

King of Kings and Lord of Lords!



SABBATH AFTERNOON

Read for This Week's Study: *Matt. 24:23-51, 7:21-29, John 14:1-3, Acts 1:9-11, Phil. 2:9-11, Rev. 20:7-9.*

Memory Text: “Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. . . . And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS” (*Revelation 19:11, 16, NKJV*).

Key Thought: Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will come again in glory to gather the redeemed of all ages into His eternal kingdom. All those who have received Him as Savior and Lord will welcome Him with joy when He returns to this earth.

Of all the promises that Jesus, our Savior and Lord, has given us, the greatest promise is that He will return and take us from this sin-sick world. We have this hope, the hope in the coming of the Lord, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, as our Savior, reconciled earth to heaven and thus paved the way for the great and glorious day of His return when—as KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS—He will bring that reconciliation to its eternal consummation.

This is the great hope of all whose acknowledgment of Christ as Lord has been made manifest in their lives; in contrast, for those who—regardless of what they confess—have rejected Jesus as Lord of their lives, the Second Coming will be a sad and fearful event.

Why not, right now, make that complete surrender to the One who, at Calvary, surrendered all for us?

**Study this week's lesson to prepare for Sabbath, September 24.*

The Certainty of Christ's Return (*John 14:1-3, Acts 1:9-11*).

Those who have received Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord are a people of hope. With joyful expectation we are “looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ” (*Titus 2:13, NKJV*). Our hope concerning the return of our Lord Jesus Christ is not wishful thinking. It is based upon the faithfulness of our Lord to honor His promises.

What promise did Jesus Christ give to His followers concerning His return to this earth? *John 14:1-3.*

We trust in this promise of Jesus: “ ‘I will come again.’ ” This phrase might literally be translated “I am coming again.” The verb to come is in the present tense. We call this a “futuristic present,” which emphasizes the certainty of that which is being described. In this promise, Jesus Christ assures us His return is as certain as if it were already taking place!

What promise of two heavenly messengers confirmed the promise of Jesus regarding His return? *Acts 1:9-11.*

Seventh-day Adventist Christians have long cherished the blessed hope of the glorious return of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Our name, Adventist, reminds us that Jesus Christ, who came once as a baby in Bethlehem's manger, will come again as King of kings and Lord of lords. Even though our pioneers expected His return long before now, the promise is still sure. “The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come” (*2 Pet. 3:9, 10, NKJV*). The apostle Paul affirms the certainty of our hope in these words: “For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven” (*1 Thess. 4:16, NKJV*). The second coming of Jesus is not wishful thinking. It is our certain hope.

Feeling discouraged, worried, fearful? Prayerfully, read again John 14:1-3 and place yourself, your name, in each spot where it's appropriate. Realize that in a very real sense, Jesus is talking to you, that those words are for you. What hope do you draw from this precious, and intimate, promise of Jesus—to you, personally?

The Nature of Christ's Return

Our Lord Jesus Christ wants us not only to be certain of His return but also to understand the nature of His return. We have already discovered from yesterday's study that His coming will be literal. Jesus declared, "I will come again." We must reject any interpretation that would attempt to spiritualize Christ's second coming as His coming into our hearts. While it is true that Christ can dwell in our hearts through faith (*see Eph. 3:17*), this dwelling in our hearts by the Holy Spirit does not replace His literal return in glory.

What can we learn from the following comments of Jesus about the nature of His return? *Matt. 24:23-26, 27, 30, 31.*

The second coming of Jesus will not be secret. It will be dramatic, visible, and audible. These words of Jesus also imply that a resurrection of the dead will occur at the time of His coming. Listen to another promise of Jesus: " 'And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day' " (*John 6:40, NKJV*).

Read Paul's descriptions of the nature of Christ's second coming (*1 Thess. 4:16, 17*). **Why would that be something hard for an imposter to fake? Why, too, with such clear biblical testimony regarding the nature of Christ's return, have so many people been fooled by false christs in the past?**

The apostle Paul reinforces the teaching of Jesus regarding the nature of His return. The second coming of Jesus Christ is personal: The Lord Himself will descend from heaven. It is dramatic: The Lord will shout and the trumpet will sound. There will be a resurrection: The dead in Christ will rise first. Finally, all the redeemed will be gathered up to meet the Lord in the air.

Using your imagination, depict in writing what it will be like when Jesus returns. Share it with your class.

