

In the Book of Psalms: Part 1



SABBATH—MAY 17

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON: Hebrews 9:11–15; Psalm 15; Psalm 24; Exodus 33:18–23; Psalm 5; Revelation 14:1–12; Psalm 51:7-15.

MEMORY VERSE: “Then I looked, and there before me was the Lamb, who was standing on Mount Zion. There were 144,000 people with him. They all had his name and his Father’s name written on their foreheads [front part of the face above the eyes]” (Revelation 14:1, ERV).

AS SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS, we search the stories of the Old Testament to find the same symbols that also are used in the book of Revelation. These stories help us understand better the symbols in the book of Revelation. These stories aren’t the only parts of the Bible that contain the symbols.

The book of Psalms also contains the symbols we read about in the book of Revelation. The book of Psalms is a collection of holy poems and songs. These poems and songs talk about many human experiences. These experiences include suffering and feeling sad about sin to feeling joy because of God’s promises of forgiveness and mercy.

For sure, when we carefully read the book of Psalms, we will understand better the book of Revelation. We will understand Revelation 14, which talks about the last work of God’s end-time church. God gave His end-time church the same job He gave to Israel of old: we must share God’s message of mercy with everyone on earth.

The book of Psalms can give us new ways to understand our work in the last days of earth’s history.



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OUR HIGH PRIEST OR TOP SPIRITUAL LEADER (Hebrews 9:11–15)

God told Moses to build Him a holy tent where He could live among His people. Moses wasn't allowed to follow just any design he liked. God gave Moses a special plan to follow: " 'Be sure to make everything just like [the same as] the pattern I showed you on the mountain' " (Exodus 25:40, NIV). The book of Hebrews tells us that Moses copied the pattern of the temple in heaven.

Read Hebrews 9:11–15 about Jesus as our High Priest in heaven's temple. What do these verses teach us about what Jesus does for us there right now?

The Old Testament symbols for offerings and worship showed the future work that Jesus would do. Everything in the holy tent from the furniture and the offerings to the priests or holy leaders tells us about Jesus.

The book of Revelation contains a lot of these symbols. In Revelation chapter 1, we read about the lampstands. In chapter 11, we read about the ark of God's promise. If we have an understanding of the Old Testament holy tent, then we will better understand John's dreams in the book of Revelation. As Paul says, the experiences of Israel during Old Testament times "happened to show us something. They were written to teach us that the end of the world is near" (1 Corinthians 10:11, NIV).

We can learn much when we study about the temple during Old Testament times. In the book of Psalms, we learn some important information that helps us understand more about the temple. We learn about how God's people felt about the temple and what the coming Savior would do for them. These things help us see Jesus. When we understand the lessons that God was teaching us in the temple, we can learn important lessons for ourselves about our own experiences with God.

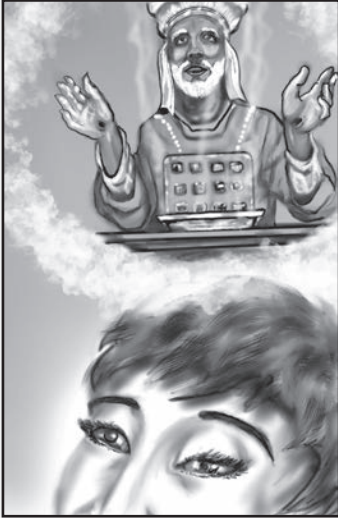
Read Psalm 122. We can't go to God's house as the Israelites in Old Testament times did. But we can think about everything the Lord does for us. Notice the ideas about peace, safety, and praise. How does Psalm 122 give us hope about what the Lord does for us?



If we have an understanding of the Old Testament holy tent, then we will better understand John's dreams in the book of Revelation.

MOUNT ZION (Psalms 15 and 24)

In Revelation 14, God's people stand on Mount Zion. A mount is a very high hill. The first Mount Zion was west of the old city of Jerusalem. The Israelites thought God lived among them on Mount Zion. Later, the Jewish temple was built on Mount Moriah. So, the Jews thought that the temple on Mount Moriah was part of Mount Zion, too.



