

# The Return of Our Lord Jesus




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## SABBATH AFTERNOON

**Read for This Week's Study:** *Isa. 13:6, 9; Matt. 24:30, 31; Dan. 2:34, 35; 2 Tim. 4:6–8; 2 Thess. 1:7–10.*

**Memory Text:** “For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be” (*Matthew 24:27*).

The poet T. S. Eliot began a poem with the line: “In my beginning is my end.” However succinct, his words carry a powerful truth. In origins exist endings. We see echoes of this reality in our name, Seventh-day Adventist, which carries two basic biblical teachings: “Seventh day,” for the Sabbath of the Ten commandments, a weekly memorial of the six-day Creation of life on earth; and “Adventist,” pointing to the second coming of Jesus, in which all the hopes and promises of Scripture, including the promise of eternal life, will find their fulfillment.

However distant in time the Creation of the world (our beginning) is from the second coming of Jesus (our end, or at least the end of this sinful existence), these events are linked. The God who created us (*John 1:1–3*) is the same God who will return and, in an instant, “in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet” (*1 Cor. 15:52, NKJV*), will bring about our ultimate redemption. In our beginning, indeed, we find our end.

This week, we will talk about the final of all final events, at least as far as our present world is concerned: the second coming of our Lord Jesus.

\* Study this week's lesson to prepare for Sabbath, June 30.

## The Day of the Lord

However much we tend to think of the second coming of Jesus as a New Testament teaching alone, that's not true. Of course, only after the first coming of Jesus—after His death, resurrection, and ascension—were we given a fuller and richer revelation of the truth surrounding the Second Coming. But as with so much else in the New Testament, the Old Testament reveals hints and shadows of this crucial truth long before it will happen. With the doctrine of the second coming of Jesus, the New Testament authors didn't reveal a new truth; instead, they greatly enhanced a truth that already had been revealed in the Bible. Only now, in light of the crucified and risen Savior, can the promise of the Second Coming be understood and appreciated more fully.

**Read** the following texts. What do they teach us about the second coming of Jesus? *Isa. 13:6, 9; Zech. 14:9; Dan. 12:1.*

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There is no question that the “day of the LORD” will be a day of destruction and sorrow and turmoil for the lost. But it is also a day of deliverance for all of God's people, those who are “found written in the book” (see also *Phil. 4:3, Rev. 3:5, 13:8*). This theme—that of the “day of the LORD” as a time of judgment against the wicked but also a time when God's faithful are protected and rewarded—is found first in the Old Testament. For instance, although some will face the “LORD's fierce anger,” those who heed the call to “seek righteousness” and “seek humility” will “be hidden / In the day of the LORD's anger” (*Zeph. 2:1–3, NKJV*).

**Read** Matthew 24:30, 31. In what way do these verses show this same great dichotomy between the lost and the saved at the second coming of Jesus?

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As final events unfold, the side we are on will only become more apparent. What choices can and must we make now to make sure we're on the right side?

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## Daniel and the Second Coming of Jesus

Although many Jews in the time of Jesus expected the Messiah to overthrow the Romans and establish Israel as the most powerful nation of all, that's not what the advents of Jesus, either the first or second, were to be about. Instead, God had something so much bigger in store for His faithful people than just a rearrangement of the old sinful and fallen world.

Perhaps nothing else in the Old Testament reveals as clearly as does Daniel 2 the truth that the new world does not grow out of the old one, but instead is a new and radically different creation.

Daniel 2 shows the rise and fall of four great world empires—Babylon, Media-Persia, Greece, and then finally Rome, which then breaks up into the nations of modern Europe. However, the statue that Nebuchadnezzar saw in his dream (symbolizing the succession of these four major world powers) ends in a spectacular way. It does so in order to show the great disconnect between this world and the one that will come after the return of our Lord Jesus Christ.

**Read** Daniel 2:34, 35, 44, 45. What do these verses teach about the fate of this world and the nature of the new one?

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These verses leave little ambiguity about what happens when Jesus returns. In Luke 20:17, 18, Jesus identified Himself with this stone, which crushed to powder all that was left of this world. The Aramaic of Daniel 2:35 says that after the gold, silver, clay, iron, and bronze were crushed, they “became like the chaff of the summer threshing-floors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them.” That is, nothing is left of this old world after Jesus returns.

