

Resting in the Promises of Jesus



SABBATH—SEPTEMBER 18

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON: Revelation 1:9–19; Matthew 24:4–8, 23–31; Revelation 14:6–12; Hebrews 11:13–16.

MEMORY VERSE: “The holy writings say, ‘No eye has seen the things God has made ready for those who love him. No ear has heard about them. No person’s heart has ever thought of them’ ” (1 Corinthians 2:9, WE).



The Bible teaches that we are in a big war between good (Jesus) and evil (Satan).

DO YOU EVER FEEL you are in the middle of a big war? A war between good and evil? Many people feel this way, even people who are not religious. As Seventh-day Adventists, we feel this way, for sure, because we know this war is real. The Bible teaches that we are in a big war between good (Jesus) and evil (Satan).

The war between Jesus and Satan happens worldwide. Really, this war is even bigger than that, because this war started in heaven (Revelation 12:7). As we live our busy lives, we easily can miss seeing the plan God made for us to escape from this war. Fear can cause us to miss seeing this plan, too. Many things in life can make us afraid: countries at war with each other, sudden disasters in nature, and citizens fighting against their own governments. But the Bible can help us stay calm because we know where we are going and how everything will turn out.

The war between good and evil is personal, too. We all have experiences in our everyday lives that show us we are in this war. This week, we look at how we can rest in Jesus, even while we are in the middle of this big war.

A DREAM ABOUT THE END (Revelation 1:9–19)

John is sent to the rocky island of Patmos to die. John is the only one of the twelve followers of Jesus who is still alive. John is old now. He is far away from everything dear to him. What must he be thinking as he sits on this lonely island where he will live until he dies? For sure, John thinks about Jesus. John saw Jesus go back to heaven. John saw the two angels who said, “ ‘Men from Galilee, why are you standing here looking into the sky? You saw Jesus carried away from you into heaven. He will come back in the same way you saw him go’ ” (Acts 1:11, ERV).

The angels said that many years ago. But Jesus still has not come back. The other followers of Jesus who were there on that day have died. Most of these followers were killed. The church is now made of young people who never met Jesus face to face. The church is under awful attack from the Kingdom of Rome. Worse, false teachers inside the church attack Bible truth. All these troubles must have made John feel tired and worn. Then all of a sudden, there on the island John sees a vision from God.

What comfort do you think this vision must have given John? For the answer, read Revelation 1:9–19.

Jesus told His followers, “ ‘Teach them to do all the things I have told you to do. I am with you always, even to the end of time’ ” (Matthew 28:20, WE). These words helped John on the island of Patmos. In the same way, the visions in the book of Revelation helped comfort John, too.

In the visions from Jesus, John sees the future of the church on earth until the end of time. Jesus shows John how everything will end. John says, “Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth. The first heaven and the first earth had disappeared. Now there was no sea. And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God. It was prepared [made ready] like [the same as] a bride dressed for her husband” (Revelation 21:1, 2, ERV).

John wrote about his big, end-time vision in the book of Revelation. This vision of the new earth helped John to rest in the promises of God.

How does knowing the good news about the future give us comfort now?



What must John be thinking as he sits on this lonely island where he will spend the rest of his life?

THE TIME OF TROUBLE (Matthew 24:4–8, 23–31)

In Matthew 24, Jesus tells His followers and us what will happen in the future. His sermon covers future history from His time until the Second Coming and beyond.

Jesus wants to show His people then and now what will happen so they can get ready for the Second Coming. Jesus shares the future with us in Matthew 24 because He also wants us to rest in His love. In the end times, everything around us will fall apart. But we can trust in the promises of Jesus to keep us safe.

Seventh-day Adventists know from Daniel about that future time of trouble: “ ‘There will be a time of much trouble, the worst time since nations [countries] have been on earth’ ” (Daniel 12:1, ERV). Jesus wants us to be ready for this time, which happens just before His second coming.

