

The Good News That Continues Forever



SABBATH—APRIL 8

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON: Revelation 1:1–3; 1 Corinthians 15:1–4; Revelation 13:8; Matthew 28:19, 20.

MEMORY VERSE: “Then I saw another angel flying across the sky. He had good news that will last [continue] for ever to tell the people who live on the earth. The good news is for every country, tribe [family group], language, and nation [people group]” (Revelation 14:6, WE).



The Three Angels' Messages help us remember who we are as a people and the work God gave us to do.

DURING OLD TESTAMENT TIMES, the people living near the Israelites worshiped gods made from wood and stone. But Israel worshiped the Lord God who made the sky and the earth. Moses said, “ ‘Listen [pay attention], people of Israel! The LORD is our God. The LORD is the only God’ ” (Deuteronomy 6:4, ERV). This verse became a prayer for the Israelites. The word written as “listen” comes from the Hebrew word “**shema**.” So, the name for this prayer is the “**Shema**.” This prayer helped the Jews to remember God’s plan for them as a people. This prayer also helped Israel to want to serve God as His special people.

As Seventh-day Adventists, what is our “**Shema**”? What Bible teaching helps us remember both who we are as a people and the work God gave us to do as His church? The answer is: the Three Angels’ Messages in Revelation 14:6–12 are our **Shema**. This week, we will study the Three Angels’ Messages. This message is three messages in one. We will look at God’s mercy in this message. We will see why mercy is so important to our understanding of the Three Angels’ Messages.

**A BOOK FILLED WITH MERCY AND HOPE
(Revelation 1:1–3)**

What do you picture in your mind when you think about the book of Revelation? Scary animals? Strange word pictures? Mysterious warnings and signs? Sad to say, Revelation scares many people because they don't understand it. But the book also fills many people with hope. God gives us plenty of reasons in Revelation to be happy about His plan to save sinners.

Read Revelation 1:1–3. What do these verses teach us about the book of Revelation? Now read Revelation 14:6. What does this verse teach us about the Good News that continues forever?

The book of Revelation is all about Jesus. This book is Jesus' message of hope to His people from New Testament times to the Second Coming. Revelation has many messages for God's church during the end times. The book of Revelation is filled with mercy and love. The book shows us Jesus as the Lamb who was killed for us. The book promises a blessing to everyone who reads, understands, and obeys its Bible truth.

In Revelation 1:5, 6, we see Jesus as the One who "loves us. By [with] his own blood [death] he has made us free from the wrong things we have done. He [Jesus] has made us into [chosen us to be] kings and priests [spiritual leaders] to his God and Father" (WE). God forgives us because of Jesus. God pardons our past sins. God gives us a new life now. God gives us hope for the future. Because of Jesus, God frees us from the penalty for our sin. Because of Jesus, God ends sin's control over our lives. Someday soon, Jesus will come back and end sin forever.

The book of Revelation also shows us the word picture of an angel flying fast in the middle of the sky. This angel has the Good News that continues forever. Do you see that the Good News about Jesus comes at the beginning of the Three Angels' Messages? God wants us to know that we are saved by His mercy because of our faith in everything Jesus does for us. We have the promise of everlasting life because of Him.

What is Revelation's most important message? What do all the word pictures and warnings teach us the answer is?



**God gives us plenty
of reasons in Revelation
to be happy about His plan
to save sinners.**

THE GOOD NEWS THAT CONTINUES FOREVER
(1 Corinthians 15:1–4)

Look at how the Three Angels' Messages start: "Then I saw another angel flying in the heavens. He was carrying the Good News that lasts [continues] forever" (Revelation 14:6, NLV). Revelation 14:6 begins with the Good News. So, we see that the Good News is important to the Three Angels' Messages. If we fail to understand the Good News, we will not understand the Three Angels' Messages. We won't understand God's work for us as Judge that the First Angel's Message talks about. We won't understand about Babylon in the Second Angel's Message. And we won't understand the mark, or sign, of the wild animal in the Third Angel's Message.

Read 1 Corinthians 15:1–4; Romans 3:24–26; and Romans 5:6–8. What do these verses teach us about the Good News that continues forever? What hope do these verses give us?

The Good News is God's message to us that Jesus died for our sins. The Good News also tells us that Jesus woke up from the dead for us. The Good News tells us that Jesus loves and cares for us, too. We must believe in Jesus' death for us on the cross. Then He can free us from the penalty for our sins. Jesus can free us from sin's control over our lives, too. Paul understood these Bible truths. Jesus filled Paul's thoughts and his writings. Jesus made Paul free from the guilt of his past sins. Jesus gave Paul control over his thoughts and behavior. Jesus also gave Paul hope for the future.

Look at four teachings that Paul talks about in the verses we just read in 1 Corinthians and in Romans:

1. God freely forgives us because of His mercy.
2. Mercy shows us that God is holy.
3. God's mercy makes us clean when we accept Jesus.
4. God showed His love to us while we were sinners.