Because the Lamb of God stands on Mount Zion, in God's holy temple, we also can live there with Him in faith.

Read Psalms 15 and 24, where David asks an important question: “Who can live on your holy mountain?” (Psalm 15:1, ERV; also read Psalm 24:3). Compare David’s answer in these psalms with John’s picture of the people standing on Zion in Revelation 14:1–5. What things are the same in both of David’s songs and in this chapter that John wrote? How do we join this group? Do you see that the Father’s name is written in the front part of people’s faces above their eyes (Revelation 14:1)? What does that mean?

The people in David’s poems are allowed to live with God. As sinners, we are far from being this perfect. Who can say that we always do what is fair and right? Who has always told the truth and never lied (Psalm 15:2)? If we say that we never sinned, we lie (1 John 1:8).

Jesus, the Lamb, gives us the strength to stand on Zion. David doesn’t talk about the Lamb in his song. But John writes about the Lamb in Revelation 14. Revelation 14 is the answer to David’s question. Because the Lamb of God stands on Mount Zion, in God’s holy temple, we also can live there with Him in faith. We can enter with hope and courage: “Brothers and sisters, because of the blood of Jesus we can now confidently [with courage] go into the holy place. Jesus has opened a new and living way for us to go through the curtain. (The curtain is [the same as] his own body.)” (Hebrews 10:19, 20, GW). Without Jesus’ blood, what hope do we have? No hope at all!

Think about all the Bible promises God gave us to win the fight against sin. God promises us that we will also beat sin. Why do we need Jesus and His perfect life as our substitute?

LAW IN OUR HEARTS (Exodus 33:18–23)

A small group stands on Mount Zion. They each have a name written in the front part of their faces above their eyes. Whose name? The name of the Father and the Lamb. Is this name two different names? Of course not! Jesus and the Father are One, right? A name in the Bible means more than a label that people use for each other. A name shows what is in a person's heart. To this day, many people say that someone has a "good name" when other people think this person is a good man or woman.

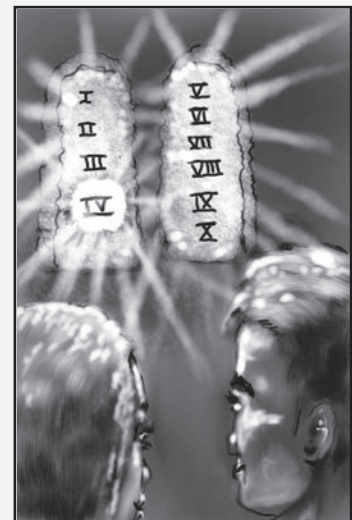
Read Exodus 33:18–23; Exodus 34:1–7; and Psalm 119:55. When Moses asked to see God's glory, what did God promise to show him? What happened after God announced His name to Moses (Exodus 34:5)?

Some people think that God's glory is a bright shining light that no one can come near. This picture is correct. At the same time, God's glory is more than a bright light. God's glory also includes His love and mercy. The same is true with God's name.

When the Bible talks about a small group of people with God's name written in the front part of the faces above their eyes, it is not talking about real letters written on their skin! What the Bible really means is that God's love, forgiveness, and mercy are written in your mind, your heart, and in your life. We show that God's name is in our lives when we show His love to other people. God saved you, and you love Him for who He is and what He did for you.

When God announces His love and mercy to Moses, He also gives Moses another copy of the Ten Commandments. The Ten Commandments show us the love that is in the Father's heart. The people who have God's name in Revelation 14 obey the commandments of God. Now notice these words written in the book of Hebrews: " 'This is the New Way of Worship that I will give them. When that day comes, says the Lord, I will put My Laws in their hearts. And I will write them in their minds.' Then He says, 'I will not remember their sins and wrong-doings anymore' " (Hebrews 10:16, 17, NLV).

