

# lesson eleven

SEPTEMBER 7-13

## Living the Advent **Hope**

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*“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord” (1 Cor. 15:58, NKJV).*



This image points to Jesus' parable of the ten virgins. His followers should be constantly vigilant, waiting for Christ's return and keeping that hope alive by sharing it with others.

Titus 2:12, 13

## Introduction

# *A Hope or a Promise?*

Like most of us, I hope that one day I will get married. It is a nice dream, and I look forward to seeing it fulfilled. There are things that I can do to prepare for this step in life, but a person can go only so far. I can get an education, learn life skills, and continue to grow in my walk with the Lord, but other steps in preparation will have to wait till later.

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### **Like most of us, I hope that one day I will get married.**

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But what if I get engaged? I would still be hoping to get married, but there's a difference now: promise. It has been promised to me that I will get married. Now I will buy a dress, make wedding arrangements, maybe look for good deals on kitchen appliances, and prepare to move to a new home. See the difference? Before, I had only a hope to get married, but when I had a promise that I would get married, everything changed.

What about us in our Christian walk? Do we simply hope that Jesus is coming again, or do we have a promise? The Bible says it's a promise. Jesus Himself said, "I will come again" (John 14:3). This is something we can truly put confidence in. But if our belief in Christ does not govern every thought and action, do we really believe it? His words are so powerful that it is impossible to fully embrace this promise without it changing every aspect of our existence. It will change how we live. It will change our perspective and our actions. It will change how we interact with other people.

For far too many Christians today, and yes, even Seventh-day Adventists, Christianity is just a convenient culture. It governs the things we do, where we go, what we listen to, and what we watch only when it conveniently aligns with our preferences. We choose to do what we like and hope that God will be OK with it. We become very selfish in our mind-set and care only about making ourselves successful. We forget that there is a world to reach, and not much time to do it. And the world to reach is not just in a remote jungle. It can be in our communities, schools, churches, and associations.

Do you live to show others how the promise of Jesus' soon return has changed your life, or do you hope that someone else will share the light? We have a duty to spread this good news to everyone, especially the least of these, so that they can also be saved in His kingdom. We are called to live this hope—this promise—every day of our lives!

# Logos *Living the Advent Hope*

Eccles. 12:13, 14;  
Job 19:25;  
2 Cor. 5:19;  
Eph. 2:14;  
Heb. 2:14, 15;  
Rev. 13:8

## ***The First Hope (2 Cor. 5:19; Eph. 2:14; Rev. 13:8)***

After the fall of Adam and Eve, the first sign of hope was seen. Adam and Eve, because of their disobedience, lost everything—their occupation, their livelihood, their clothing, their home, and their hope. But God came down and promised them that a Savior would be born through their seed (Gen. 3:15).

Although they would be subject to death, Adam and Eve did not die that day in the Garden of Eden. The “lamb [was] slain from the foundation of the world,” and the plan to save humanity was put in place (Rev. 13:8). God loved a world that did not love Him in return. He gave up His Son to a people who “did not receive Him” (John 3:16, 17; 1:11, NKJV). Thus, through the sacrifice of Jesus, the barrier of sin would be broken down (2 Cor. 5:19; Eph. 2:14) and all could have hope again.

## **Because Christ is alive, His promises can be trusted.**

Therefore this plan, although difficult in its execution, allowed Jesus to come into the world to redeem, to buy back, His people (Ps. 34:22; Isa. 44:22–24). Through this method of redemption, God’s people could once again be heirs of salvation (Heb. 1:14). Jesus would live among us as one of us. He would be “made like” us and be tempted “in all points” like us, yet He would not succumb to temptation (Heb. 2:17, 18; 4:15). Because He overcame, tempted humanity would now have hope (Rev. 3:21).

## ***Hope in Temptation***

Although humanity has become “subject to bondage” through their disobedience to God and their obedience to Satan, Jesus gives us hope (Heb. 2:14, 15). There is no longer a fear that temptation, regardless of its apparent difficulty, cannot be overcome. Because Jesus “has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted” (Heb. 2:18, NKJV). Humanity now has hope in the same power through which Jesus overcame. Through acceptance of Jesus, humanity can be reborn (John 1:12, 13; Rom. 1:16).