Meanwhile, the stone that destroyed all trace of this old world “became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth.” And this kingdom, which arises as a result of the Second Coming, is one that “‘shall never be destroyed,’ ” and “‘it shall stand forever’ ” (*Dan. 2:44, NRSV*).

In other words, only one of two endings awaits every human being who has ever lived on this planet. Either we will be with Jesus for eternity, or we will disappear into nothingness with the chaff of this old world. One way or another, eternity awaits us all.

## Long-Term Prospects

**Read** Titus 2:13. What great hope do we have, and why?

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Describing his beliefs about the origins of our universe, a lecturer explained that about 13 billion years ago “an infinitely dense tiny mass popped out of nothing, and that mass exploded, and from that explosion our universe came into existence.” Just how this “infinitely dense tiny mass” could just pop out of nothing, the lecturer didn’t say. He just assumed, by faith, that it did.

Now as we noted in the introduction to this week’s lesson, in our origins we find our endings. This is why, according to this lecturer, our endings aren’t too hopeful, at least in the long run. The universe, created from this “infinitely dense tiny mass,” is doomed to eventual extinction, along with all that is in it, which includes humanity, of course.

In contrast, the biblical concept of our origins is not only much more logical than this view but also much more hopeful. Thanks to the God of origins, our long-term prospects are very good. We have so much to be hopeful for in the future, and this hope rests on the promise of Jesus’ second coming.

**Read 2 Timothy 4:6–8.** What is Paul talking about here, and in what is he putting his hope?

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Although Paul is soon to be executed, he lives in assurance of salvation and the hope of Christ’s return, which Paul calls “His appearing” (*2 Tim. 4:8, NKJV*). A “crown of righteousness” awaits him, certainly not his own righteousness (*1 Tim. 1:15*) but the righteousness of Jesus, upon which Paul knows his hope in the promise of the Second Coming rests. Regardless of his immediate circumstances, which are dismal at best (in jail, waiting to be executed), Paul knows his long-term prospects are very good. And that is because he is looking at the big picture, not focusing only on the immediate situation.

**Regardless of your own immediate circumstances, how can you have the same hope as Paul did? How can we learn to look at the big picture and the hope it offers us?**

## In the Clouds of Heaven

However central and crucial the Second Coming is, according to the Bible, not all Christians see the event as a literal, personal return of Jesus Himself. Some argue, for instance, that the second coming of Jesus occurs not when Christ Himself returns to earth but when His Spirit is made manifest in His church on earth. In other words, Christ's second coming is accomplished when the moral principles of Christianity are revealed in His people.

How thankful we can be, however, that this teaching is false. If it were true, what long-term hope would we really have?

**Read** the following New Testament texts about the Second Coming. What do they reveal about the nature of Christ's return?

Matt. 24:30 \_\_\_\_\_

1 Thess. 4:16 \_\_\_\_\_

Matt. 26:64 \_\_\_\_\_

Rev. 1:7 \_\_\_\_\_

2 Thess. 1:7–10 \_\_\_\_\_

“The firmament appears to open and shut. The glory from the throne of God seems flashing through. The mountains shake like a reed in the wind, and ragged rocks are scattered on every side. There is a roar as of a coming tempest. The sea is lashed into fury. There is heard the shriek of a hurricane like the voice of demons upon a mission of destruction. The whole earth heaves and swells like the waves of the sea. Its surface is breaking up. Its very foundations seem to be giving way. Mountain chains are sinking. Inhabited islands disappear. The seaports that have become like Sodom for wickedness are swallowed up by the angry waters. Babylon the great has come in remembrance before God, ‘to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath.’ ”—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 637.

The return of Jesus will be such a massive event that it literally will bring the world as we know it to an end. When it happens, everyone will know it, too. What Jesus accomplished for us at the first coming fully will be made manifest at the second.

**How should living with the reality of the Second Coming impact how we live now? How should it help us to remember what the really important things in life are?**

## The Living and the Dead

Before raising His friend Lazarus from the tomb, Jesus uttered these words: “ ‘I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live’ ” (*John 11:25, NKJV*). But rather than just asking people to take His word about such an incredible claim, He then proceeded to raise Lazarus, who had been dead long enough for the corpse to start stinking, from death (*John 11:39*).

