

Learning in Heaven Forever



SABBATH—DECEMBER 19

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON: John 6:54; Revelation 21:4; 1 Corinthians 13:12; 2 Corinthians 4:17, 18; Zechariah 13:6.

MEMORY VERSE: “But as it is written in the Scriptures [Bible]: ‘No one has ever seen this. No one has ever heard about it. No one has ever imagined [made a picture in his or her mind] what God has prepared for those who love him.’ Isaiah 64:4” (1 Corinthians 2:9, ICB).



All our education should help us get ready for heaven.

A POET WAS AFRAID to die. He asked someone, “How can people live without knowing for sure what happens when they die?” In a poem, the poet wrote about getting ready for life after death. But how can you do that if you do not know what happens when you die?

The Bible tells us the answer. It talks about heaven, the new earth, and the learning and living we will do there forever. The time to get ready for heaven is in this life now. All our education should help us get ready for heaven.

Any school can give you a lot of good information and knowledge. But what good does any of that do you to get all that knowledge and lose everlasting life? This week we are going to look at what the Bible tells us about the best school ever. This is a school that we will go to forever. As students in this school, we will be learning and growing forever and ever. In the school of heaven, we will learn things that we never knew before. We will enjoy learning these things so much!

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN WE DIE (John 6:54)

In the 1600s a French writer named Blaise Pascal wrote about what it meant to be human. Pascal understood that no matter how long a person lived, or how good they were, sooner or later he or she will die.

Also, Pascal believed that whatever came after death was going to be a lot longer than the short time of life here on earth. So, for Pascal, the most important thing someone should do is learn what waits for us after we die. Pascal was surprised to see people get upset about everyday things: (1) losing a job or (2) getting into a fight with someone who insulted them. But these people did not care about what will happen after they die.

Pascal helps us to see something important about humans. The Bible spends a lot of time talking about what waits for people who are saved in Jesus. It shows us God’s promise of what will wait for them in the future.

Read John 6:54; John 3:16; 1 John 5:13; 1 Timothy 1:16; John 4:14; John 6:40; Jude 1:21; and Titus 3:7.

The Cross helps us to understand everlasting life. God, the One who made the earth, came to this earth as a human baby. He made everything (Hebrews 1:2). He gives us life. Because of Him “ ‘we live and move and keep on living’ ” (Acts 17:28, NLV). God came in a human body and that body died . . . and for what? So that we will just rot?

The Bible promises us a better end than that. That is why the New Testament is filled with promises about everlasting life.

Pascal was right. Our time here is so limited. God promises us many things in our future life with Him. Let us get ready now for our new life with God.

What do you say to someone who does not care about what happens after he or she dies? How can you help that person see that thinking is silly?



The Bible talks about what waits for people who are saved in Jesus.

A NEW LIFE (Revelation 21:4)

“He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death, sadness [being sad], crying, or pain. All the old ways are gone” (Revelation 21:4, ERV). What does this verse tell us about our new life in heaven? What will happen to death, sorrow, and pain? How different from this old life will our new life be?

A Christian talked to a friend about the promise of everlasting life in Jesus Christ. The friend answered, “Everlasting life? What an awful thought! Our 70–80 years here are bad enough. Who wants to continue this life forever? That will be hell.”

This person did not understand the promise of everlasting life. It is not the same life we have today continuing forever. Who wants that? As Revelation 21:4 shows us, the old things end. All things become new.

What do the verses below tell us about the new life that is coming?

2 Peter 3:10–13 _____

Revelation 21:1–6 _____

The important questions for each and every one of us are: How do we start this new life? How can we be sure we will be part of it? What things in our life can stop us from joining in this new life God promised us in Jesus?



God “will wipe away every tear from their eyes.”

THEN WE WILL KNOW (1 Corinthians 13:12)

“Heaven is school. In this school, we will study everything that God made. That includes all the stars and planets. This school has a Teacher. It is God. God set up part of this school in Eden. When God is done saving us, then He will again start the school in Eden to educate humans again.”—Ellen G. White, *Education*, page 301, adapted.

If you are the same as most people, you have a lot of questions. Questions about sin, suffering, sickness, death, and about why things happened the way they did. We have questions about nature and all its mysteries. Yes, science has done a lot to help us to understand more about life on this earth. But there is so much that we do not know now.

Nature shows us that life is much bigger and deeper than our minds can now understand. From the stars in the sky above our heads to the smallest insects, we see that there is so much more to study. But we have so little time here on this earth to study these things for ourselves.

