

God's Family Will Be Made New at the Second Coming



SABBATH—DECEMBER 22

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON: John 14:1–3; Isaiah 11:1–10; Revelation 21:1–5; 1 Thessalonians 4:13–18; Isaiah 35:4–10.

MEMORY VERSE: “We are looking for what God has promised, which are new heavens and a new earth. Only what is right and good will be there” (2 Peter 3:13, NLV).



At the Second Coming, we will join with the Lord and live together as one family.

ONE OF THE BIGGEST PROMISES that God gives us in the Bible is the promise of Jesus' Second Coming. Without the Second Coming, we have no hope. That promise, and what it means for us, is the reason for all our hopes. When Jesus comes back in the clouds of heaven, everything on this earth and every man-made thing will end. Then after 1,000 years, this earth will be made new again. It will become the home for the people that God saved. Jesus joins humans with God again at the Second Coming. Then they will live with each other forever.

Our hope in Jesus' Second Coming is one of the most important teachings in the New Testament. For many hundreds of years, Christians waited for Jesus to come back. As Seventh-day Adventists, we want Jesus to come back. Our name itself says that we hope that He will come back soon.

In this last lesson, we will look at the promise of the Second Coming and how it helps us to have unity. Unity is agreement and peace in Jesus. Unity is the agreement we feel as a church when Jesus joins us in heart, mind, and in the truth. The peace and agreement that Jesus gives us is often hurt by our human weakness. But at the Second Coming, we will join with the Lord and live together as one family.

THE PROMISE OF JESUS' SECOND COMING (John 14:1–3)

John 14:1–3 is the best-known promise about Jesus' Second Coming. What does this promise tell you about the life that God's people will live on the new earth?

The New Testament Christians said that Jesus' Second Coming was the “blessed [very precious] hope” (Titus 2:13, NIV). They looked for all of the Bible's promises to come true at that time. People who love Jesus wait with joy and hope for the day when they will see Him face-to-face. Jesus' words in John 14:1–3 hint that we will be close to Jesus and live with Him and each other after He comes back.

As Christians, we believe in the Second Coming because the Bible promises us it will happen. We have this hope because we believe in Jesus' words: “ ‘I will come back’ ” (John 14:3, ERV). The Bible told us about Jesus' First Coming before it happened. The Bible also tells us about His Second Coming. We can read about the Second Coming even in the Old Testament. Here is one example: a thousand years before Jesus came to this earth, King David wrote about the Second Coming. He said that the Savior will come to join all God's people together. David writes, “Our God is coming and will not keep quiet. Fire burns in front of him. There is a great [awful] storm around him. He tells the sky and the earth to be witnesses as [at the time when] he judges his people. He says, ‘My followers, gather around me. Come, my worshipers, who made an agreement with me’ ” (Psalm 50:3–5, ERV).

Before the Flood, God tells Enoch that the Savior will come in glory to put an end to sin. Enoch says, “ ‘Look, the Lord is coming with thousands and thousands of his holy angels’ ” (Jude 14, 15, ERV).

Jesus' Second Coming is connected closely to His First Coming. Before He came to earth the first time, the Bible told us about Jesus' birth and His work for God on earth. We can read these promises in Genesis 3:15; Micah 5:2; Isaiah 11:1; and Daniel 9:25, 26. These promises about the First Coming give us many reasons for our hope and trust in Jesus' Second Coming (Hebrews 9:26, 28).

What hope and comfort do you find in the promise of the Second Coming?



The promises about the First Coming give us many reasons for our hope and trust in Jesus' Second Coming (Hebrews 9:26, 28).

GOD PROMISES TO MAKE ALL THINGS NEW (Isaiah 11:1–10)

In Isaiah 11:1–10, God gives a promise to Israel. What does this promise tell us about the home where God’s people will live forever?

The Bible starts with the story about how God makes life on earth in six days. God makes a beautiful place for our first parents to live. Everything God makes on earth is perfect. The final two chapters of the Bible also talk about a perfect earth made by God (Revelation 21, 22). But this time, God will take the old earth we now live on and make it new. There will be no sin on this earth at all.

