

# Hope



## SABBATH—APRIL 11

**READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON:** Luke 21:25, 26; John 5:24; 1 Corinthians 15:20–26; 1 Corinthians 15:50–55; Revelation 21.

**MEMORY VERSE:** “Always be ready to give an answer to anyone who asks you about the hope you have” (1 Peter 3:15, NIV).

**THE TWENTIETH CENTURY BEGAN** with people being very positive about the future. During the first 50 years of the twentieth century, the people looked forward to having a good life in the Western world. As humans, we thought we could discover all truth through reason. We thought we also would become better and better morally. New inventions, new ways of travel, the fast progress of medical knowledge, and the introduction of new machines would improve all lives. But after two world wars, the Holocaust,<sup>1</sup> the nuclear threat of the cold war, worldwide terrorism, and the environment being destroyed by man, people have less and less reason for being positive about the future.

But there is still hope. It is not in what we see or in what we can do but in what God has promised us through Jesus, His Son.

**A CLOSER LOOK AT THIS WEEK'S LESSON:** As followers of Christ, we can have hope in a world that offers none. That is because this hope does not depend on anything the world can offer. This hope depends only on Jesus and His promises to us.

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1. Holocaust—the planned destruction of over six million European Jews by the Nazis before and during World War II.

**SUNDAY—APRIL 12****HOPE IN OUR WORLD  
(Luke 21:25, 26)**

Life after September 11, 2001, has greatly changed. People always will remember watching TV about passenger airliners flying into the twin towers of the World Trade Center. We all know that it can happen again. There is no way we fully can be protected from people who are prepared to die by blowing themselves up in an airplane, at a bus stop, or in a supermarket. There is fear everywhere. When we think about the kind of world we live in, we can understand this fear.

**In Luke 21:25, 26, what did Jesus point out as one of the signs of the time of the end?**

“Lawbreaking has almost reached its limit. Confusion fills the world. And a great terror is soon to come upon people. The end is very near. God’s people should be preparing for what is to happen as a great surprise to the world.”—Adapted from Ellen G. White, *Child Guidance*, page 555. Imagine what she would say were she alive in the world after what happened on September 11, 2001!

Ours is a world of war, dirty politics, greed, and terror. And we know that many unpleasant things will happen in the future—in the world, and even in the church. But no matter what

happens, we have hope through Jesus. There may be great suffering among the nations. People even may be afraid of terror or “‘worried about what is happening in the world’” (Luke 21:26, NIV). But Christians who have been expecting their Lord will not worry about it. None of these horrible things should surprise us. After all, the Bible has warned us all that we should expect hard work, suffering, and trouble until Jesus returns. When we see these things, they should help support what we know about the truth of God’s Word.

**According to Luke 21:28, what hope is Jesus offering us among all the trouble and fear of the world?**

**Why is it so hopeless and empty to put our hope in this world? Why do we do that, even though it should be clear by now that we must have a hope that goes beyond whatever this world can give?**

**MONDAY—APRIL 13****HOPE—HERE AND NOW  
(John 5:24)**

The Christian hope deals with the future: Christ’s return; the resurrection (return to life from the dead) of God’s people; a new heaven and a new earth; eternity (life without end) with God. But salvation<sup>2</sup> also is real to us. That kind of hope separates us

2. salvation—God’s plan for saving sinners from eternal (without end) death.

from those who do not have the promise that life has meaning and that in Christ we have an eternal future. The apostle Paul reminds us of the great change that happens when we accept Jesus as our Lord. As long as we are separated from Christ, we are “without hope and without God in the world” (Ephesians 2:12, NIV). But all this changes when we are not “far away” from God but have been “brought near through the blood of Christ” (Ephesians 2:13, NIV).

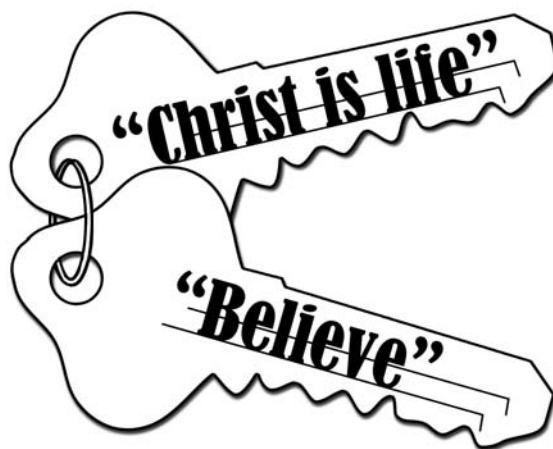
**In John 5:24, how did Jesus describe the great change that happens when we “hear” His Word and believe in Him?**

**How does John 10:10 explain the kind of life that can be ours? What does this mean? How should we be experiencing this promise?**

*Life* is one of the key words of the Gospel (book) of John. In Matthew, Mark, and Luke, life means eternal (forever; without end) life. “But in the Gospel of John, life means what Jesus does for those who believe in Him. . . .