Those who believe in Jesus do, indeed, die. However, as Jesus said, though they may die, they will live again. This is what the resurrection of the dead is all about. And this is what makes the second coming of Jesus so central to all our hopes.

**According** to these texts, what happens to the dead in Christ when Jesus returns? *Rom. 6:5; 1 Thess. 4:16; 1 Cor. 15:42–44, 53–55.*

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The great hope of the Second Coming is that the resurrection from the dead that Jesus Himself experienced will be what His faithful followers of all the ages will experience, as well. In His resurrection they have the hope and assurance of their own.

**What** happens to those who are alive when Jesus returns? *Phil. 3:21, 1 Thess. 4:17.*

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The faithful ones alive when Jesus returns will retain a physical body, but not in its present state. It will be supernaturally transformed into the same kind of incorruptible body that the ones raised from the dead will have, as well. “The living righteous are changed ‘in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye.’ At the voice of God they were glorified; now they are made immortal and with the risen saints are caught up to meet their Lord in the air.”—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 645.

**Make a list of all the things of this world that are so important to you that you would rather sacrifice eternal life in order to retain them. What’s on the list?**

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**Further Thought:** The second coming of Jesus isn't the epilogue, the appendix, or the afterword to the sad story of human sin and suffering in this fallen world. Instead, the Second Coming is the grand climax, the great hope of the Christian's faith. Without it, what would we have? The story of humanity just would go on and on, one miserable scene after another, one tragedy after another, until it all ends in death. Apart from the hope that Christ's return offers us, life is, as William Shakespeare wrote, "a tale / Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, / Signifying nothing." And yet, we have this hope because the Word of God confirms it for us, again and again. We have this hope because Jesus ransomed us with His life (*Mark 10:45*), and Jesus is indeed coming back to get what He paid for. The stars in the heavens don't speak to us of the Second Coming. The birds chirping in the trees don't herald it. In and of themselves, these things might point to something good, something hopeful, about reality itself. But they don't teach us that one day, when Jesus returns, "the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed" (*1 Cor. 15:52, NKJV*). They don't teach us that one day we will look up and "see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven" (*Mark 14:62, NKJV*). No, we know these things because they have been told to us in the Word of God, and we trust in what the Word promises us.

### Discussion Questions:

- 1 Think about what it would mean if the second coming of Jesus really were nothing more than what some believe it is: the full expression of Christian principles in the lives of Christ's followers. However wonderful a display that would be, why, in the end, does it leave us without any hope?
- 2 Why is the currently popular idea that the universe arose from nothing such a silly idea? Why would people promote such a notion, and why do some believe it? Why is belief in an eternally existing God, who created all things, so much more logical and rational an explanation for the universe?
- 3 Share with your class the things you put on a list of what you find so important in this life that you would sacrifice the hope of eternity in order to keep them. What can you learn from one another about the contents of the lists? If people have nothing on their lists, how can we make sure, then, that nothing in our lives is truly keeping us from salvation, as will be the case with many people?

## “Hunter of Souls”

by ANDREW MCCHESENEY, Adventist Mission

Danny Whatley was on top of the world—and not just because he worked as a bush pilot in the U.S. state of Alaska.

Danny owned a thriving tour company that offered private hunting trips to the world’s movers and shakers. Clients included Citibank’s president and the Rockefeller family.

“I wanted to be in the elite,” Danny said. “I did not want to be a regular person. I loved those people.”

But then he received a copy of *The Great Controversy*. Danny had dated a former Seventh-day Adventist and through her started playing basketball and volleyball at the Adventist church in his hometown, Palmer. A church member gave him the book.

Danny took the book with him on his next bush trip and read how the seventh-day Sabbath was changed to Sunday. He never had heard of author Ellen G. White, but he instantly felt convicted that this was truth.

Back in Palmer, Danny was preparing for the hunting season when church members invited him to an evangelistic series. The opening presentation about the Daniel 2 prophecy captivated him.

“I was hooked right away,” he said. “People who say evangelism doesn’t work have never been on the receiving end of an evangelism series.”

The next night, Danny brought his father.

When the preacher, Vern Snow, spoke about baptism one night, a battle broke out in Danny’s mind. He didn’t want to lose clients because of the Sabbath.