What will happen at the Second Coming? How can we avoid being tricked by false teachers right before Jesus comes? For the answer, read Matthew 24:4–8, 23–31.



In the end times, everything around us will fall apart. But we can trust in the promises of Jesus to keep us safe.

The Second Coming will be a real happening at the end of time. In Matthew 24, Jesus spends lots of time talking about His coming. So, the Second Coming is very important.

What was the last big, worldwide happening that destroyed the earth? The Flood. Think about this: only eight people on the whole earth were ready for it. Jesus compares the Second Coming to the Flood (Matthew 24:37–39). Sure, no one knows the day or the hour when Jesus will come back (Matthew 24:36). But God has told us about the signs that will happen on the earth before Jesus comes back. So, we can watch for these things. Then we will know that the Second Coming is very close. And we will be ready.

God has given us important end-time work to do. What work is that? For the answer, read Matthew 24:9–14.

In the worldwide war between good and evil, we are more than just watchers. We help share the Good News about Jesus with other people all over the earth. What does this mean for us? People will attack us for our faith.

How do we stay “ ‘strong in the faith’ ” (Matthew 10:22, NlrV) to the very end of time?

THE JOB GOD GIVES US TO DO RIGHT NOW (Revelation 14:6–12)

Revelation 14 tells us the reason for our being here as a church on this earth. Now is the time when God will judge all people on earth. We must help people everywhere get ready for the Second Coming of Jesus.

Read Revelation 14:6–12. What worldwide messages must we announce to people on the earth? Why are these messages so important? Why do we need to announce them right now?

As Seventh-day Adventists, we believe in “present truth” (2 Peter 1:12). Present truth is the Bible truth we need most for our time. Revelation 14:6–12 shows us the present truth for our time: the Three Angels’ Messages. These messages show us our job at this time in history.

Do you see that the First Angel’s Message starts with “the Good News that lasts [continues] forever” (Revelation 14:6, NLV)? The Good News gives us our only hope of being saved. This hope gives us rest. Next, we learn from the First Angel’s Message that “ ‘the time has come for God to judge all people’ ” (Revelation 14:7, ERV). Then the First Angel announces that we must “ ‘worship God. He made the heavens, the earth, the sea, and the springs [places where water comes out of the earth] of water’ ” (Revelation 14:7, ERV). The Second Angel announces that Babylon is destroyed (Revelation 14:8). Babylon is a word picture for false religion. Then the Third Angel warns, “ ‘God will punish all those [people] who worship the beast [wild animal from the sea] and the beast’s idol [statue of a false god]’ ” (Revelation 14:9, ERV). The chapter ends with this verse about the end-time people of God: “This demands [asks of us; calls for] patience [being patient] from God’s holy people, who keep God’s commands and the faith of Jesus” (Revelation 14:12, NTE). The “faith of Jesus” is not the same thing as our faith **in** Jesus. Faith in Jesus is our belief in Jesus as our Savior. The faith of Jesus shows that we obey the law of God, just as Jesus obeyed. Jesus cleans our hearts and helps us to obey.

Read Revelation 14:11. This verse shows us the people who worship the wild sea animal and his statue. The people who worship this animal have no rest. Why is that?



The Three Angels’ Messages show us our job at this time in history.

REST IN PEACE (Hebrews 11:13–16)

For many hundreds of years, Christians have waited for Jesus to come back. His coming is our highest hope. The Second Coming is the dearest hope of all the people of God who ever lived.

Read Hebrews 11:13–16. What important promise do we read in these verses? How is this promise for people in the past and for us, too?

Do you see that Hebrews says, “These people all died still believing in God. They did not get the things God had promised them” (Hebrews 11:13, WE)? In many ways, these verses will not mean anything to us if we believe the popular teachings about death today. These popular teachings say that when people die, they go to heaven. Now they are forever with Jesus enjoying everlasting life. That is what people said when Baptist Pastor Billy Graham died. We heard again and again that he was in heaven with Jesus.

