

## Filled With Hope



### SABBATH—MAY 11

**READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON:** John 14:1–3; Acts 1:9–11; Isaiah 28:9, 10; *The Great Controversy*, chapters 18–21.

Miller studied the Bible and believed that Jesus was coming in his lifetime.

**MEMORY VERSE:** “At that time people will say, ‘Here is our God! He is the one we have been waiting for. He has come to save us. We have been waiting for our Lord. So we will rejoice and be happy when he saves us’ ” (Isaiah 25:9, ERV).

**THE SECOND COMING** of Jesus is one of the most important teachings in the Bible. The Old Testament talks about the Second Coming 1,845 times. New Testament writers talk about the Second Coming more than 300 times.

The Second Coming was an important belief for early Protestants. This belief gave Protestants hope and helped them join together as one people in heart and mind. But the Protestant religion in Europe started to have problems. Leaders fought with each other and separated. Many Protestants went to the United States. The Protestant religion grew strong in America. There, many Protestants stood for Bible truth, including the Second Coming. One of these Protestants was William Miller. Miller studied the Bible and believed that Jesus was coming in his lifetime. Miller started to preach this message. Jesus didn't come in Miller's lifetime. But Miller's preaching helped people accept Bible truths that are important to this day.

This week, we will study why the Second Coming filled the hearts of God's people with hope in the past. We will learn what we can do to be ready for Jesus today.

## THE PROMISE OF HIS COMING (John 14:1–3)

Many Protestant leaders and pilgrims left Holland for America. They wanted Jesus to come back. They waited for Him with hope and joy. The Protestant leaders who lived before them taught that the Second Coming was a gift from God. John Wycliffe believed that the Second Coming was the hope of the church. Calvin spoke for every Protestant when he said that the Second Coming was the most wonderful promise of all.

**Read John 14:1–3; 1 Thessalonians 4:13–18; and Titus 2:11–14. Why did these verses give so much hope to Christians in the past? Why do these verses fill us with so much hope today?**

We easily can understand why believing in the Second Coming filled Christians with hope. The Second Coming will bring an end to sickness, suffering, and death. The Second Coming will end war and fighting. After the Second Coming, we will enjoy peace, happiness, and fellowship with Jesus and the saved ones from all ages forever.

“The Second Coming has been the hope of His followers in every age. The Savior promised on Olivet to come again. This promise gave His followers hope. This promise filled their hearts with joy. Sadness and hard times could not remove this joy and hope. . . . When the Christians in Thessalonica buried their loved ones, they were sad. Their loved ones had hoped to live to see Jesus come back. Paul was their teacher. He told the Thessalonian Christians to believe in the resurrection when people will wake up from the dead. The resurrection will happen when Jesus comes back. The people who loved Jesus will wake up. Together with the living, they will be taken up in the clouds and meet the Lord in the air. Then Paul adds, ‘And we will be with the Lord forever. So encourage each other with these words.’ 1 Thessalonians 4:16–18 [ERV].”—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, page 302, adapted.

**Why is the teaching about the Second Coming so important to our faith? As we will study in lesson 10, death is the same as sleep. Without the Second Coming, would we have any hope for the future? Read what Paul says in 1 Corinthians 15:15–18 for the answer.**



**The Second Coming will bring an end to sickness, suffering, and death.**

## HOPING AND WAITING (Acts 1:9–11)

The Protestants in the Middle Ages believed in the Second Coming. They taught that everyone on earth would see and hear Jesus come back. But as time passed, people changed their views. Popular preachers in the 1800s taught that Jesus was coming to start His kingdom on earth. Then we would have peace on earth for 1,000 years.

In the same way, Jesus' 12 followers misunderstood the Bible teaching about His first coming. They thought Jesus would come as a powerful general to give the Jews freedom from Roman power. The Jews did not understand that Jesus came to make them free from sin and its penalty. So, they failed to understand what would happen when Jesus came.