“The battle went on for the whole meeting,” Danny said. “At the end, I had to make a decision. I went to Vern and said, ‘I want to be baptized.’ ”

At that moment, he surrendered everything, including his business, to Jesus.

“I was a hunting guy who could do it all on my own, and now I realized that I could not do it all on my own,” he said.

At the baptism, the pastor declared, “Here is a trophy hunter who is now a hunter of souls.”

Danny’s father and stepmother were baptized the following Sabbath. Other people also have joined the church through Danny’s influence.



At work, Danny told clients that they could no longer hunt on Saturdays. Instead, he said, they could enjoy the day in nature at no cost. With trips costing \$1,500 a day, clients happily embraced the new pricing plan.

Two years later, Danny sold his flourishing business. He also lost his desire to be in the elite.

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*“I had wanted to travel like them,” said Danny (pictured left), today a successful serial entrepreneur. “But now I go on mission trips, which are much better.”*

## The Lesson in Brief

► **Key Text:** *Daniel 7:13*

► **The Student Will:**

**Know:** Consider the reality and the turning point of the second coming of Jesus.

**Feel:** Anticipate and rejoice in the prospect of meeting the Lord face-to-face.

**Do:** Live with hope in spite of the prospect of death and the present reality of hopelessness.

► **Learning Outline:**

**I. Know: The End Is the Beginning.**

**A** Why does the heavenly kingdom imply the destruction of the earthly kingdoms?

**B** Why is the Second Coming real and not just a spiritual parable?

**C** Why does the Second Coming make sense?

**II. Feel: Longing to See Him**

**A** What feelings do you have when you think of the Second Coming?

**B** How does the hope of the Second Coming affect your outlook?

**C** Why is the Second Coming the only real solution to our suffering?

**III. Do: Hope Against Hope**

**A** How does the hope of the Second Coming help you in the experience of injustice?

**B** How does hope in the Second Coming help you to deal with the idea of death?

**C** How does the hope of the Second Coming help you to make the right decisions in your daily life?

► **Summary:** The second coming of Christ is the fundamental belief that gives all the Christian religion its meaning. It is the event that ultimately fulfills all the dreams and hopes of humankind.

## Learning Cycle

### ►STEP 1—Motivate

**Spotlight on Scripture:** *2 Timothy 4:7, 8*

**Key Concept for Spiritual Growth:** A belief in the second coming of Jesus comprises more than a dogmatic truth to be repeated in our confession of faith. It is the cornerstone of our spiritual life. Jesus' request " 'your kingdom come' " (*Matt. 6:10, NKJV*) is the pinnacle of His model prayer. The ancient Israelites prayed toward Jerusalem (*Dan. 6:10*), because prayer was the expression of their hope.

**Just for Teachers:** The belief of the second coming of Christ contains all other tenets of faith. Analyze with your students the meaning of the name "Seventh-day Adventist." Ask them to meditate on the meaning of each component of the name and on the significance of the tension between them. Then share the following quote: "Our name is made of two opposite entities. . . . While the phrase 'seventh day' connects us with earthly existence and human history the word 'Adventist' takes us to the future of history, what comes after human history and belongs to the prophetic domain, pointing to the heavenly order. While the phrase 'seventh day' confronts us with the present reality of the earthly city and makes us breathe with the rhythm of time 'under heaven' (*Eccl. 3:1*), the word 'Adventist' takes us away from here and makes us dream and pray and hope for the coming of the kingdom of heaven, and strengthens in our heart the sense of 'eternity' (*Eccl. 3:11*)."—Excerpted from Jacques Doukhan, "The Tension of Seventh-day Adventist Identity: An Existential & Eschatological Perspective," *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society*, Jan. 26, 2015, pp. 29, 30.

**Opening Discussion:** Examine the connection between the truth of the Second Coming and other Seventh-day Adventist truths. If you did not have this hope, how would the other beliefs stand? What is the connection between the hope in the Second Coming and the Sabbath commandment?

#### Questions for Discussion:

- ❶ Why does the Bible begin with Creation and end with the kingdom of God? What other examples do you find in the Bible that attest to that same connection?
- ❷ Why would it not be possible to be a good Adventist without the Sabbath? Conversely, why is it not possible to be a good Seventh-day Adventist without the hope of the Second Coming?