We can't do anything to earn Jesus' mercy. Jesus died a painful and awful death. Sinners who refuse to accept Jesus will die this death. On the cross, Jesus accepted God the Father's anger against sin. Jesus was rejected so that we can be accepted. Jesus died the death that was ours, so that we can live the life that was His.

God made this saving plan before time started (2 Timothy 1:9; Titus 1:2). This information helps us understand why God's plan is named the Good News that continues forever.



The Good News tells us that Jesus woke up from the dead for us.

A STORY ABOUT MERCY AND GOD'S LOVING FAVOR (Revelation 13:8)

The Three Angels' Messages tell us the story about God's mercy and loving favor. The Three Angels' Messages tell us the story about our Savior's love for us. This love has no end. This love has no limits. This love can't die. We can't fully understand it. Jesus loves us so much that He chose to die so that no one would need to be lost.

Nothing can surprise God. Not even sin. As we saw already, God's plan to save us from sin wasn't something that He came up with after sin happened. God's saving plan was something that He made before He made this earth.

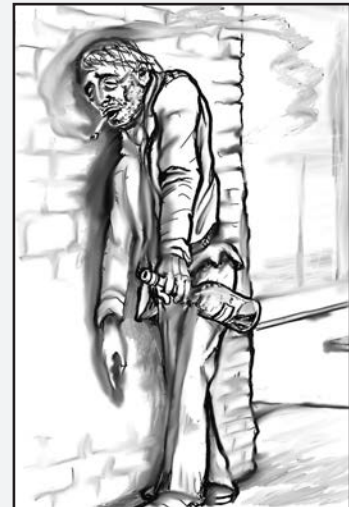
Read Revelation 13:8 and 1 Peter 1:18–20. What do these verses teach us about God's saving plan?

The Good News that continues forever shows us the past, our time now, and the future. When God gave us free choice, He knew that we would make bad choices. We are free to choose evil. Could God make us so that we don't choose evil? Yes, but we would not be free. We would be the same as robots who were forced to serve Him. God doesn't want to force us to serve Him. That goes against His plan. To be free to love means that we must have a choice. When people can choose, they can choose the wrong thing. So, God made His saving plan before our first parents sinned in Eden.

"God didn't make His saving plan at the last minute. God didn't make the plan to save us after Adam sinned. No, God's plan 'about Christ is the secret truth that was hidden for long ages past, but is now made known.' Romans 16:25, [ICB]. This plan showed God's love. The law of love controls God's government forever."—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, page 22, adapted.

As we said, the Good News that continues forever is about everything God did for us in the past. The Good News also is about the things Jesus does for us now. But the Good News is about our future hope, too. Our hope is that we may live forever with Jesus.

Ephesians 1:4 says that God chose us to be saved before He made the earth. What does this Bible truth mean? Why should this teaching encourage you?



**When people can choose,
they can choose
the wrong thing.**

TO EVERYONE ON EARTH (Matthew 28:19, 20)

Read Revelation 14:6 again. This verse talks about the Good News that God’s people must announce. Who must they share this announcement with?

The Good News must be announced to every people group and family group on earth. The Good News must be shared in every language on earth, too. Wow! This task is a big one. So, we must give God our best efforts to help Him do this work. We must give Him all our hearts. When we announce the Good News, we will put Jesus first. We will want to serve Him more than we want anything else in this life.

Read Matthew 28:19, 20. What is the connection between these verses in Matthew and the First Angel’s Message in Revelation 14:7? What do both sets of verses teach that is the same?



God started the Seventh-day Adventist Church to help finish His work on earth in the end times.

Paul David Tripp wrote a book named *A Quest for More: Living for Something Bigger Than You*. In this book, Tripp says that all humans have the need to be part of something more important than they are. Tripp writes, “God made people to be part of something more important than their own lives. Sin causes us to be selfish. God’s mercy saves us from living only for ourselves. God’s mercy frees us to live for the kingdom of God.”

When we are part of God’s work, we become part of something that He started. God started the Seventh-day Adventist Church to help finish His work on earth in the end times. This work is bigger than any one person can do on his own. God gave His end-time church a job. John wrote in Revelation 14 about that job. Revelation 14 shows us what God wants from us. God wants us to give our lives to the biggest job He gave humans. What is this job? We must show God’s love to everyone on earth just before Jesus’ Second Coming.

Have you been part of something bigger than yourself in the past? Share your experience with the class. How does this experience help you understand the idea we talked about in today’s study? Also, is there anything at all that you can think of that is bigger than working with God to finish His work on this earth?

GOING WHERE GOD WANTS US TO GO
(Matthew 24:14)

The first Adventists studied the Bible carefully. As they studied, they started to understand more fully the Three Angels' Messages. The first Adventists believed that the Three Angels' Messages were God's end-time warning. They also believed that this message must be announced in every language and to everyone on earth to help them get ready for Jesus to come back. The Three Angels' Messages are the reason for our worldwide work since our church first started.