The Timing of Christ's Return

Almost two thousand years ago, in His last recorded comment in the book of Revelation, our risen Lord declared, “ ‘Surely I am coming quickly’ ” (*Rev. 22:20, NKJV*). Christians have wrestled with that declaration ever since. From our perspective, it doesn't seem as though He is coming quickly. We realize, of course, that the Lord is not locked in time as we mere mortals are. The apostle Peter reminds us that “with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day” (*2 Pet. 3:8, NKJV*).

Dwell upon what Peter wrote regarding the Lord and time. What mistake should these words protect us from making?

In terms of eternity, the Lord Jesus Christ is coming quickly. And yet, many times we find ourselves crying out with the souls under the altar, “ ‘How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?’ ” (*Rev. 6:10, NKJV*).

Read the parable Jesus tells in Matthew 24:45-51. In your own words, write out what you believe is the basic message Jesus is giving us here. Why is this parable so relevant for us as Adventists?

There's been a long-running debate in the church about the question of a delay. Is there one? If so, why? If not, then why hasn't Christ returned? And though we probably won't get all these questions resolved this side of eternity, the crucial thing for us is to be ready always, regardless of when He comes.

If someone were to ask you, What does it mean to be ready for Jesus' return, how would you respond? If Christ returned today, would you be ready? Justify your answer.

The Impact of Christ's Return

The glorious return of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will impact those living on the earth in one of two ways. For those who have refused to receive Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord, it will be a time of terror. Even for many professed followers of Christ, those who never let Him be Lord of their lives, it will be a time of fearful judgment.

Read carefully the following texts in light of this whole quarter's lesson: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity" (*Matt. 7:21-23*). How do these verses capture the essence of what it means to *profess* Jesus as Lord but not allow Him to be Lord? What is the crucial difference between the two?

Our Savior is very clear: We can't separate a profession of faith in Him from a life of obedience to Him. Notice how Jesus here links obedience with actually being in a saving relationship with Him; He says He "never knew" those who—though professing Him as Lord, and even doing deeds in His name—weren't obedient to the will of God. This has to be one of the strongest statements Jesus ever made about the futility of calling oneself a Christian while not living like one, and living like one demands that we do the will of the Father in heaven. Otherwise, our faith is made out of nothing but sand.

Read the parable that comes right after Christ's words here (*Matt. 7:24-29*). How does this fit in exactly with what Jesus said in verses 21-23?

The Cosmic Confession

For Christians, their profession that Jesus is Lord is matched by a life of faithful obedience, not an obedience that saves (it can't), but an obedience that expresses a true faith in God.

Read Ephesians 1:7, Colossians 1:14, and Hebrews 9:12. What do these verses tell us about how we are redeemed?

And yet, these people are not the only ones who acknowledge Jesus as Lord. According to the apostle Paul, the day is coming when every knee will bow and every tongue will make that same confession.

Read Philippians 2:9-11. What is Paul talking about here?

“At His first coming, Christ was denied and rejected by men, and by them dragged as a criminal to Pilate’s bar, where they charged Him with blasphemy. He was scourged and crucified. Nails were driven through His hands and His feet. . . . At His second coming, the scene will be changed. He will be acknowledged by all as the King of glory. At the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. The angels will bow in adoration before Him. His enemies will see the mistake they have made, and every tongue will confess His divinity.”—Ellen G. White, *Signs of the Times*, April 19, 1905.

However, for the wicked, this will not be a saving confession but simply a recognition of that which is undeniably true. There is no change of heart. No repentance. In fact, according to Revelation 20:7-9, they continue their rebellion against the Lord.

In contrast, there are those who—though sinners, though imperfect, though in and of themselves possessing no righteousness—have, nevertheless, committed their souls to the Lord Jesus by surrendering their will to Him. These people will proclaim Jesus as their Lord, and their lives will reflect that proclamation. Our praise of the Lord in heaven will simply be our picking up where we left off praising Him here. If we love and serve Jesus even amid the toil, pain, sin, and corruption on earth now, then how much more so in the new heaven and a new earth? Our service to Jesus as Lord there will just be the continuation of our service to Him here but without the cumbrousness of sin, disease, ignorance, and the devil. That’s the victory Jesus won for us. We can, by trusting and living by faith with Jesus as Lord, start enjoying the fruits of that victory, even now.

Further Study: Read the last four chapters in the book of Revelation. Take time to meditate on this beautiful scene of the new earth: “And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him. They shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads. And there shall be no night there: They need no lamp nor light of the sun, for the Lord God gives them light. And they shall reign forever and ever” (*Rev. 22:1-5, NKJV*).

What a blessed hope is ours. Soon our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will return as King of kings and Lord of lords. He will create a new heaven and a new earth, and we will reign with Him forever and ever. Even so, come, Lord Jesus!