That is odd, because people who believe this view often say something else that goes against this thinking. When someone dies, they say, “May he or she rest in peace.” What is going on here? Are dead people resting in peace in the grave? Or are they alive up in heaven? Let us ask the Bible for the answer.

How does Jesus talk about death in John 11:11?

Jesus shows us that people do not go right away to live in heaven after they die. Dead people rest. “For believers, death is only a small problem. Jesus says we should not worry about death at all. Why? Because death will not continue forever. Jesus says, ‘I tell you the truth. If anyone obeys my teaching, he will never die’” John 8:51 [ICB]. And ‘ “Whoever obeys my teaching will never die” ’ John 8:52 [ERV]. For Christians, death is the same as sleep. Death is a short moment that is silent and dark. Is Jesus your life? If yes, then ‘when he comes again, you will share in his glory’ Colossians 3:4 [ERV].”—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, page 787, adapted.

Jesus compares death to a sleep (John 11:11, 14). He also adds that both the saved and the lost will get their reward after He wakes them up from the dead (John 5:28, 29). So, we must be ready for death whenever it comes.



Jesus shows us that people do not go right away to live in heaven after they die. Dead people rest.

BE FILLED WITH JOY! (Philippians 4:4–6)

Many people who have smartphones use Google Maps. We like to use Google Maps when we go somewhere new. But with Google Maps on your phone, you can easily find your way anywhere, even in a foreign city. You feel safe with Google Maps. Safety helps you feel rest and peace. Your feeling of rest and peace is the same way God wants you to feel when you trust Him about what the Bible says will happen in the future.

But sometimes, we may put the wrong address into Google Maps. Or we may just decide not to follow the directions because we think we know a shortcut. So, we may end up driving somewhere we did not want to go. And that may not be in a place where we can find rest and peace.

Read Philippians 4:4–6. What does Paul say we must do to have rest and peace in our busy and often painful lives?

In these verses, Paul does not say to be joyful always in all your troubles. What Paul really says is, “Always be filled with joy in the Lord” (Philippians 4:4, ERV).

Do you have many troubles in life? Paul says to think about God, His love, and His dying on the cross for us. Then we will find joy in Jesus. He will give us peace.

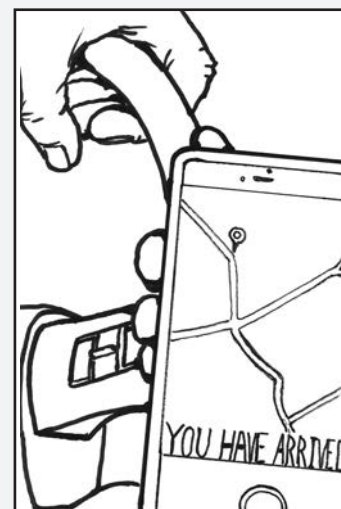
The words of Paul in Philippians fill our hearts with rest, peace, and hope for something beyond this life.

Paul says: “Don’t worry about anything” (Philippians 4:6, ERV). What if you followed this advice? For sure, this advice is hard to follow at times! Paul himself had plenty of worries. But we know we serve a loving God who is in control and will save us into His kingdom. So, we can trust God to help us with the things we are worried about.

The Bible tells us that the Lord is always close to us. Even when we die. When we close our eyes in death, then the next thing we will see is Jesus coming in the clouds.

Yes, life is full of suffering, troubles, and hard times. No one escapes from these things. Just look at the life of Paul. He did not escape from troubles (read 2 Corinthians 11). Paul wants us to understand that we can find joy in the Lord, even if we have hard times.

Read Philippians 4:4–6 again. In what ways do these verses give you hope right now in whatever hard times or troubles you have?



Google Maps is a word picture for the peace and rest God wants us to have when we trust Him.