Jesus “gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works” (Titus 2:14, NKJV). God is faithful, and He always provides a way of escape in the midst of any temptation (1 Cor. 10:13). Hope is offered even in temptation.

### **Hope After Death**

As a conclusion to life, death is often pictured as the end. That's how it appeared when Jesus died. The disciples hid "for fear of the Jews" (John 20:19). But, it was through the death of Christ that hope was secured for our salvation, and it was through the resurrection of Christ that hope was restored (1 Pet. 1:3, 21).

Without the resurrection of Christ, our preaching, our lives, our faith—everything is futile (1 Cor. 15:12–19, 22, 23). However, because Christ was resurrected, our final enemy, death, will be destroyed (1 Cor. 15:26).

It may appear that sin, and its results, will continue to raise its ugly head and that it will never be avenged (Hab. 1:2; Luke 18:1–8). However, when Cain killed Abel, the Lord responded, "The voice of your brother's blood cries out to Me from the ground" (Gen. 4:10, NKJV). Each of God's faithful who have been persecuted and oppressed will see the Lord's justice and judgment.

Moses, in his final address to the children of Israel, described God's vengeance in these words: "And there is no God besides Me; . . . nor is there any who can deliver from My hand." "My hand takes hold on judgment, I will render vengeance to My enemies, and repay those who hate Me." "For He will avenge the blood of His servants, and render vengeance to His adversaries; He will provide atonement for His land and His people" (Deut. 32:39, 41, 43, NKJV). What greater adversary does God have than sin and the originator of temptation, Satan?

### **The Blessed Hope**

One day soon, Jesus will come to gather His own. He who suffered and tasted "death for everyone" is alive (Heb. 2:9, NKJV). The Redeemer lives (Job 19:25). And, because Christ is alive, His promises can be trusted. He has overcome the world, and therefore He offers peace and hope (John 16:33). He is preparing a place for His own. He is coming again to take us to where He is (John 14:1–3). "For yet a little while, and He who is coming will come and will not tarry. Now the just shall live by faith" (Heb. 10:37, 38). He has paid the price; He has redeemed His own; He is coming soon.

### **Hope in the New**

When all is said and done, when sin has run its course, then judgment will complete its course (Eccles. 12:13, 14). "The God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; . . . and it shall stand forever" (Dan. 2:44, NKJV). In that kingdom, whose streets are paved with gold, every tear will be wiped away. In that city, "there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain" there because He who sits on the throne will say, "Behold, I make all things new" (Rev. 21:4, 5, NKJV).

### **REACT**

1. How can I allow the hope of Jesus' redemption to shape my life?
2. What aspects of God's hope mean the most to me?

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*Malcolm S. Douglas, Tucson, Arizona, USA*

## Testimony

# *People of the Book: Keep Reading*

Matt. 25:40

Many of us have a wealth of experience in discussing Matthew 24 within a variety of contexts—evangelistic seminars, small group Bible studies, and Sabbath afternoon conversations, for instance. But we would do well to devote just as much time and attention to chapter 25, especially the latter half. Feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, healing the sick, and visiting the lonely mean just as much (if not more) to our preparation for eternity as does being keenly aware of apocalyptic signs.

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“Those whom Christ commends in the judgment may have known little of theology, but they have cherished His principles. . . . Among the heathen are those who worship God ignorantly, those to whom the light is never brought by human instrumentality, yet they will not perish. Though ignorant of the written law of God, they have heard His voice speaking to them in nature, and have done the things that the law required. Their works are evidence that the Holy Spirit has touched their hearts, and they are recognized as the children of God.