In many places in the Bible, we read that the new home where God’s people will live forever will be a real place. It will not be a dream or a fake place. God’s people will see, hear, smell, touch, and feel a new experience and a new life there. Isaiah 11:1–10 gives us a beautiful promise about the Second Coming. At that time, Jesus will make everything new on earth. He will end all war. Then He will lead us in everlasting peace.



“The hearts of God’s people will fill with even more love for God. Then they will play their gold harps. Thousands of voices will join as one in a mighty chorus to sing praises to God.”—Ellen G. White, *The Story of [about] Redemption [God’s plan to save humans]*, pages 432, 433, adapted.

Revelation 21:1–5 tells us that something will disappear forever because of the everlasting peace that Jesus will bring. What will disappear?

Ellen White wrote a description about life for God’s people after God makes everything on earth new: “Each year of our everlasting lives, we will learn more beautiful truths about God and Jesus. As we learn more about God, our love, respect for God, and happiness will grow too. The more we learn about God and from Jesus, the more we will admire who God is and what He thinks, feels, and does. Jesus will show His people the rich truths about God’s plan to save them. Jesus will show them the amazing things that God did in the big war between good and evil. The hearts of God’s people will fill with even more love for God. Then they will play their gold harps. Thousands of voices will join as one in a mighty chorus to sing praises to God.”—Ellen G. White, *The Story of [about] Redemption [God’s plan to save humans]*, pages 432, 433, adapted.

In what ways may we understand who God is now? How can our living in peace and agreement with other believers help to show God’s love to people who do not know Him?

**WHEN GOD WAKES UP THE DEAD
(1 Thessalonians 4:13–18)**

Maybe more than any other promise, the Second Coming gives God's people courage and hope. That has been true since New Testament times. Any time God's people feel pain or feel sad, they can think about the hope that they have in the Second Coming. Jesus gave us this hope with many other wonderful promises.

What promises do you find in 1 Thessalonians 4:13–18? What hope do these promises give us that Jesus will wake up our dead loved ones so that we can be with them again?

Jesus' Second Coming will change everything for all humans in very powerful ways. God will come to take His people to live with Him in His kingdom in heaven. This act is a very important part of God's kingdom. " 'He will use a loud trumpet to send his angels all around the earth. They will gather [collect] his chosen people from every part of the earth' " (Matthew 24:31, ERV). At that time, God will wake up the dead who are His people. Then God will give them everlasting life (1 Corinthians 15:52, 53). That is the time we are waiting for! The dead who belong to Jesus will wake up. They will join again with those believers who waited and wished for them to be alive again. Paul talks about that time with deep joy: "O death, where is your power? O death, where are your pains [power to hurt]?" (1 Corinthians 15:55, NLV).

When Jesus wakes up His people from the dead, they will not come out of the graves with sick or old bodies. No. They will have new, perfect bodies that will never die. Their bodies will not show scars from the sin that caused them to rot in the grave. When God's people wake up from the dead, they fully will feel Jesus' work to make them new. They will have perfect bodies that show God's love and holy life. They will show everyone who God is, just as He always wanted humans to do when He first made them (Genesis 1:26; 1 Corinthians 15:46–49).

At the same time that Jesus wakes up the dead, His people who are alive on the earth also will change. They will be given new, perfect bodies too (1 Corinthians 15:53) and will join Jesus in the air (1 Thessalonians 4:17).

God promises that He will wake up the dead. What does His promise teach us about why only His power can save us?



When Jesus wakes up His people from the dead, they will not come out of the graves with sick or old bodies. No. They will have new, perfect bodies that will never die.

A NEW EARTH (Revelation 21:2, 9–27)

“ ‘Look, I will make new heavens and a new earth. And people will not remember the past. They will not think about those things’ ” (Isaiah 65:17, ICB). Both Isaiah and John (Revelation 21:1) saw in a vision the new earth that God promised.

In Revelation 21:2, 9–27, John describes the wonderful city named the New Jerusalem where God’s people will live. What do these verses tell us about the peace and agreement that God’s people will see and feel in this city?