But in heaven, things will be different. We will have forever to study all the secrets of nature. For sure, we will learn the answers to a lot of mysteries.

What do the verses below tell us about what we will learn when sin, suffering, and death end?

1 Corinthians 13:12 _____

1 Corinthians 4:5 _____

God promises us that He will help us to understand things that we cannot understand now. Then we will praise God! This is a wonderful promise! For now, we must hold on to our faith until the end. We must trust in God’s promises and live what we know. The good news is each of us can say that “Christ [Jesus] is the one who gives me the strength I need to do whatever I must do” (Philippians 4:13, ERV).



In heaven we will have forever to study all the secrets of nature.

THE SCHOOL IN THE NEXT LIFE (2 Corinthians 4:17, 18)

“We have small troubles for a while now, but these troubles are helping us gain an eternal [everlasting] glory. That eternal glory is much greater than our troubles. So we think about what we cannot see, not what we see. What we see lasts [continues] only a short time, and what we cannot see will last forever” (2 Corinthians 4:17, 18, ERV). What hope do these verses give us? What do you think are some of these everlasting things that we wait for and that Jesus promises us? (Also read Revelation 21:1, 2; Revelation 2:7; Revelation 7:14–17.)

God offers us many promises in Jesus. These promises are wonderful and real. We have many good reasons for believing in them too. At the same time, the Bible gives us only hints of what God has planned for us. But we can be sure of one thing: life with God is going to be beautiful. Think how wonderful life will be with no sin!

Also, think about all our pain and suffering, all the sin and the bad things that happen to us because of sin. Jesus came to end all that. Then He will make the earth new again. The earth will be the way God planned it to be before sin. Really, it will be better. We always will see the scars on Jesus’ hands and feet. These scars help us to remember how much it cost God to save us.

“At that time, we shall see what we cannot see now. Our eyes shall see the beauty of the earth. We will be able to see with our own eyes the beauty that we can see now only with a microscope. Then we will look with our own eyes at the stars and planets that we can see now only with a telescope. Sin and sickness will be removed from the earth. The whole earth shall be seen in ‘the beauty of the Lord our God.’ There the student of science may look at all God has made and see nothing of evil and death. The student may listen to the music of nature’s voices. He will not hear any note of crying or sorrow. The student may see God’s name written by God’s own hand on everything He made. Not one sign of sickness will be seen in earth, sea, or sky.”—Ellen G. White, *Education*, page 303, adapted.

Try to make a picture in your mind of living forever in a new earth. What things are you most excited about in that life? What do you want to do and see the most?



We will always be able to look at the scars on Jesus’ hands and feet. These scars show us how much it cost God to save us.

THE MIGHTY TEACHER (Zechariah 13:6)

As we saw this whole quarter, one important part of Jesus' work on earth was teaching. From the start of His work for God on earth, Jesus never stopped teaching His followers Bible truths about Himself, the Father, being saved, and the hope that waits for us in heaven (read Matthew 5:2; Mark 4:2; Luke 19:47; and John 6:59).

Just look at any of the Gospels. The Gospels are the first four books in the New Testament: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Any Gospel will show you that Jesus is always teaching. Now, Jesus continues to teach us from the Bible. On the new earth, Jesus will continue teaching us too. But think about how different learning will be when we can live without the pain of sin and the limits it puts on us.

“ ‘But other people will say, “Then what are these wounds in your hands?” He will say, “I was beaten in the house of my friends” ’ ” (Zechariah 13:6, ERV). What do you think this verse is talking about?

“The years of our everlasting life will show us more beautiful knowledge about God and Jesus. Knowledge grows fuller with time. Love, respect for God, and happiness will also grow deeper with time. The more men learn about God, the more they will love Him. Jesus shows us the truth about God's plan to save sinners. Jesus also shows us the wonderful things God did in the war between good and evil. Then the hearts of the saved will be filled with more love for God. With joy, they will touch their gold harps. Many millions of voices will join in singing praise to God. . . .

“The worldwide war between God and Satan is done. Sin and sinners are gone. All heaven is clean. Peace and harmony fill everything God made. Life, light, and joy flow everywhere from the One who made everything. That includes the smallest atom to the biggest planet. All things say God is love.”—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, page 678, adapted.

We will learn many exciting things in heaven. But nothing we learn will excite us more than Jesus' death for us on the cross. Think about how important this topic must be if we will study it forever. How can you learn now to understand better what Jesus did for us on the cross?