“There are two keys to receiving eternal life. The first is to know that the beginning of that life is found only in Christ (John 14:6; John 6:33–58; 1 John 5:11, 12). Wherever Jesus is, life is (John 11:25, 26). The second key to receiving eternal life is believing (John 1:4, 12). It is through daily relationship with Jesus that people can receive the life that is ever present

in Jesus (John 3:16, 36).”—Adapted from Jon Paulien, *John, The Abundant Life Bible Amplifier* (Boise, Idaho: Pacific Press® Publishing Association, 1995), page 189.



The two keys to receiving the gift of eternal life: knowing that life is found only in Christ and that believing in Him is the only way to receive life.

**How has Jesus changed your life for the better here and now? What do you have now that you did not have before coming to know Jesus and the hope He gives us?**

**TUESDAY—APRIL 14**

**HOPE BEYOND THE GRAVE  
(1 Thessalonians 4:14)**

Death comes to all of us (except if we are alive at the moment of Christ’s return). All of us have lost loved ones in death. We daily are faced with death. We see it as we drive past cemeteries, see hearses, or switch

on the television news. But even worse, we face it when we say our final Goodbye to a friend or relative. Death is one of our worst enemies. But it is one that will not win.

**According to 1 Corinthians 15:20–26; 1 Corinthians 15:50–55; and 1 Peter 1:3, what is the wonderful truth about the end of death?**

**According to 1 Thessalonians 4:14, how does the sure hope of the resurrection divide people?**

In his famous chapter about the resurrection (1 Corinthians 15), Paul explains that the hope of the resurrection (return to life from the dead) is an important part of our total faith experience (1 Corinthians 15:12–19). If there is no resurrection, our faith is empty.



**If there is no resurrection,  
our faith is empty.**

Of course, there are many things about being raised to life that we do

not understand. But of one thing we can be sure: our “resurrection” does not depend on keeping our present bodies. It depends on the power of our Creator (God) to protect who we are and to re-create us at the right time with a new (perfect) body that will never grow old.

We have no idea how God is going to re-create our bodies. But the God who could create life has the power to re-create the earth and fill it with people. Our hope is not based on anything we can prove with our knowledge or our senses. The resurrection covers an area of life where science cannot take us. It is based on the fact that Christ has won against death. As a result, the death of the believer is just a temporary (lasting a short time) “sleep.” From this he or she will be raised and given eternal life.



**The death of the believer is  
only a temporary sleep.**

**Even with this great hope, we still hate death, we still fear it, and we still try to escape from it. This is only natural (for death is unnatural).**

**At the same time, what can we do to make stronger our faith in the great promise that we have about eternal life?**

### **WEDNESDAY—APRIL 15**

#### **ETERNAL HOPE**

**(1 Corinthians 15:42, 43, 52)**

How can limited humans (people) ever understand what it is to be eternal? How can we as humans ever understand what it is to live forever? Most of us will not live over 80 or 90 years. Eternal life does not simply mean that our present life will keep going. That would in many ways be more like “hell” than “heaven.” Eternal life is something very different. While we are still in our present life, we will need to be happy with a foretaste of what the future holds: we see but “a poor reflection [example]” and “know [only] in part” (1 Corinthians 13:12, NIV).

**How do 1 Corinthians 15:42, 43, 52 and Revelation 21 show that eternal life will be different from our present life? What things will be almost the same?**

We are left with lots of questions as we think about the life that awaits us. There are the questions that never will be fully answered here and now. But we can learn from Jesus’ own resurrection. It is important to know that the Christ who was raised from the dead was the same Person as the One who a few days earlier died on the cross. Jesus arose with a “glorified” (made

perfect) body that no longer followed the laws of nature in the same way our present bodies do. But at the same time, Jesus had almost the same human body that He had before His death and resurrection. He was the same Person. He was recognized by His appearance, His voice, and His actions. That gives us good reason to think that in our new glorious bodies we will be recognized by those we knew in this life and who will enjoy the life in heaven with us.



