

Wait for the Lord



SABBATH—MARCH 23

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON: Psalm 27:14; Psalm 131; Psalm 126; Psalm 92; Psalm 5:3; 2 Peter 1:19; Revelation 22:16.

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our hearts will fill
with peace and hope,
even if times are hard.

MEMORY VERSE: “Wait for the LORD’s help. Be strong and brave, and wait for the LORD’s help” (Psalm 27:14, ERV).

WE ARE NOW in the last week of this quarter’s study on the Book of Psalms. We have learned many wonderful Bible truths about our King and Judge. He is the One who made us. He saves us from sin. He forgives us. Our hearts are filled with hope as we wait for Jesus to come back. The final message we will study from the Book of Psalms is the topic of waiting for the Lord.

What does it mean to wait for the Lord? Does waiting mean that we sit around all day doing nothing? Of course not! Waiting for the Lord is something we do. Waiting shows our faith and our trust in God. When we wait for the Lord, our hearts will fill with peace and hope, even if times are hard. That’s why the poet says, “The night may be filled with tears, but in the morning we can sing for joy!” (Psalm 30:5, ERV). And, “Show me your faithful [something we can depend on] love this morning. I trust in you. Show me what I should do. I put my life in your hands!” (Psalm 143:8, ERV). This hope and trust will cause us to work harder to help God save the people around us (Psalm 126:6; Matthew 9:36–38). We will never feel ashamed when we wait for the Lord. That’s because the Lord keeps all His promises (Psalm 37:7–11, 18, 34; Psalm 71:1; Psalm 119:137, 138). So, we can be sure that God will richly reward us for waiting for Him.

WAITING FOR GOD (Psalm 27:14)

Read Psalm 27:14; Psalm 37:7, 9, 34; Psalm 39:7; Psalm 40:1; Psalm 69:6; Galatians 5:5; and Romans 8:18–25. What do these verses ask God’s people to do?

No one really enjoys waiting. Waiting can cause us stress. At times, we all must wait for things. Maybe we must wait in line at the store. Or we must wait to hear news from our doctor about our health. We don’t always like doing that, do we?

What about waiting for God? The Book of Psalms talks about waiting for God. The rest of the Bible talks about it, too. What is the secret to waiting for God? We must not give up hope. Don’t become afraid that God will not keep His promises or be there for us. When we wait for God, we must know that we can trust in Him with our problems. We can be sure He will work things out for our best.

Waiting for the Lord is more than wanting Him to do something for us. Waiting for the Lord is about wanting God Himself. We want the Giver and not only the gifts He promises. Waiting for God is compared to someone in a desert who is very thirsty (Psalm 63:1). The poet waits for God to give him many blessings. But more than wanting the blessings, the poet wants to feel close to God in his heart. A relationship with God is more important to the poet than any other thing he needs or wants in life.

Paul tells us in the Book of Romans that everything in nature waits for God to make the earth new. All nature waits for God to meet with His people at the end of time. Paul writes: “Everything that God made is waiting with excitement for the time when he will show the world [everyone on earth] who his children are. The whole world wants very much for that to happen” (Romans 8:19, ERV).

This promise is wonderful!

While we wait for Jesus to come, the Lord continues to be with His people now. He sends His Holy Spirit to live in their hearts.

Jesus asks us to be His witnesses (Acts 1:4–8). He wants us to tell everyone the good news that He saves them from sin and makes their lives new. He will make the earth new, too. That time is what we, as a church, are waiting for. As Seventh-day Adventist Christians, our name includes the idea of the hope we wait for. We wait, but we know God will reward us for our waiting.



When we wait for God, we must know that we can trust in Him with our problems.

A BABY WITH ITS MOTHER (Psalm 131)

Read Psalm 131. What does this poem teach us about our relationship with God?