“How surprised and gladdened will be the lowly among the nations, and among the heathen, to hear from the lips of the Saviour, ‘Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me!’ How glad will be the heart of Infinite Love as His followers look up with surprise and joy at His words of approval!”<sup>1</sup>

“Love to man is the earthward manifestation of the love of God. It was to implant this love, to make us children of one family, that the King of glory became one with us. And when His parting words are fulfilled, ‘Love one another, as I have loved you’ (John 15:12); when we love the world as He has loved it, then for us His mission is accomplished. We are fitted for heaven; for we have heaven in our hearts.”<sup>2</sup>

### **REACT**

1. What is the ideal motivation for exercising loving service to others, even—especially—those who are particularly difficult to love?
2. Are there any connections between meeting people’s needs and proclaiming the three angels’ messages and other missives of prophetic import?

1. Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 638.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 641.

Hab. 1:2;  
Luke 18:1-8;  
Rev. 21:1-5

## Evidence

# *The Patience of the Saints*

God's people have looked forward to the end of sin ever since Adam and Eve were kicked out of the Garden of Eden. When God made them leave the Garden, He made known to them His plan for Jesus to come someday and die in their place.

### God has promised. The challenge is with us.

Throughout the centuries and millennia, the faith of God's people in the blessed hope fluctuated. Even the prophet Habakkuk experienced this. Within the first few verses of the book that bears his name, the prophet cried, "O LORD, how long shall I cry, and thou wilt not hear! Even cry out unto thee of violence, and thou wilt not save!" (Hab. 1:2).

Habakkuk didn't understand why God wasn't dealing with the sins of his day. But in Luke 18, Jesus told a parable that helps to answer Habakkuk's question. No doubt, many of us share the same question today. In this parable, there is a woman who is a widow. She went to a judge and continued going time after time. And time after time, she was rejected.

Eventually, the judge took care of her problem because he was tired of her coming. This parable, by contrast, helps us to understand God's character. God will one day put an end to sin, and that, quite soon. "Nevertheless," Jesus says, "when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" (Luke 18:8).

God has promised. The challenge is with us. Will we let Him transform our hearts? As difficult as waiting may be, God's people are described in His Word as being patient. "Here is the patience of the saints" (Rev. 14:12). The word in this verse for patience literally means "cheerful (or hopeful) endurance."

Many people have experienced the heartache of losing loved ones. Others have been abused, attacked, and robbed. Whatever the issue is, we have God's promises that it will all end someday soon. It is often difficult to wait cheerfully for God's deliverance. That is why He gave us His promises.

Toward the end of Revelation, God gives us a beautiful promise of what He has prepared for His faithful children: "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away" (Rev. 21:4).

God will blot out our tears. He will make all things new, and nothing that has made this life miserable will be allowed to bother His children ever again.

### **REACT**

1. How can we encourage each other to persevere on the way to heaven?
2. How do we wait cheerfully and patiently for God to fulfill His promise of a new earth?

*Gabriel Taylor, Jefferson, Texas, USA*

## How-to *Shout It Out*

Matt. 10:5–8;  
25:31–46;  
28:18–20

There is something about getting good news that makes it hard to keep it to yourself. There is a need to share it with others. It makes you want to grab a megaphone and shout it from the mountaintop—or, rather, post it on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, or Snapchat.

There is good news that needs to be shared. The Advent hope! The hope of Jesus' soon return! Along with great hope comes great responsibility. The world needs to know He is coming soon. Not only do they need to know of His soon return, but they need to be ready.

### The hardest place to be a missionary is sometimes right in your own home.

How do you tell the world about the Advent hope?

*The lost sheep (Matt. 10:5–8).* Take the message to those who do not know about God. Start with your friends. Do all of them know who God is? Do they all believe in Jesus? Do they all know that Jesus' return is imminent? Invite them to church socials and vespers. Offer to study the Bible with them. Walk the walk and talk the talk. Show them through the way you live that God is love. But reach the lost sheep.

*Do unto the least of these (Matt. 25:31–46).* It is important to treat others the way you would treat Jesus. Share your food with someone who is hungry. It could be a homeless person, or it could be someone who didn't have enough money for groceries that day. Get involved in prison ministries outreach. Sing at a nursing home. Donate unneeded clothing to a shelter or community services. Maybe someone is hungry for the Word of God and not for food. Share the gospel through GLOW tracts, pamphlets, and Bible studies.