**Christ’s own return to life from death helps us to understand what our glorified bodies will be like.**

But we also can experience some of that eternal life now. Paul explains to us (Romans 8:10) that the Spirit (God) will enter the person who has turned to Christ. The believer is already touched by the eternal life that will become real in the world to come. The presence of the Spirit is the pledge (promise) of our eternal life (Ephesians 1:13, 14).

Imagine what life will be like in a new heaven, a new earth, with new bodies. Write out a paragraph based on what we find in the Bible about what this new life will be like. How foolish it would be for us to throw it all away for anything that this life offers us in its place.

## THURSDAY—APRIL 16

### CHRIST OUR HOPE (Revelation 22:20)

Before Christ entered this world, His coming had long been foreseen. True to those promises, Jesus did come. There are a great many promises that He will come a second time. He said so Himself: “‘I will come back (John 14:3, NIV).’” On the last page of the Bible, this promise is repeated: “‘Yes, I am coming soon’” (Revelation 22:20, NIV). This is the hope of all Christian believers. “We are waiting for Jesus Christ to appear in all his glory” (Titus 2:13, NIV).

**According to Revelation 22:7, 10–12, 20, in what way does the hope of the Christian depend on Jesus’ second coming? Why are these promises so important to us?**

**How does 2 Peter 3:8, 9 help us understand what the word *soon* means in connection with the Second Coming?**

The greatest answer to the sin

problem and all the problems sin has caused is not found in human actions at all. Instead, it is found in the actions of our Lord Jesus Christ. Our hope is not in the works of humans, clever politicians, or social and religious works. These things never can solve the problem of death. And it is important to know what will happen before and during the coming of the Lord. But it is even more important that we are sure of the One we expect.

Our Lord will come soon. “It is just a matter of time, that’s [that is] all. And no one can change this fact. No human in power can reach up and take the world away from Jesus’ control. It remains firmly and forever in His hands. Since the cross, we live in time filled by the victory [a win] of the cross. So, whether they know it or not, people do not just work toward a hoped-for goal in some far-off day, which may never come. No! People move as winners from a goal Jesus has already reached.”—Adapted from Norman Gulley, *Christ Is Coming* (Hagerstown, Maryland: Review and Herald® Publishing Association, 1998), page 540.

**A philosopher (thinker) named Martin Heidegger once said that “only a god can save us.” Whatever Martin himself might have meant by that idea, why is it so true? Where are you placing your hope? If it is in anything but the true God, why is this hope a false one?**

**FRIDAY—APRIL 17**

**ADDITIONAL STUDY:** Norman Gulley's book *Christ Is Coming* is probably the most complete Adventist book in recent times about last-day events and the second coming of Christ. You may want to read the book, especially the chapter "The Greatest Rescue of All Time" (pages 538–552). For the time-honored description of the moment when our hope will be fulfilled, read Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, especially pages 662–678.

Memorize the following words: "The great controversy [war between Christ and Satan] is ended. Sin and sinners are no more. The entire universe<sup>3</sup> is clean. One pulse of harmony and gladness beats throughout it. Life and light flow from God throughout space. From the tiniest atom<sup>4</sup> to the greatest world, all things, living and nonliving declare with perfect joy that God is love."—Adapted from Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, page 678.

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

❶ In class, read your descriptions of what you feel eternal life in a new earth will be like. Compare and discuss what was given.

❷ How do you answer those who say that this hope Christians have of another life causes them not to care deeply enough about the problems of this life?

❸ How can you remain hopeful, even when everything seems to go against you?

❹ How do we experience, here and now, some of the hope that we have in Christ? How should lives be different now because of this hope? What can we do to show others the benefits (rewards) of being a follower of the living God?

**SUMMARY:** Hope is a very important part of the Christian life. It is firmly based on what Christ did on the cross. The Christian's hope is connected with the here and now. This is because the kingdom that is to come is already present in the believer. But the fulfillment of the blessed hope is still in the future. We know that the world still is influenced by<sup>5</sup> the results of Satan's rebellion (war). But the outcome is safe. Our Lord reigns (rules), and His eternal kingdom soon will be fulfilled with all its glory. Our hope is to be citizens of that kingdom forever.

3. universe—all the matter (things), light, and energy (forces in nature that do work) that have been discovered (found) or that we know of.

4. atom—the smallest part of something.

5. influenced by—to be affected or changed by the power of another person or thing.