God's people live on an earth filled with sin and suffering. The poet who wrote Psalm 131 understands this ugly truth. That is why he is grateful to remember that he is God's child. The poet knows that he must depend on God for everything in life. This thought empties the poet's heart of all pride. The poet confesses that pride is worth nothing. Pride is a lie. Pride causes people to think only about self. A heart filled with pride is blind. A person with pride in his heart can't see that he needs God.

God's children see that they need God (Psalm 123:1, 2). God's children have no pride in their hearts because they understand that God is all-powerful and wonderful. The poet says, "I don't see myself as better than others [people]. I am not thinking about doing great [important] things" (Psalm 131:1, ERV). Only God can do "great things." His works are a mystery. We cannot fully understand them.

In Psalm 131:2, the poet tells us some more about His relationship with God. He compares how he feels with God to a child with its mother, after the baby finishes eating. He says, "Right now I am calm [filled with peace] and quiet, like [the same as] a child after nursing [feeding at its mother's breast], content [happy] in its mother's arms" (Psalm 131:2, ERV). This word picture is powerful. God's love fills the poet with peace, the same as the child in its mother's arms.

The poet feels the same trust in God that the child feels with its mother. This trust comes from faith. When our faith is put to the test, we grow in spiritual strength. We learn during suffering and hard times that we can trust in God. The Lord always keeps His promises.

The poet doesn't end his poem with thoughts about himself. He ends his poem with thoughts about God's people. In the same way, God wants us to think about His church. He wants us to use our experience with Him to help His church grow strong. What does "our experience" mean? God wants us to share with other church members the things we learned about Him. Our stories about the things Jesus does for us can help encourage other church members. Our stories can help church members build a stronger faith.



"Right now I am calm [filled with peace] and quiet, like [the same as] a child after nursing [feeding at its mother's breast], content [happy] in its mother's arms" (Psalm 131:2, ERV).

BRINGING IN THE CROPS (Psalm 126)

What gives strength and hope to God’s people? Read Psalm 126 for the answer. What important rule do we learn about in this poem? How can we follow this important rule in our own lives?

When we think about the Lord’s miracles in the past, we feel hope for the future. When God saved His people in the past, they thought they must be dreaming. The experience was so wonderful! Of course, the experience was the same as a bad dream for Israel’s enemies (Isaiah 29:7, 8). In Psalm 126, do you see that the people who praise the Lord for saving Israel in the past (Psalm 126:1) are the ones who are prisoners in a strange land?

Remembering the past gives God’s people hope in hard times. In Psalm 126:4, the people pray, “So, Lord, bring back the good times, like [the same as] a desert stream filled again with flowing water” (Psalm 126:4, ERV). Next, the poet uses a word picture about planting seeds in a sad time and collecting crops in a happy time (Psalm 126:5, 6). This word picture shows us a powerful promise that God will lead His people from hard times to a happy future.

Bible writers often used the harvest as a word picture to teach the Israelites important Bible truth. The people worked hard planting seeds and plowing their fields, orchards, and grape gardens. They took good care of their crops, their fruit trees, and vines. At the end of the growing time, the people enjoyed a harvest of plenty. In the same way, God’s people work hard for His kingdom now. Their sufferings and hard times will be rewarded soon. God will give them the crown of life at the end of time. Then their hearts will be filled with joy.

The Second Coming is the same as a big harvest. After that time, Jesus will start His everlasting kingdom on the earth (Amos 9:13–15; Matthew 9:37). But we must wait until then. Just as we must wait for crops to grow, we must wait to see all the wonderful things that will happen because of the work we do now for God.

Think about times when you saw the Lord working in your life or in the lives of other people. How can these experiences give you hope during hard times?



In Psalm 126:4, the people pray, “So, Lord, bring back the good times, like [the same as] a desert stream filled again with flowing water” (Psalm 126:4, ERV).

GOD'S SABBATH REST (Psalm 92)

Read Psalm 92. Psalm 92 is a song for the Sabbath day. In Bible times, God's people sang this song on the Sabbath. What two things about the Sabbath does this song talk about?

