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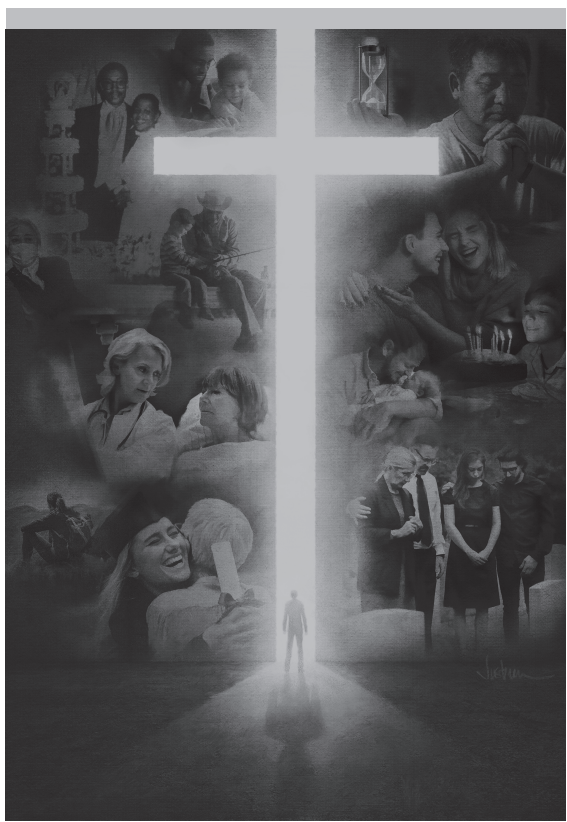
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# On Death and Dying: Our Future Hope



God created human beings to enjoy eternity in a loving relationship with Him and His creation. But this relationship was distorted by the mysterious appearance of sin within the heavenly courts (*Isa. 14:12–15, Ezek. 28:12–19, Rev. 12:7–12*) and the subsequent fall of Adam and Eve (*Gen. 3:1–19, Rom. 5:12*). Tragically, death engulfed not only the human race but also all life, as well. Expressions of death can be seen today in the leaves that fall from the trees, the flowers that fade in our vases, our innocent pets who die in agony, and our beloved ones who are taken from us so brutally. Our world is full of suffering and unwiped tears.

Longing for a better world, people have painted for themselves many “paradises” in which they would like to live. For example, in 1933 English novelist James Hilton released his book, *Lost Horizon*, which a few years later was turned into a film under the same title. The film captures the plight of people on an airplane that runs out of fuel, eventually crashing into the snow-covered Himalayan Mountains. The pilot dies in the crash, but the few who survive are pulled from the wreckage and escorted by a group of Tibetans to the paradisiac valley of Shangri-La. Isolated from the outside world, the inhabitants grow in love and wisdom, living an almost immortal life of enduring harmony and joy.

Of course, it’s only fiction.

As mortal human beings, we need assurance in the present and hope for the future. As well stated by the Swiss theologian Emil Brunner: “What oxygen is for the lungs,

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such is hope for the meaning of human life. Take oxygen away and death occurs through suffocation, take hope away and humanity is constricted through lack of breath; despair supervenes, spelling the paralysis of intellectual and spiritual powers by a feeling of the senselessness and purposelessness of existence. As the fate of the human organism is dependent on the supply of oxygen, so the fate of humanity is dependent on its supply of hope.”—*Eternal Hope* (London: Lutterworth Press, 1954), p. 7. Indeed, the biblical hope sustains us during the existential crises we face in our journey toward eternity.

In contrast to the fictional Shangri-La of the *Lost Horizon*, our hope of eternal life does “not follow cunningly devised fables” (*2 Pet. 1:16, NKJV*). It is based on God’s trustworthy promise of a perfect world with no more tears, pain, or death (*Rev. 21:1–5*). This precious promise inspired the apostolic church and was held, and cherished, by many Christians throughout the centuries. Without ever losing its power, this same promise gives meaning and purpose to our present lives. It allows us to look with confidence into the future. It assures us that all our beloved ones who died in Christ will finally be raised from the dead to inherit eternal life.

The present Bible study guide deals with the subject of the great controversy between good and evil from the perspective of two major themes. One is the origin and ongoing existence of sin and death. The other theme is God’s enduring work to solve these problems and bring the world back to its original perfect condition. Special emphasis also is given to the mortal nature of human beings and how the resurrection is what leads to immortality. In reality, we should not fear death because Christ died for us and overcame the power of death. Actually, we are assured that He holds “the keys to death and to the place of the dead” (*Rev. 1:18, NCV*).

This quarter, we will explore the painful subject of death but through the lens of the hope offered us through Jesus.

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# How to Use This Teachers Edition

**“The true teacher is not content with dull thoughts, an indolent mind, or a loose memory. He constantly seeks higher attainments and better methods. His life is one of continual growth. In the work of such a teacher there is a freshness, a quickening power, that awakens and inspires his [class].”**  
—Ellen G. White, *Counsels on Sabbath School Work*, p. 103.

To be a Sabbath School teacher is both a privilege and a responsibility. A privilege because it offers the teacher the unique opportunity to lead and guide in the study and discussion of the week’s lesson so as to enable the class to have both a personal appreciation for God’s Word and a collective experience of spiritual fellowship with class members. When the class concludes, members should leave with a sense of having tasted the goodness of God’s Word and having been strengthened by its enduring power. The responsibility of teaching demands that the teacher is fully aware of the Scripture to be studied, the flow of the lesson through the week, the interlinking of the lessons to the theme of the quarter, and the lesson’s application to life and witness.

This guide is to help teachers to fulfill their responsibility adequately. It has three segments:

- 1. Overview** introduces the lesson topic, key texts, links with the previous lesson, and the lesson’s theme. This segment deals with such questions as Why is this lesson important? What does the Bible say about this subject? What are some major themes covered in the lesson? How does this subject affect my personal life?
- 2. Commentary** is the chief segment in the Teachers Edition. It may have two or more sections, each one dealing with the theme introduced in the Overview segment. The Commentary may include several in-depth discussions that enlarge the themes outlined in the Overview. The Commentary provides an in-depth study of the themes and offers scriptural, exegetic, illustrative discussion material that leads to a better understanding of the themes. The Commentary also may have scriptural word study or exegesis appropriate to the lesson. On a participatory mode, the Commentary segment may have discussion leads, illustrations appropriate to the study, and thought questions.
- 3. Life Application** is the final segment of the Teachers Edition for each lesson. This section leads the class to discuss what was presented in the Commentary segment as it impacts Christian life. The application may involve discussion, further probing of what the lesson under study is all about, or perhaps personal testimony on how one may feel the impact of the lesson on one’s life.

**Final thought:** What is mentioned above is only suggestive of the many possibilities available for presenting the lesson and is not intended to be exhaustive or prescriptive in its scope. Teaching should not become monotonous, repetitious, or speculative. Good Sabbath School teaching should be Bible-based, Christ-centered, faith-strengthening, and fellowship-building.