ADDITIONAL THOUGHT: “We all want God to answer our prayers right away. We often lose hope when the answers do not come fast enough or they come in a way we do not expect. But God is too wise and good to answer our prayers always at just the time we want and in the way we want. God will do more and better for us than to give us everything we wish for. We can trust the wisdom and love of God. So, we should not ask Him to do exactly what we want. We should try to do what the Lord wants. We must put His plan first in our lives. Then we will put His plan ahead of our own wishes.”—Ellen G. White, *Gospel Workers*, page 219, adapted.

“Soon, Jesus will come to save His children. Then He will give them everlasting life. . . . The graves will open. The dead will wake up and walk out of their graves. They will give a shout of joy, saying, ‘Death, where is your victory [power]? Death, where is your power to hurt?’ [1 Corinthians 15:55, ICB]. Our loved ones who sleep in Jesus will come back to life in new bodies that will never grow old or die.”—Ellen G. White, *Counsels on Stewardship*, page 350, adapted.



“In a little while, Jesus will come to save His children.”

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- ① Think about the worldwide war between God and Satan. How is this war fought on the earth today? This war is very real, right? We know this war is more real than many people think. But most people today do not even believe in a real devil. How does our understanding about the worldwide war between God and Satan help us understand why things are so bad on this earth? Why does our understanding about this war comfort our hearts?
- ② We can misunderstand the special messages in the Bible about the future if we try to make these verses say more than they really mean. How often have Christians gotten into trouble for saying what will happen in the future? What happens when the thing they promise does not happen? How can we protect ourselves from falling into this trap?
- ③ In class, read Revelation 14:9–11. In these verses, the people who worship the wild sea animal and its false god will not have any rest. What does it mean that they have no rest?
- ④ A “hot” topic in the church today is if we can cause the Second Coming to happen sooner. Whatever you believe, why is it important that we continue to share the news that Jesus is coming back soon?

ROUGH FIRST DAY AT SCHOOL

The first day of school was hard for Niang Muang. Really, really hard.

The nine-year-old girl came to the United States only a month earlier from the country of Myanmar. Niang and her parents came to America to escape the war in their country. Niang did not know English. She did not have any friends.

“Hello, what is your name?” a girl at school asked her.

Niang shook her head. “No,” she said.

“Oh,” said the girl. She looked confused. “Where are you from?”

Niang shook her head again. “No,” she answered.

Niang was not trying to be mean. She did not understand English.

Niang sat quietly in class all morning. She said nothing. At lunchtime, she followed the other children to the cafeteria. Niang looked at the food that was being served. Cheese and beef. Pizza. Pieces of chicken. The food was very strange to Niang. She was used to eating mustard leaves, potatoes, vegetables, beans, and lentils.

Niang tasted the food, then went back to the classroom. She sat quietly until school ended for the day. At home, she prayed for help. “Dear God, please help me at school tomorrow.”

4th grade was rough. But 5th grade was better. Niang started to make friends.

“What is your name?” a girl at school asked Niang.

“My name is Niang,” Niang said with a shy smile.

“Oh, where are you from?” the girl wanted to know.

“I am from Burma. Burma also is named Myanmar,” Niang said.

The girl nodded. She had heard of the country. Several other children from Myanmar also studied at their school.

“OK,” said the girl. “Do you want to play?”

Niang felt happy. She was starting to fit in. She felt really happy in 7th grade when she started going to a Seventh-day Adventist school, thanks to a 13th Sabbath Offering in 2011. The 13th Sabbath Offering helped people the same as Niang who escaped to America from war in their countries.

Niang was so grateful to God. “Dear God, thank You so much for helping me learn this new language and for taking care of me,” she prayed.

Part of the 13th Sabbath Offering for this quarter will help children the same as Niang to study at Adventist schools. Niang is now 21 years old. She is studying to be a doctor. She hopes to travel to different countries to heal people who are sick and teach them about the love of God.

INSIDE *Story*

by ANDREW MCCHESENEY



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