Psalm 92 praises God for everything He made (Psalm 92:4, 5). The poem also praises God because He wins the fight against His enemies and is a fair Judge (Psalm 92:7–15). So, we see that Psalm 92 praises God for His past works and praises Him for the peace He will bring in the future.

The people can enjoy Sabbath rest because the Lord is the Most High God (Psalm 92:1). At the same time, the Lord comes down to save those who cry to Him for help. Everything the Lord made should fill our hearts with love for Him. We should worship Him because He made us and saves us.

In Psalm 92:10, the poet says, "You have poured fine [expensive] oils on me" (ICB). The expensive oils are a word picture that shows the poet's love for God. The poet promises to serve God with His whole heart. In Old Testament times, God's prophets or messengers poured a special oil on the heads of kings and priests or spiritual leaders. The oil showed that these people chose to serve the Lord (Exodus 40:15; 1 Samuel 10:1). The poet uses this word picture to show us that he wishes to give himself as a living offering or gift to the Lord. The oil shows us that the poet wants to give his whole life to God (Romans 12:1).

We shouldn't be surprised to find thoughts about giving one's whole life to God in a poem that is about the Sabbath. The Sabbath is the sign that God makes His people holy (Exodus 31:13). The Sabbath is a sign of God's everlasting promise with His people (Ezekiel 20:20). The Sabbath rest is important to God's people because it helps them to trust in the Lord and wait for Him to keep His promise (Hebrews 4:1–10).

Read Psalm 92 again. What wonderful hope does this poem offer us?



In Psalm 92:10, the poet says, "You have poured fine [expensive] oils on me" (ICB).

JOY COMES IN THE MORNING (Psalm 5:3)

Read Psalm 5:3; Psalm 30:5; Psalm 49:14; Psalm 59:16; Psalm 92:2; Psalm 119:147; 2 Peter 1:19; and Revelation 22:16. In these poems, what time of day is used as a word picture for God’s plan to save us?

In the Book of Psalms, morning is the time when the people wait for God to come and save them. Morning is also a word picture for God’s favor and blessing. Morning ends the long night. Night is a word picture for trouble and sadness (Psalm 130:5, 6). In Psalm 143, when God saves His people, He will reverse the way things are. He will end sin and death (Psalm 143:3). He will change the dark into the light of a new morning (Psalm 143:7–10).

Read Mark 16:1–8. What do these verses from Mark say happened in the morning? Why is that information important to us?

Jesus woke up from the dead on the morning of the third day after He was nailed to the cross. When Jesus woke up from the dead, He made a way for the human family to be saved in His name. When Jesus woke up from the dead, His followers fully understood the promise in Psalm 30:5: “The night may be filled with tears, but in the morning we can sing for joy!” (Psalm 30:5, ERV). God’s favor and love are the only things that change our tears into joy (Psalm 30:5, 7).

Jesus is named the bright Morning Star (Revelation 22:16). The morning star announces the start of a new day. We wait for Jesus, the Morning Star, to start His kingdom. At that time, there will be no more night, evil, or death (Revelation 21:1–8, 25). More than anything, we wait for this time with all our hearts. For sure, the wait is worth it!

“Jesus stepped out of Joseph’s grave. He announced, ‘I am the One who wakes up from the dead. I am Life.’ Only God can say these words. Everyone who lives does so because of God. We depend on God for life. From the mightiest angel to the little child, all of us must get our life from God. Jesus is One with God. Only He can say, ‘I can give up My life. I have the strength to come back to life again.’ As God, Jesus had the strength to wake up from the grave.”—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, page 785, adapted.



When Jesus woke up from the dead, His followers fully understood the promise in Psalm 30:5: “The night may be filled with tears, but in the morning we can sing for joy!” (Psalm 30:5, ERV).

ADDITIONAL THOUGHT: Read Ellen G. White, “Growing Up Into Christ,” pages 67–75, in *Steps to Christ*.

