take us to at His second coming. Elsewhere, the Bible also compares God's people to a bride (Isaiah 62:5). Maybe that is because the saints are inside "the holy city coming down out of heaven from God. This holy city is the new Jerusalem. It was prepared [made ready] like [the same as] a bride dressed for her husband" (Revelation 21:2, ICB).

This picture of the Holy City shows a special connection between God's people and the city. That's why both are named "the bride." "The New Jerusalem is named 'the bride, the wife of the Lamb.' [Revelation 21:9, ERV]."—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, page 426, adapted.

Read Revelation 21:9–27. Why is this scene so hard for us to imagine in our minds right now? How do we understand what God promises to us in these verses?



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FOLLOW THE LAMB (Isaiah 25:8)

What do you want to do most when you get to heaven? A child may answer, “Ride a tiger!” Or “Slide down a giraffe’s neck!” Or “Fly to different planets!” If you ask teenagers what they will enjoy most in heaven, they may answer, “Not doing any more homework.” Or “Exploring heaven with my friends without getting hurt.” Adults may say, “Being in a place with no more pain, suffering, or death.” Or “Meeting loved ones again.” These answers are wonderful. We have so much to enjoy in the new heaven and new earth. God put a wish for heaven in our hearts. We know there must be something more to life than what is here and now.

What other blessings will we enjoy in the new heaven and new earth? Read Isaiah 25:8; Revelation 7:17; and Revelation 21:4 for the answer.



For sure, the best blessing of heaven will finally be to see Jesus.

For sure, the best blessing of heaven will be finally to see Jesus. We can thank Him, in person, for everything He did for us in this life. We will worship Him for saving us on the cross. We will join the angels in singing, “ ‘All power, wealth, wisdom, and strength belong to the Lamb who was killed. He is worthy to receive [get] honor, glory, and praise!’ ” (Revelation 5:12, ERV).

John the Baptist introduced Jesus as the “Lamb of God” (John 1:36, ERV; also read verses 35, 37). Jesus’ followers followed closely behind Him. Revelation 14:4 says we will do the same: “They follow the Lamb wherever He goes” (Revelation 14:4, NLV). Do you want to follow Jesus in heaven? You must first follow Him here on earth.

Jesus, the Lamb, is also our Shepherd. He leads us as no one else can. We may have hard times now. But Jesus won’t stop leading us, even in heaven. Revelation 7:17 says, “ ‘The Lamb who is in front of the throne will take care of them. He will guide them to the places where there is water that gives life’ ” (WE). As His people, His sheep, we will follow Jesus in heaven. We will want to be with Him forever. “His name will be on the front of their heads” (Revelation 22:4, EASY). This verse shows that we will always be thinking about Jesus.

Watch the Seventh-day Adventist gospel song “Follow the Lamb” at <https://vimeo.com/1067821589>. Sing the words as your personal prayer today.

COME! (Matthew 11:28–30)

Jesus invites us, again, today: ‘Come!’

Read the following verses: Matthew 11:28–30; Isaiah 55:1–3; and John 6:44. Notice Jesus’ invitation for you to come to Him.

The Holy Spirit wants you to accept Jesus today. Jesus invites you to come to Him. He wants you to live in Him today, and every day, until He comes. When you accept Jesus’ invitation, you will feel peace. You may be a terrible sinner, but you know that Jesus will make you strong. He will wake up the dead when He comes back. Jesus said, “ ‘When anyone comes to me, I will never send that person away’ ” (John 6:37, EASY).

We must work with the Holy Spirit to invite other people to have a saving relationship with Jesus. “The Holy Spirit and the bride say, ‘Come!’ And the person who hears should say, ‘Come!’ Anyone who is thirsty should come. Anyone who wants to take the free gift of the water of life should do so’ ” (Revelation 22:17, NIV).

God’s invitation is free. He offers it to us as a gift. When we accept Him into our lives, we must each love Him with all our heart, mind, spirit, and strength (Deuteronomy 6:5). Then our life here and in the future will be forever changed for the better.

Look at what the last words in the Bible promise us: “Jesus is a witness about these things. He says, ‘Yes. I am coming soon.’ Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!” (Revelation 22:20, NIV).