*The Great Commission (Matt. 28:18–20).* Tell the world. Teach all nations. The Great Commission is an imperative. You do not have to go to another country to be a missionary. Each person has their own mission field. It could be in your home, at school, at your job, in your neighborhood. The hardest place to be a missionary is sometimes right in your own home. Teach others about the love of Jesus.

### REACT

1. Do you find it easy or hard to share Jesus with your family? What is one way you could share Jesus with your family this week?

2. Think of people outside your circle. What steps could you take to share this great hope? What is something that is preventing you from sharing? Pray that God can help you overcome this obstacle.

*Brandy Taylor, Jefferson, Texas, USA*

Isa. 58:1–14

## Opinion *Restore the Breach*

Isaiah 58 starts out by introducing to us a people who are extremely religious. These people delight to worship God. They are fasting for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit. They are going to a camp meeting in search of a special blessing upon their lives. But God says that they are all wrong. They will not receive a special blessing. They will not receive the Spirit. Why?

They are fasting for the wrong reasons. They are doing this for all the wrong reasons. They are going to a camp meeting for strife. They want to fight, argue, and debate with each other. But the Lord also points out another reason they won't receive the Spirit. His people cherish a spirit of selfishness within their hearts. They take whatever blessings God has given to them and keep them all for themselves.

### **They are fasting for the wrong reasons.**

Isaiah 58 isn't about political parties. It isn't about telling you which political agenda or group to identify with and follow on social media so that you can be trending. It's about character development. It's about taking personal responsibility for the things that are happening in this world and doing something about it. Since when has Christianity relied upon legislation to tell them it's OK to do good things? If we believe that we can offload our moral obligation to some political party or government to do the things that we should be doing, how, then, will our characters grow?

Isaiah 58 is about God wanting us to restore His law and His character in this world. When we set about to do this, His righteousness will shine through us. When we purpose in our hearts to reproduce the character of Christ through actions of Christlike selflessness, we will start to see the breach restored in this world. Remember, Christ said that “the poor you will always have with you” (Matt. 26:11, NIV). So the goal isn't to eradicate poverty. It's to give us the opportunity to express the Father's loving-kindness to those in need. Once we learn this self-sacrifice, we will learn the true nature of the Sabbath, which is sacrificing ourselves and learning to delight ourselves in the Lord. This is a promise God wants to keep.

### **REACT**

1. If God is selfless and self-sacrificing by nature, how could we get along with Him in heaven if we don't build up a similar character here on earth?
2. In many cases, mission trips have become an excuse for tourism. Might it be more effective to reach out to one's own country and repurpose the funds that would have been used on overly expensive mission-tourism?

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*Arthur Ujjaki-Nagy, Berrien Springs, Michigan, USA*

## Exploration

# *Hope That Is Above and Beyond*

Eccles. 12:13, 14

### **CONCLUDE**

In this desolate world on the brink of the most cataclysmic finale, we have been placed for such a time as this. With despair, suffering, homelessness, disease, and death knocking at the door, we need hope. You and I are the ones who must teach people today to look with confidence to the promised return of Jesus to save us from this sin-filled world. The truths of the Bible must be visible in our lives so that we might be living examples to testify of what we profess to believe, as light shining in the darkness.

### **CONSIDER**

- Writing down why you have hope in Jesus.
- Looking on YouTube for videos of people who sacrifice to bring hope to others. Then share the videos on your social media accounts.
- Drawing or painting a scene that brings you hope. Share the picture with your class on Sabbath.
- Gathering (GLOW) tracts that talk about hope and passing them out to people in a busy area or throughout your day.
- Singing or playing a song that gives you the hope and encouragement that you need to make it through trials and difficulties.
- Visiting the elderly and asking them about times when they needed hope to make it through challenges.
- Reading stories in the Bible of people who leaned heavily upon hope. Consider Moses, Abraham, Noah, Elijah, Daniel, or Paul, to name a few.

### **CONNECT**

Matthew 24:32–35; 25:1–13.

Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, chap. 40, “God’s People Delivered.”