Revelation 22:1–5 talks about two things that will be in the new city: (1) the river of life that flows from God’s throne and (2) the tree of life. Why will these two things be in the new city? What is God’s plan for them on the new earth?

Adam lost permission to eat from the tree of life after he sinned (Genesis 3:22–24). But Jesus will plant the tree of life in the New Jerusalem. God will give His people permission to eat its fruit again (Revelation 2:7). The tree of life will produce 12 different crops of fruit. It will produce a different crop of fruit each month. That may explain why God’s people “ ‘will come to worship me [God] . . . every New Moon,’ says the Lord” (Isaiah 66:23, ICB). Revelation also says that “the leaves of the tree are for the healing of all people” (Revelation 22:2, ICB). The leaves show us God’s plan to remove all the pain caused by separations between people. Then God will join His people in one big family who lives in peace with each other and gives glory to God.

“What Micah talked about hundreds of years ago now happens: ‘All fighting between nations will end. They will never again train for war. . . . No one will make them afraid. That is because the LORD All-Powerful said it would happen like [the same as] that’ (Micah 4:3, 4, ERV; read also Isaiah 2:4). There, next to the river of life, God’s people will sit together under the tree of life. The leaves of the tree of life are the same as medicine. They will heal all the ‘deep cuts’ that hurt and divided humans when they were on earth.”—Ranko Stefanovic, *Revelation [secrets made known] of [from or about] Jesus Christ: Commentary [explanation] on the Book of Revelation*, page 593, adapted.



Jesus will plant the tree of life in the New Jerusalem. God will give His people permission to eat its fruit again (Revelation 2:7).

OUR LIFE ON THE NEW EARTH (Isaiah 35:4–10)

In Isaiah 35:4–10 and Isaiah 65:21–25, we learn that we will live a very different life on the new earth. What will be different about our life on the new earth?

The book of Isaiah talks about several “new things” (Isaiah 42:9, NIV; Isaiah 48:6) that God will show us or give us on the new earth. We will sing “a new song” (Isaiah 42:10, NIV). We will see “something new” (Isaiah 43:19, ERV) and get “a new name” (Isaiah 62:2, ERV). In Isaiah 65, we read about a new way of doing things. There will be peace and agreement between all living things that God made. God will end the curses that came on the land because of our sins. There will be many blessings, houses to live in, and food to enjoy.

Life on the new earth will be very beautiful. Some people wonder if we will know our friends and family after God gives us new bodies and everlasting life. We know that after Jesus woke up from the dead, His followers knew who He was. Many of Jesus’ followers knew His voice when they heard it after He woke up from the dead (John 20:11–16). Thomas knew who Jesus was when he saw Him (John 20:27, 28). Jesus’ two followers from Emmaus knew who Jesus was by the things He did at the dinner table (Luke 24:30, 31, 35). So, we can see from these verses that our new bodies will be the same as Jesus’ body after He woke up from the dead. That means we will know our friends and loved ones when we see them again after Jesus comes back. We can look forward to spending our lives with our friends and loved ones again. It is safe to say that we will continue our connections and friendships with the people we know and love. They will be there with us on the new earth.

“In the new earth we will love fully. God Himself put these feelings of love and pity inside us. We will speak with holy people. We will be friends with angels and all of God’s loyal people who ever lived on the earth. God’s people washed their ‘robes [thoughts, feelings, actions]’ in the Lamb’s [Jesus’] blood. His blood made their robes white [clean; holy]. Holy friendships connect God’s people in one family in heaven and on earth (Ephesians 3:15). All these things will give God’s people happiness.”—Ellen G. White, *The Great [worldwide] Controversy [war between God and Satan]*, page 677, adapted.



Life on the new earth will be very beautiful.

ADDITIONAL THOUGHT: Ellen G. White, “Behold [look], I Come Quickly [soon],” pages 355–359, in *Counsels [advice] for the Church*. Read the articles “Resurrection [the time when God wakes up the dead],” pages 1082–1084, and “Heaven and New Earth,” pages 863, 864, in *The Ellen G. White Encyclopedia*.