**When Jesus comes again, everyone will see Him.**

**Read Acts 1:9–11; Revelation 1:7; and Matthew 24:27, 30, 31. What do these verses teach about the Second Coming?**

When Jesus came the first time as a baby, very few people knew about it. But when Jesus comes again, everyone will see Him. Everyone will hear the trumpet sound when He arrives. Every person on earth will see Jesus in all His shining glory. We do not need to be tricked. The Bible clearly teaches what will happen when Jesus comes back.

“One of the most wonderful Bible truths is the promise of the Second Coming. At that time, Jesus will come to finish His work to save us. The promise of the Second Coming fills God’s people with joy and hope. Jesus is life. He will wake His people up from the dead. The Second Coming is one of the most important teachings in the Bible. God’s children have waited for the Promised One ever since Adam and Eve were sent away from Eden. God’s people have waited for Jesus to come to end Satan’s power. Jesus will come to bring them back to the home they lost because of sin.”—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, page 299, adapted.

An early Adventist leader, Luther Warren, used to tell young people, “The only way to be ready for Jesus’ coming is to get ready and stay ready.” Yes, Jesus is coming soon. So, we must look inside our hearts and let go of anything that separates us from Jesus. The Second Coming helps us to live a holy life now so that we may be ready for Jesus.

**Read 1 Thessalonians 5:2–5 and Hebrews 9:28. What encouragement do these verses give us about the Second Coming?**

**WILLIAM MILLER AND THE BIBLE (Isaiah 28:9, 10)**

God used William Miller to help people understand the Bible truth about the Second Coming. As Miller studied the Bible, he discovered a loving Savior. Jesus loved him more than he thought possible. With the Bible, a pen, and a notebook, Miller started reading the Bible from the beginning. Miller made sure he understood every verse he read before he studied a new verse. Miller also compared the verses he studied with other verses in the Bible. In this way, Miller allowed the Bible to explain itself.

**Read Isaiah 28:9, 10; Proverbs 8:8, 9; John 16:13; and 2 Peter 1:19–21. What important rules about understanding the Bible do you read about in these verses?**

William Miller compared Bible verse with Bible verse. As Miller followed this plan, the Holy Spirit showed Miller what the verses meant. Miller searched for Bible truth the same as for hidden treasure. God richly rewarded his efforts. Miller studied the Bible's special messages about the future with the same carefulness.

**Read Daniel 1:17; Daniel 2:45; 1 Peter 1:10, 11; and Revelation 1:1–3. What do these verses teach us about how to understand the Bible's special messages about time?**

The meaning of Bible symbols is not a mystery. A loving God gave us special messages in the Bible to help us get ready for the future. William Miller understood that the Bible explains its special messages. The Bible tells us the meaning of its symbols and word pictures. Wild animals are symbols of kings or kingdoms (Daniel 7:17, 23). Wind is a symbol of something that destroys (Jeremiah 49:36). Water is a symbol for people (Revelation 17:15). A woman is a symbol for a church (Jeremiah 6:2; Ephesians 5:22–32). The special messages about time in the Books of Daniel and Revelation are written in symbols. In these books, one day equals one real year (Numbers 14:34; Ezekiel 4:6). Miller used these Bible rules to help him understand the Bible. Soon he became surprised at what the Bible taught about the time when Jesus would come back.

**Why is it so important for us to understand the correct meaning for the Bible's symbols?**



**The Bible tells us the meaning of its symbols and word pictures.**

### THE 2,300 DAYS OF DANIEL 8:14 (Daniel 8:14)

William Miller saw that everything in the Bible happened just as God promised: Abraham's future children lived in Egypt for 400 years (Genesis 15:13). Israel wandered for 40 years in the desert (Numbers 14:34). The Jews were taken prisoner to Babylon for 70 years (Jeremiah 25:11). And God promised Daniel that he would give Israel 70 weeks (Daniel 9:24) to choose to honor and serve Him.



The angel came to help Daniel understand the 2,300 days.

**Read Mark 1:15; Galatians 4:4; and Romans 5:6. What do these verses tell us about when God's promises happen?**

The Bible teaches us that God's promises always happen right on time. William Miller learned this Bible truth as he studied. Miller compared verse with verse. He understood from his study of the Bible that God must have a special time for the Second Coming, too.