In 1874, the General Conference sent our first Bible worker to Europe. The General Conference is the headquarters for the leadership of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Ellen G. White said that John Andrews was the best man we had for the job. Andrews spoke at least seven languages. He learned and remembered every word of the New Testament. Andrews knew most of the Old Testament, too. He was very smart. He wrote many books and articles. He also was a powerful preacher and a Bible expert.

Why send Andrews to a place where there were very few believers? Why send the best man you had to a place so far away from everyone and everything he knew? Why was Andrews willing to go? His wife died a few years earlier. Why was he willing to leave family and friends behind in America to sail with his two children to a faraway place and put his life and his children's lives in possible danger?

There is only one reason. Andrews believed that Jesus was coming soon. He believed that the end-time message of Bible truth must go to everyone on earth.

During our whole history as a church, our best and smartest people have traveled to faraway lands to announce God's end-time message. This group of people included teachers, doctors, nurses, pastors, farmers, mechanics, carpenters, and businessmen and women of all types. Some of these people already worked for the church. But many of these professionals did not. Many of these Bible workers were church members who believed Jesus was coming soon.

Read Revelation 14:6; Acts 1:8; and Matthew 24:14. What do you see in these verses that is the same?

So far, our church has preached the Good News and God's message about the end times in 210 of the 235 countries on the earth.



During our whole history as a church, our best and smartest people have traveled to faraway lands to announce God's end-time message.

ADDITIONAL THOUGHT: Think more about the idea in Wednesday’s study that humans need to be part of something more important than their own lives. Our lives are short. Often, they are evil and sad. So, we need to live for something more important than ourselves. Is there anything more important than announcing that Jesus is coming back soon?

“God’s servants will go from place to place. They will move fast. Their faces will be lit up and shining with God’s holy life. Thousands of God’s servants will warn the people everywhere on earth. God’s people will do miracles. They will heal the sick. Many signs and wonderful things will happen wherever they go. Satan also will work. Satan will do miracles, too. But his miracles are lies and tricks. Satan will make fire come down from the sky in front of people. Revelation 13:13. Everyone on earth will learn what they need to know so that they can decide for Jesus or against Him.”—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, page 612, adapted.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:



God’s people will do miracles. They will heal the sick. Many signs and wonderful things will happen wherever they go.

- ① “Several people wrote me. They asked me about the teaching that God in His mercy forgives our sins and makes us holy because of our faith in Jesus. These people asked if this message is the same as the Third Angel’s Message. I answered them, ‘Yes, it is the Third Angel’s Message, for sure.’”—Ellen G. White, *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, April 1, 1890, adapted. How are the Three Angels’ Messages connected to the teaching that God in His mercy forgives us and makes us holy because of our faith in Jesus?
- ② Think more about the idea that the Good News continues forever. Why is the Good News everlasting?
- ③ As a church, we have Bible workers in many countries everywhere on earth. Why do you think we need Bible workers everywhere? How does God bless their work? What more can your local church and Sabbath School class do to help finish God’s work on earth?

PINK HAIR AND GOD

A few days before the school year started, a mother made a telephone call to the manager in charge of a Seventh-day Adventist elementary school in Ukraine. The mother wanted help with her daughter. The mother said, “I don’t know anything about the different Christian churches. But I saw a sign outside your school that said, ‘Christian School.’ I’m very sure that this school is the one I am looking for.”

The school manager was interested in the young girl after the manager’s phone conversation with the girl’s mother. So, the manager asked the mother for more information about the little girl. The little girl was named Natasha. Natasha’s mother said that when she was carrying Natasha inside her before she was born, she thought about sending her child to church school. The idea was strange because the mother didn’t believe in God. When Natasha was old enough to go to school, the mother sent her to a private school that promised to teach students how to be artists. But the school didn’t teach the children any rules. The children were free to do whatever they pleased.

Natasha’s mother got worried when her daughter was in the second grade and said she wanted to dye her hair pink! Then the mother saw the sign for the Adventist school and remembered her thoughts before Natasha was born. The mother thought, “I want my child to go to this school.”

On Natasha’s first day at the Adventist school, she started third grade. There were five other children in her class. All five children were from Adventist families. Natasha worked hard to learn what the other children already knew. She was a fast learner. Reading the Bible and having morning worship were new experiences for Natasha. She loved learning about God.

Several weeks later, Natasha’s mother called the school manager again. The mother was happy with the changes that she saw in her daughter since she started going to the Adventist school. The mother said, “Natasha loves your Bible lessons. She has fallen in love with the school, too. She tells her father and me everything that happens at school and asks us to pray with her before meals. I’m so happy I brought my little girl to your school.” Not long ago, the mother called the school manager again. This time she asked for information about Adventist beliefs. She said, “Natasha wants to become Adventist. So, I want to know what changes we need to make in our lives. I want to become an Adventist, too.”

Ivan Riapolov (see picture) is the education leader for the Euro-Asia area of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. He says, “This family’s journey with God is just beginning.” Thanks for your offerings that support Adventist education worldwide.

INSIDE *Story*

by ANDREW MCCHESENEY



Natasha’s mother got worried when her daughter was in the second grade and said she wanted to dye her hair pink!