“Jesus woke up from the dead and then went to heaven. These two things that Jesus did prove that God’s people will win the fight over death and the grave. Jesus’ waking up from the dead and His going to heaven are God’s promise to His people that heaven is open to everyone who washes his or her robe [thoughts, feelings, and actions] in the blood of the Lamb. The Lamb’s blood will make believers’ robes white [clean; holy]. Jesus also went to the Father for us. God will take to heaven everyone who shows to other people who God is. He will bring His people to see His glory. They will share His glory with Him.

“We are strangers on this earth. But God will make homes for us on the new earth. God also makes robes that He will put on everyone who believes and obeys Him. He will give us crowns of glory and palm branches. These palm branches are a word picture that shows us that God’s people win the war over sin. After Jesus comes back, we will understand everything that confused us on this earth. We will understand those things that are hard to explain now. God will help us understand the truth about His loving-favor. Then everything that confused us will make sense. Our minds will see that God planned everything in the most perfect and beautiful order. We will understand that God let us suffer the most difficult experiences because He loved us. We will know the truth about God’s loving care for us. God makes all things work together for our good. We will feel joy that cannot be put into words. It is a joy that is full of God’s glory.”—Ellen G. White, *Counsels [advice] for the Church*, page 358, adapted.



“Heaven is open to everyone who washes his or her robe [thoughts, feelings, and actions] in the blood of the Lamb.”

—Ellen G. White, *Counsels [advice] for the Church*, page 358, adapted.

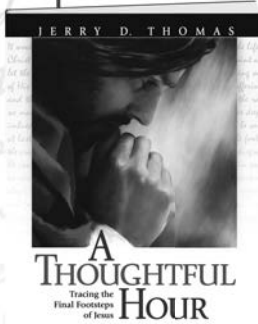
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- ① Many other Christians (but not all) believe in Jesus’ Second Coming. But what makes the Seventh-day Adventist belief in the Second Coming special?
- ② It may be hard to make a picture in our minds of the new earth or really understand how wonderful the new earth will be. But why should we try anyway?

could be well to spend a thoughtful hour each day reviewing the life of Christ from the manger to Calvary. We should take it point by point and

A THOUGHTFUL HOUR

JERRY D. THOMAS



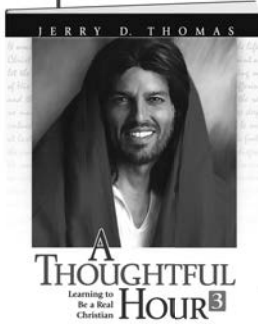
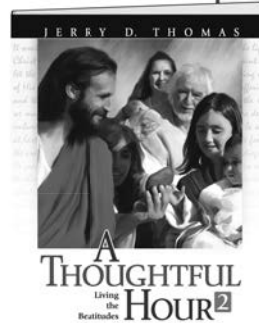
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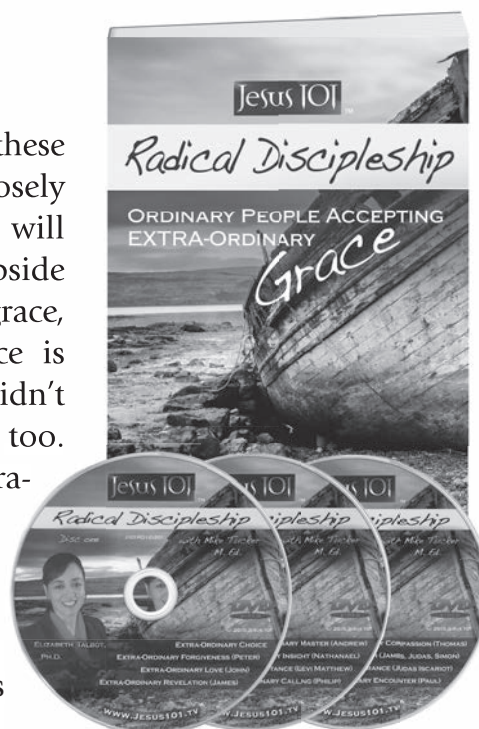
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