**Read Daniel 8:14. What does the Bible say will happen at the end of the 2,300 days?**

William Miller accepted the popular view about God's temple. This view taught that God would clean his temple with fire. Miller studied the Bible to discover when this cleaning would happen. As Miller studied, he saw a connection between Daniel 9 and the dream in Daniel 8. In Daniel 8:16, the Lord tells his angel to help Daniel understand the dream. The only part of the dream the angel didn't explain is the part about the 2,300 days (Daniel 8:27). Later, the angel came back and said, " 'Daniel, I have come to give you wisdom and to help you understand' " (Daniel 9:22, ERV; also read Daniel 9:23, 25–27). So, the angel came to help Daniel understand the 2,300 days.

How do we know? Because the first words that the angel says are, " 'God has allowed 70 weeks for your people and your holy city, Daniel' " (Daniel 9:24, ERV). The word written as "allowed" means "cut off." So, 70 weeks, 490 years, will be cut off. Cut off from what? The answer is: cut off from the 2,300 days. That's the only part of the dream that Daniel didn't understand. The 70 weeks "will begin when an order is given to rebuild Jerusalem and make it like [the same as] new again" (Daniel 9:25, NIRV). With that date, Miller knew he could figure out when the 70 weeks and 2,300 days started.



## THE LONGEST TIMELINE IN THE BIBLE (Ezra 7:7–13)

**Read Ezra 7:7–13. When did the king give the order for the Jews in Persia to go free and rebuild their temple?**

King Artaxerxes gave the command in 457 B.C. Artaxerxes was the king of Persia. His command was the third and final command that allowed the Jews to go home to rebuild Jerusalem and to worship in their temple again. This third command was more complete than the first two orders. So, the third command is when the 2,300 day/year special message about time starts (Daniel 8:14).

**When would the 2,300 years start? Read Daniel 9:25, 26 for the answer. What important things do these verses say will happen?**

Daniel says, “A command will come to rebuild Jerusalem. The time from this command until the appointed [chosen] leader comes will be 49 years and 434 years” (Daniel 9:25, ICB). (49 years + 434 years = 483 years.) King Artaxerxes gave the command in the fall of 457 B.C. So, the 483 years end in the fall of A.D. 27. The words “appointed leader” mean Jesus. In the fall of A.D. 27, Jesus was baptized with water and was filled with the Holy Spirit (Luke 3:21, 22; Acts 10:38). Then “Jesus went into Galilee and preached the Good News from God. Jesus said, ‘The right time has come. The kingdom of God is near’ ” (Mark 1:14, 15, ICB).

In the spring of A.D. 31, Jesus died on the cross. He died in the middle of the last week of Daniel’s special message about time (Daniel 9:25, 26). 3½ years after Jesus was baptized, He was nailed to the cross. All the animal offerings the Jews brought to the temple in the past were a symbol of Jesus. He was the Lamb that God offered for our sins on the cross.

**Read Daniel 9:27. How do the 70 weeks end?**

The 70 weeks, or 490 years, that God gave to the Jews, ended in A.D. 34. At that time, the Jewish leaders rejected the Good News message (Acts 6:8–7:60).

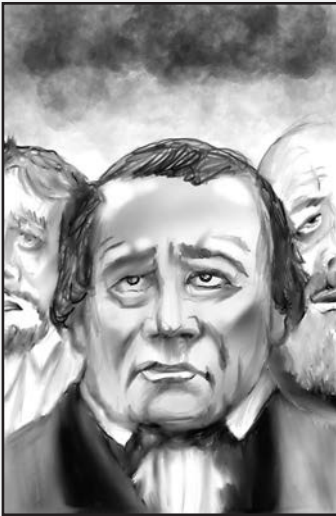
When we subtract 490 years from the 2,300-year time message, we get 1,810 years. The 1,810 years ended in A.D. 1844. William Miller and the early Adventists believed that the temple in Daniel 8:14 was the earth. They believed that Jesus would come and clean the earth with fire in 1844.