## ►STEP 2—Explore

**Just for Teachers:** One Christian lecturer mocked those naïve Christians who believed in the second coming of Jesus from heaven: “Do you think that Jesus will come in a parachute?” People laughed, and the lecturer made his point. During the past century, many Christian theologians have emphasized the importance of having an existential encounter with Jesus Christ. What is important, they argue, is our personal relationship with Him, our ethical life, and our faith in His love for us in our present life. This lesson will address this pernicious thinking. Biblical hope is not about this life but concerns a radically new world, which will be initiated by the real historical interruption of God, who will break through our history and bring a new life that has nothing to do with our present mortal condition.

## Bible Commentary

### I. The Kingdom of the Future (*Review Daniel 2:34, 35 with your class.*)

The prophecies of Daniel make it very clear. The heavenly kingdom of God will be different from all other earthly kingdoms. The prophetic history of the kingdoms of the earth is described as a continuous succession of kingdoms, which disappear one after the other, while still retaining something from the previous kingdoms.

The kingdom of God, on the other hand, appears abruptly from heaven and has no connection whatsoever with the previous earthly kingdoms. In fact, the establishment of the kingdom of God implies the total and radical destruction of all the other kingdoms: “‘No trace of them was found’ ” (*Dan. 2:35, NKJV*). Note that this operation is not the result of human wars or even of an ecological disaster. Just as the Creation of the world was God’s unique operation, the destruction of the world will happen “‘by no human hand’ ” (*Dan. 2:45, ESV*). On the other hand, “‘the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed’ ” (*Dan. 2:44, NKJV*). While the earthly kingdoms do not last and have no future, the kingdom of God is the only one that reveals the future.

This future perspective of the kingdom of God contains the secret of biblical wisdom. While the wisdom of the world is present-oriented, the wisdom of the kingdom of God is future-oriented. All we do should be tested by this question. As Ellen G. White advises: “No scheme of business or plan of life can be sound or complete that embraces only the brief years of this present life and makes no provision for the unending future. Let the youth be taught to take eternity into their reckoning.”—*Education*, p. 145.

**Consider This:** What are the differences between the earthly kingdoms (represented by the metals) and the heavenly kingdom (represented by the stone) in the vision of Daniel 2? Why is the second coming of Jesus irreconcilable with the idea of evolution?

## II. Like a Thief (Review 1 Thessalonians 5:4, Revelation 3:3, 16:15 with your class.)

The biblical view of hope is radically different from human theories of hope. While all human philosophies of hope expect the solution to human miseries to come from this world and from human effort, the Bible promises the solution to our problem comes from God in heaven. For this reason, the Messiah our Savior is pictured as someone coming “with the clouds of heaven” (*Dan. 7:13, Matt. 24:30, Rev. 14:14*). We cannot save ourselves, just as we cannot create ourselves.

Nor can we predict the moment of His coming. According to the Bible, the “end” is not a gradual process, the result of a progressive maturation. The Hebrew word *qets*, for “end,” is derived from the Hebrew verb *qatsats*, which means “cut off” (*Deut. 25:12, NKJV*) and implies an abrupt event, which has no link with preceding events. Therefore, the coming of Jesus will surprise and will strike like a violent and unexpected blow.

The Bible compares the coming of Christ to the coming of a thief. This comparison suggests that the world that He will take is presently not in His hands; it is in the hand of an enemy (*Matt. 13:28; compare with Job 1:11, 12*). To save us, God is obliged to break through and steal, just as He did when He stole Israel from Pharaoh or when He stole the demon-possessed from the devil (*Matt. 12:28, 29*).

### Discussion Questions:

- ❶ Why can humans not save themselves?
- ❷ What human philosophies of hope are you acquainted with? How, and why did they, or will they, fail?
- ❸ Why will God’s people, as will everyone, be surprised by the second coming of Christ?
- ❹ Why does God’s salvation of the world imply violence?
- ❺ What lesson does the comparison to a thief imply for us in our waiting for His coming? (Read *Matt. 24:44*.)

## III. New Heavens and a New Earth (Review Isaiah 65:17–25 with your class.)

God will not just “steal.” He will give new things. The kingdom of Babylon is destroyed, and, instead, the New Jerusalem is created. Death is replaced by eternal life. The resurrection of the dead will be the first manifestation of the Second Coming. Daniel is the book of the Old Testament that resonates the most with that hope (*Dan. 12:2, 3, 13*). Eternal life will be lived fully in our newly made bodies.