Discussion Questions:

- 1** As a class, compare notes from what you wrote in Monday’s study about what it will be like when Christ returns.
- 2** What do you say to someone who, when the subject of Christ’s return is brought up, says, “Look, ever since I was a kid, I was told that Christ was coming soon. That was so many years ago. Please, don’t bother me with this talk of His ‘soon’ return.”?
- 3** If you read the selection above in Revelation, talk as a class about what you think life will be like in the new earth. What will the major difference be between life there and life here now?
- 4** As a class, talk about the difference between merely believing in Jesus as Lord and experiencing that lordship in your life.

Two Answered Prayers

Dorothy Eaton Watts

Jaggaya worked in a railway station in eastern India. One day the wind stirred up stray papers lying around the station. One paper landed near Jaggaya. He picked it up and read it. It told the story of Jesus feeding the 5,000 with five loaves and two fish. *Now that is amazing*, Jaggaya thought. *This Jesus must be a very great God to do this. I must learn more about Him.*

Jaggaya asked a Protestant pastor in his village to tell him more about Jesus. Soon Jaggaya was attending church and reading his Bible. Always his prayer was that Jesus would teach him more. Then one day a stranger walked into Jaggaya's village.

Paul Reddy prayed as he neared the village, "Lord, lead me to some soul longing to know more about You." As he walked down the street, he noticed an old man reading a Bible. "Hello, Brother," Paul greeted the man. "I see you are reading God's Word. I am a Christian too." The two men talked for a while, then Paul asked him, "Do you know about the Bible Sabbath?"

"No," said Jaggaya. "I have read the Bible a lot, but I do not know anything about a Sabbath. Will you explain it to me?" Paul Reddy opened his Bible and began seven days of intense Bible study with Jaggaya. They studied many doctrines of the Bible. Over and over Jaggaya exclaimed, "This is wonderful! I never knew that before!" At the end of the Bible studies, Jaggaya asked Paul Reddy to rebaptize him, symbolizing his acceptance of the new Bible truths he had accepted.

"I will bring a minister to baptize you," Paul promised. But it took several weeks before Paul could return with a pastor. In the meantime, Jaggaya faithfully followed what he had learned from Paul Reddy and the Bible.

Jaggaya is 80 years old, but he walks the streets of his village sharing his newfound faith with others. He is studying the Bible with 20 people he has found. They are preparing to be baptized into the Adventist church.

The work in Orissa State in eastern India is exploding. In 1997 after 70 years of Adventist work, the church had 102 congregations in Orissa and 3,100 believers. Today there are more than 350 congregations and more than 30,000 believers. Pray that God will open the way to build more than 300 churches needed by new congregations in Orissa. Pray too that our new members will remain faithful to God in spite of great difficulties.

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John M. Fowler, author of this quarter's lessons, will guide us in one of the great love letters of the Bible, the book of Ephesians. It is our hope that this study will help each of us experience the life-changing power of the gospel as it works in the hearts of sinful human beings.

Lesson 1—The Church at Ephesus

The Week at a Glance:

SUNDAY: Ephesus: Jesus Vs. Diana (*Acts 19:24-29*).

MONDAY: Ephesus: Aquila and Priscilla

TUESDAY: Apollos at Ephesus (*Acts 18:24-28*).

WEDNESDAY: Paul at Ephesus (*Acts 19:1-20*).

THURSDAY: The Depth of Paul's Ministry (*Acts 20:17-38*).

Memory Text—*Acts 19:20, NKJV*.

Sabbath Gem: Among those associated with the Ephesian church were Aquila and Priscilla, Apollos, Timothy, and the apostle John. Each of them had a role to play in the building of this church, one of the finest of the first century. What can we learn as we delve into this fascinating and instructive moment in early Christian history?

Lesson 2—Ephesians: Themes in Relationships

The Week at a Glance:

SUNDAY: The Author: Paul (*Gal. 1:11-17*).

MONDAY: The Recipients: The Saints in Ephesus (*Eph. 1:1, NKJV*).

TUESDAY: Grace and Peace (*Eph. 1:2, NKJV*).

WEDNESDAY: The Theme: Unity (*Eph. 1:9, 10, RSV*).

THURSDAY: The Key: In Christ (*Eph. 3:11, 12*).

Memory Text—*Ephesians 1:3, NKJV*.

Sabbath Gem: The letter to Ephesians deals with no particular problem, doctrinal or social. It celebrates the joy of fellowship, relationship, and unity in Christ. It's also a great expression of thanksgiving and praise for what God has done through Christ in the creation of His church.

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