**In the fall of A.D. 27, Jesus was baptized with water and was filled with the Holy Spirit (Luke 3:21, 22; Acts 10:38).**

**ADDITIONAL THOUGHT:** Look at the chart below. The chart shows us two of Daniel’s special messages about time: the 70 weeks and the 2,300 days. Both time messages start in 457 B.C. Both time messages tell us things about the Savior. The 70-week time message is all about Jesus. Daniel’s messages about Jesus happened just as the Bible promised. So, we can trust that the 2,300 days end in the year 1844.

<b>2,300 days (=2,300 years)</b>		
<u>70 weeks (490 years)</u>	<u>1810 years</u>	
457 B.C.    A.D. 34		1844



**William Miller and his friends were sad when Jesus didn’t come back when they thought He would.**

“William Miller and his friends did not understand everything about the message God gave them to preach. They had wrong ideas about Bible truth. These wrong ideas kept them from understanding an important part of the special message about time. So, they were sad when Jesus didn’t come back when they thought He would.”—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, pages 351, 352, adapted.

“God had a reason for allowing Miller to preach his message the way he did. God’s work as Judge would start soon. So, God in His mercy tested His people. God gave them a test about time to show them what was in their hearts. God sent this message to test the church and make it clean. God caused His people to see what they loved more: the things of this life, or Him and heaven. God’s people said they loved their Savior. Now they must give proof of their love. Were God’s people ready to give up their hopes and plans for this life? Were they ready to welcome with joy their Lord’s coming? The message that Miller preached was the test that showed God’s people if they were really spiritual. God sent His people this test in mercy. This test was meant to wake His people up. The test was meant to cause God’s people to seek Him. The test was meant to help His people give up their sins and empty their hearts of all pride.”—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, page 353, adapted.

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

- ① What can we learn from William Miller’s experience? How does God use our mistakes to test and bless us?
- ② Why is it important to understand Daniel 9:24–27? How does this time message help us trust the Bible?

## OPENING HEARTS

Not long ago, a mother and daughter from Syria came to worship at the Kingston Seventh-day Adventist Church in Ontario, Canada. As the church's pastor, I always am happy to meet any visitor. What made these two visitors so special was that they belonged to another worldwide religion. How did they hear about us? Who invited them to our church?

Long before the mother and her daughter came to church, they became friends with Shirley, one of our church members.

Shirley has a big heart for strangers and people who have left their own countries to escape war and suffering. Many of these people had to leave home because they were tortured for their faith or religious beliefs. Shirley welcomes people with a warm smile. Shirley loves to help in any way she can. Her love touches people's hearts. That's why they accept her invitations to family dinners and summer picnics. The Syrian mother and daughter were named Eman and Heba. Shirley invited them to come to church on Sabbath. Eman and Heba accepted the invitation.

After worship, I visited with Eman and Heba outside the church. Eman and Heba were happy to talk. They accepted my offer to pray for them. Then I asked them if they would like to have a copy of the Book of John in the Arabic language.

Eman accepted the book. She said, "We believe that Jesus is a special messenger from God. So, my daughter and I will read the book."

A few days later, Shirley called me on the phone to ask me if I spoke the Sudanese language. She explained, "I met another family from Africa that I want you to visit."

Shirley's love and care for strangers keeps opening hearts. Her example helps us to want to work the same as Jesus did. "Only Jesus' plan will give us real success in touching people's hearts. The Savior made friends with people. He wanted the best for them. He showed love for them and took care of their needs. He earned their trust. Then He told them, 'Follow Me.'" —Ellen G. White, *The Ministry of Healing*, page 143, adapted.

Shirley is friendly. She listens to people, serves them, and shows them love. She cares for them. Her love and care help break the "walls" that separate most people from Jesus. We can win hearts as Shirley does every day.

Jesus said, "All people will know that you are my followers if you love each other" (John 13:35, ERV). When we have Jesus' love in our hearts, people will open their hearts to us. This love is the same love that will cause people to want to become Jesus' followers.

INSIDE  
*Story*  
by F. EDGAR NUNES



**The Savior showed love for people and took care of their needs.**