How soon is Jesus coming? From our view, we close our eyes in death, then the next thing we know will be Jesus’ coming. Our lives are very short. That’s how fast Jesus is coming back for us. Maybe your first thought when you wake up from the dead will be, “Wow, Lord, Your coming was really soon!”

Don’t grow tired of waiting for Jesus. Keep your love for Him alive and your wish to see Him. Trust in the love of God. Have faith in Him. Yes, Lord Jesus, please come!

Pray right now for the faith to wait for God and to stay loyal to Him. Ask Him for the faith to help you give your life completely to Him. He died for you. He is coming back soon for you, too.



Jesus will wake up the dead when He comes back.

ADDITIONAL THOUGHT: “If we want to accept the religion of Jesus, we must read the Bible. If we don’t, we shall not enter into the city of God. If we love only the things of this life, we will not love the things in heaven. They would not interest us. The voices of the angels and the music of their harps would not satisfy us. We wouldn’t understand the wisdom of heaven. We must want Jesus’ life of perfect obedience in our hearts. His love and forgiveness must change us. Then we may be ready for the fellowship of angels. . . .

“Then the saints will know no other law than the law of heaven. Everyone will be happy and part of one big family. Everyone will offer praise and thanksgiving to God. . . . The angels of God will sing and shout with joy. God the Father and Jesus the Son will announce, ‘Nobody will ever die again.’ [Revelation 21:4, EASY].

“Make a habit of talking about heaven. Heaven is very beautiful. Talk about the life that will continue as long as God shall live. Then you won’t remember your little problems and troubles. Think about God.”—Ellen G. White, *The Faith I Live By*, page 363, adapted.



“Make a habit of talking about heaven.”

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- ① Read Ellen G. White’s vision about heaven in *Early Writings*, pages 14–20. What is the most interesting thing to you about this vision?
- ② What part of this quarter’s lessons do you want to remember most? How will this Bible truth help you keep your relationship with God strong until you see Jesus face-to-face?
- ③ Who in your life needs to hear about the hope of heaven? Share with this person as soon as you can. Remember: you can’t share with them hope that you don’t have.

AMELIA'S PROMISE TO GOD

Amelia didn't think that life was worth living. People said and did mean things to her in the past. Their words and actions hurt her deeply. She thought about ending her life.

Then Amelia remembered that a friend told her to pray for the people who hurt her. So, Amelia decided to try. Amelia remembered the Bible verse in Psalm 37:5 that says, "Depend on the LORD. Trust in him, and he will help you" (ERV). Amelia was crying. She asked God to keep that promise to her. She wanted to become everything He wanted her to be. She promised, "Lord, I will work for You. If You help me out of this problem, I will do whatever work You want me to do."

Amelia's prayer changed her life for the better. God removed the pain and suffering in her heart. She no longer was angry at the people who hurt her. Now she wanted to share Jesus' healing love with other people.

Amelia's friend told her about a job with Global Mission. She could teach at a Seventh-day Adventist school in the mountains. The school was hard to get to. But Amelia put her trust in God.

Amelia's days at the school were long. After teaching, she visited students and their families. She also led them in worship on Sabbaths. Both Seventh-day Adventists and non-Seventh-day Adventists in the community came to worship at the church. These non-Seventh-day Adventists worshiped spirits.

Not everyone supported Amelia's work for God. The village leader ordered the villagers to stay away from her. Then the village leader started coming to Amelia's Bible meetings. Amelia heard that the man used witchcraft to put curses on people who upset him. So, Amelia started to pray for him all the time.

Amelia held a parent-teacher meeting at the school to talk about the students' grades and test scores. She also shared her plans for the school. Soon after Amelia started talking, the leader started to shout at her. No one could hear Amelia talk.

Amelia ran to the church next door. She knelt down and prayed, "Please, God, help me. Control our meeting." Amelia's heart filled with courage. She went back to the meeting.

The leader continued to cause trouble at the meeting. But Amelia answered his questions with respect. The leader ordered the parents to agree with him. But they supported Amelia.

At the end of the meeting, Amelia chose to keep her promise to God. She continued to stay at the school. She chose to trust God to help her with every problem in the future.

Many church pioneers often serve God in places that are filled with danger. Please pray for Amelia and for the hundreds of pioneers who share God's love worldwide. To learn more about Global Mission pioneers, visit www.GMsda.org/Give.

INSIDE
Story
by MWAMBA MPUNDU



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