The Book of Psalms asks us to wait for the Lord (Psalm 37:7). When waiting is hard to do, we should remember Jesus’ followers on the day Jesus went back to heaven (Acts 1:4–11). Jesus was lifted into the sky in front of their eyes. They were left behind on earth to wait for Him to come back at some day in the future. Jesus told His followers to wait for the Father’s promise to send them the Holy Spirit. The followers went back to Jerusalem and did everything Jesus told them to do. They waited for the gift of the Holy Spirit. Then they preached the good news in a powerful way to the people in Jerusalem.

Our Lord’s commandment to wait on Him is possible only if we allow Him to do His work in us. The Lord sends His Spirit to live in our hearts. The Spirit helps us have a personal relationship with God. A close, personal relationship with God will give us the strength to wait for Jesus. “When Jesus lives in our hearts, He will give us His strength. ‘He helps you want to do what pleases him, and he gives you the power to do it.’ Philippians 2:13 [ERV]. Then we shall work the way that Jesus worked. We shall have His same spirit. We shall love Him and live in Him. Then ‘we will grow to be like [the same as] Christ [Jesus] in every way. He is the head [the spiritual leader of the church].’ Ephesians 4:15 [ERV].”—Ellen G. White, *Steps to Christ*, page 75, adapted.

As we continue to wait for the Lord, we will find peace in the Book of Psalms. We meet God every day in its prayers and songs.



A close, personal relationship with God will give us the strength to wait for Jesus.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- 1 Why is waiting an important part of our spiritual life? Talk about some men and women in the Bible who waited. How did waiting make their faith strong? Hint: read Romans 4:19–22 and Hebrews 11.
- 2 What things are we waiting for? What has God promised us? What hope do we find in Psalm 37:34–40 that God will give us these things?
- 3 Read Ecclesiastes 9:5. What does this verse tell us about the dead? How much longer must those people sleeping in Jesus wait in the grave? Why is their wait almost done? What hope do we get from this answer?

THE WALDENSES IN POLAND

The police kept bothering Ryszard Jankowski. Every time Ryszard set up a book stand to sell books, the police showed up. Ryszard sold Ellen White's *The Great Controversy* and other religious books in Poland. The police ordered Ryszard to remove the book stand and all the books.

Then the Polish Seventh-day Adventist printing press printed a special copy of the *Signs of the Times* magazine. Church leaders sent copies to members of the Polish government. One government leader liked the magazine very much. So, he wrote a letter to government leaders in different towns in Poland and asked them to help send out the magazine to people. Ryszard took the letter and a copy of the magazine to the mayor of the vacation town where he had trouble with the police in the past. The mayor liked the magazine very much. The mayor knew the government leader who wrote the letter about the magazine.

The mayor told Ryszard, "I know this man. He was my professor at the university. Of course, you may sell this magazine to people in this town."

Ryszard asked, "May I get your permission in writing?"

The mayor wrote a letter and gave it to Ryszard.

Ryszard took the letter with him when he set up his book stand on the street. Ryszard put the *Signs of the Times* magazine on the stand together with *The Great Controversy* and other books. Soon, the police came. A policeman told Ryszard, "You can't sell your books in our city."

Ryszard said, "Look, I have a letter from the mayor."

The policemen read the letter carefully. Then they saluted Ryszard. One policeman told Ryszard, "You can stay."

But that wasn't the end of the story. Shortly after, a grandmother stopped by the book stand. Not long ago, someone gave her *The Great Controversy*. The grandmother liked the book very much. She liked the stories about the Waldenses. The Waldenses were a group of people who lived in Europe during the Middle Ages. They shared their faith with other people, even when sharing Bible truth put their lives at risk. The grandmother told Ryszard that her grandson wanted to be like the Waldensian young people. Her grandson understood that he needed to be loyal to God and the Bible.

The grandmother said, "My grandson saw your stand and your book *The Great Controversy*. He said to me, 'Grandma, the Waldensians are in our town.'"

So, the grandmother went to meet Ryszard and to tell him about her grandson. Later, the grandmother joined the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

INSIDE Story

by ANDREW MCCHESENEY



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