God's kingdom will be a place that our imagination cannot conceive (*1 Cor. 2:7–9*).

The fact that God's kingdom is beyond the capacity of our imagination does not mean that this new order escapes our understanding. Rather, it means that God's promise is real even if we cannot imagine it, for the "Thief" did not come from our mind or our dreams. Heaven is a real place that the "Thief" has prepared for us (*John 14:2*). The life in this kingdom will be a real life, just as it has never been in our earthly life, because, for the first time after the Garden of Eden, it will be a life without the shadow of death.

**Consider This:** Why is it not possible for us to conceive of the kingdom of God? Why does the resurrection of the dead exclude the idea of the immortality of the soul?

### ►STEP 3—Apply

**Just for Teachers:** The author of this quarter's Teachers Edition was once interviewed on French public radio. During the program, he spoke about his hope in God's kingdom in heaven. In contrast to his comments about hope in the God of heaven, the music technician, an atheist, broadcast a popular song that featured a bird flying in the skies to suggest that the author's faith was not about real things. For the technician, heaven meant only birds and literal sky. Contrary to what this song was intended to suggest, why is a hope in the Second Coming about real things, unseen though they are?

#### Application Questions:

- ❶ Why is it not possible to witness about the heavenly kingdom of God when we are not living as citizens of it here and now?
- ❷ What are the things in our lives today that distract us from the heavenly kingdom of God?

### ►STEP 4—Create

**Just for Teachers:** Discuss with the class the challenges we face in sharing the truth of the Second Coming with those who do not believe.

#### Activities:

- ❶ Ask the members of your class to share with others in the coming week about their hope in the Second Coming and report on peoples' responses next week.
- ❷ Encourage your students to self-reflect: What will they do differently in their lives, from here on out, after having studied this lesson?

Many historians believe the three most crucial decades in world history occurred when a small group of men, mostly Jews under the power of the Holy Spirit, took the gospel to the world. Acts is an account of those crucial decades, which spanned from Jesus' resurrection in A.D. 31 to the end of Paul's first Roman imprisonment in A.D. 62. Acts deals with the formative period of the early church, in which there was considerable growth. This can be seen in the way the church dealt with questions concerning the time of Jesus' second coming, the status of the Gentiles, and the role of faith for salvation. What the early church accomplished in such a short period of time stands as a perpetual testimony of what God can do through those who humble their hearts in prayer, live beyond individual differences, and let themselves be used by the Spirit for God's honor and glory. This quarter's guide, *The Book of Acts* by Wilson Paroschi, examines the story of those called by God to start the work. We will reflect on what we, those who have been called by God to finish the work, can learn from their story.

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## **Lesson 1—You Will Be My Witnesses**

### **The Week at a Glance:**

SUNDAY: **The Restoration of Israel** (*Acts 1:6, 7*)

MONDAY: **The Disciples' Mission** (*Acts 1:8*)

TUESDAY: **He Will Come Again** (*Acts 1:9–11*)

WEDNESDAY: **Preparing for Pentecost** (*Acts 1:12–14*)

THURSDAY: **The Twelfth Apostle** (*Acts 1:21, 22*)

**Memory Text**—*Acts 1:8, NRSV*

**Sabbath Gem:** The disciples are promised the gift of the Holy Spirit to empower and lead them on a mission that would reach the ends of the earth.

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## **Lesson 2—Pentecost**

### **The Week at a Glance:**

SUNDAY: **The Coming of the Spirit** (*Acts 2:1–3*)

MONDAY: **The Gift of Tongues** (*Acts 2:5–12*)

TUESDAY: **Peter's Sermon** (*Acts 2:22–32*)

WEDNESDAY: **The Exaltation of Jesus** (*Acts 2:33–36*)

THURSDAY: **The Firstfruits** (*Acts 2:38, 39*)

**Memory Text**—*Acts 2:32, 33, NRSV*

**Sabbath Gem:** Following Jesus' ascension and His exaltation in heaven, this outpouring of the Spirit was a supernatural event that transformed the apostles from simple and obscure Galileans into men of conviction and courage who changed the world.

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