“With joy, [the saved] will touch their gold harps.”

ADDITIONAL THOUGHT: Read Ellen G. White, “The School of the Hereafter,” pages 301–309 in *Education*; “The Controversy Ended,” pages 662–678, in *The Great Controversy*.

“We fear the lion now. But on the New Earth, the lion will lie down with the lamb. There will be only peace and harmony in the New Earth. The trees of the New Earth will be straight and tall. There will be nothing ugly about them. . . .

“We should let everything on this earth help us remember our home in heaven. In heaven there will be the crystal river and green fields. There will be the bright city and the singers wearing white clothes. Heaven will be a place of beauty. No artist can make a picture of it. No person can write about it in words. So, make a picture of heaven in your mind. Heaven is the home of the saved. Remember, that the real heaven will be more beautiful and bright than any picture you can make in your mind.”—Ellen G. White, *Heaven*, pages 133, 134, adapted.

“Some people are afraid of the teaching that heaven is a real place. So, this has led many people to teach that heaven is only a word picture. They do not look at heaven as our home. Jesus told His followers that He went to heaven to make rooms for them in His Father’s house. People who accept Bible truth will know something about our home in heaven. . . . Human words cannot show us the beauty of heaven. It will be known only to the ones who see it. No human mind can fully understand heaven and its glory.”—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, pages 674, 675, adapted.



“We fear the lion now. But on the New Earth, the lion will lie down with the lamb.”

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- ① Think more about Pascal’s idea that many people do not care about everlasting life. Why do you think some people are that way? Why is this thinking wrong?
- ② Why is the hope of everlasting life so important to our faith? Without that hope, why do we really have nothing to live for?
- ③ Think about all the mysteries on this earth in the rocks, plants, and stars. Even the most simple life on this earth is not so simple. Each new discovery shows us more questions that need answering. How does this help us understand how much we will be learning in our life in heaven and on the new earth?

NO QUIET WORK ON SABBATH

My crew gets everything ready to build the new roof. The roof will go on top of the Essential Life Center that we build in Battambang. Battambang is the second largest city in Cambodia. I call a company in Phnom Penh, the capital of Cambodia. I ask the manager of the company to send enough workers to help build the roof. I explain that my crew does not work on Saturdays. The manager tells me that the roof will be finished before that time.

But after the workers arrive, I can see right away that they will not finish before Sabbath. I email the company's manager. I tell him to remember our agreement about not working on Sabbath.

On Wednesday, I am in my office talking with one of my own workers, Koy Sopaon. My phone rings. It is the company manager I emailed. "I am calling about your email," he says. "We need Saturday to finish the job. If the guys cannot work on Saturday, we will have to pay them extra money to wait until Monday."

"We talked about this earlier," I say. "We cannot work on Saturday."

"We will be quiet," the manager promises. "We will not make any noise. We do not need to use hammers or other noisy tools on Saturday. No one will ever know we are on the roof."

"May I explain why we do not work on Saturday?" I ask.

The manager agrees to listen to my reasons.

"The Christian Bible tells us that God made this earth in six days," I say. "On the seventh day, God does three things: (1) He stops His work. (2) He rests. (3) And He makes the day holy. God does that to help us remember He is the One who made us. So, He asks us not to do any work. That includes anyone who works for us. God wants them to stop working, too, every seventh day. This way, we can remember and worship Him."

"OK," the manager says. "We will rest on Saturday."

Sopaon, my worker, overhears everything I say to the manager. When I get off the phone, he asks, "So, why does my church worship on Sunday, Boss?"

I invite Sopaon to sit down. Then I give him a history lesson on how the Sabbath was changed from Saturday to Sunday. Later, at lunch break, I see Sopaon studying the Bible. He tells me that he is surprised to learn that the Bible teaches that the seventh day is Sabbath.

On Friday, I tell Sopaon, "You have seen new truth about God's day in His Holy Bible. Do you want to follow Him in His truth and keep Sabbath holy?"

"Yes, I do!" Sopaon says.

Sopaon comes to the half-built center that Sabbath. Nobody works on the roof that day. Today, Sopaon is a deacon, or church leader, and Sabbath School class teacher at the finished church.

INSIDE
Story
by GARY ROGERS



I see Sopaon studying the Bible. He tells me that he is surprised to learn that the Bible teaches that the seventh day is Sabbath.