God's name shows everyone who He is. His law also shows who He is. The members of the group who stand on God's holy hill in the end times are filled with love for God. Their obedience to God's law shows their love for Him.



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PSALM 5 (Psalm 5 and Revelation 14:1–12)



**When God writes His name
in your heart,
you can't stay silent.**

Read Psalm 5. In this poem, David compares the lost with the saved. Compare Psalm 5 with Revelation 14:1–12. What things do you find the same in both sets of verses? How does your answer help you understand what it means to be part of God's end-time church?

David says that God doesn't "live with those [people] who do evil" (Psalm 5:4, ICB). The reason God told His people to build Him a holy tent in Old Testament times was so He could live with them. The same thing will happen in God's kingdom (read Revelation 21:3). People who come near to God's throne must be saved.

David talks about worship in Psalm 5:7. Worship is the most important topic in the worldwide war between God and Satan. Revelation 13 talks about "worship" five times. The three angels' messages invite everyone on earth to worship the God who made everything. David tells us that he fears, or honors and obeys, God. The first angel's message tells everyone on earth to " 'fear [honor] God and give him praise. The time has come for God to judge all people. Worship God. He made the heavens, the earth, the sea, and the springs of water [places where water comes out of the earth]' " (Revelation 14:7, ERV).

Also, do you see that the saved in Revelation 14 don't tell any lies (Revelation 14:5)? They tell the truth. Their words and behavior show God's love and mercy. Evil people, on the other hand, don't tell the truth (Psalm 5:9).

John shows us an amazing scene in this part of Revelation (chapter 14). God saved sinners from death. Now they stand with God. These sinners didn't earn this favor from God. God gave them this gift because the Lamb of God, Jesus, stands there with them. God forgives them and saves them. They no longer must suffer for their own guilt (compare with Psalm 5:10). The Lamb of God removes their guilt. He accepted their punishment and died in their place (compare with Isaiah 53:12 and 2 Corinthians 5:21).

When God writes His name in your heart, you can't stay silent. God's people give one final offer of mercy with a loud cry (Revelation 14:7). "But let those who trust in you be happy forever. Protect and strengthen [make strong] those [people] who love your name" (Psalm 5:11, ERV).

TEACH SINNERS YOUR WAY (Psalm 51:7–15)

After the Lord appeared to Isaiah in Isaiah 6:1–8, Isaiah learned that his sins were removed. Then Isaiah answered God’s invitation to serve Him. Isaiah said, “ ‘Here I am. Send me!’ ” (Isaiah 6:8, ERV). For sure, Isaiah knew what all his faults were. But as soon as Isaiah knew that God accepted him, he was ready to work for the Lord.

It’s the same with us, too, right? How can we announce the good news about God’s saving mercy to other people if we don’t have it ourselves? We can have this gift if we have faith in Jesus and everything He does for us.

Read Psalm 51:7–15. What does David promise to do after God forgives his sin?

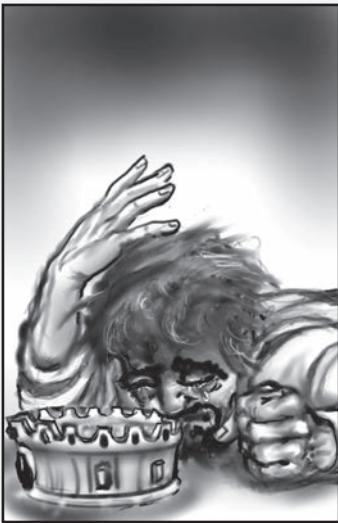
When God invites us to come into His shining light, He will soon send us back out to save other people. God asks the people He saves to serve Him. He sends them as His messengers to save other sinners. Soon, in our near future, God’s people will give His final message in a powerful way. Revelation 18:1 tells us that God’s final invitation to a lost planet will fill the whole earth with Bible truth.

“When a person comes to Jesus, he wants to tell other people that Jesus is His precious friend. The saved person can’t hide the truth about Jesus in his heart. We must put on Jesus’ holy life the same as clothes. Then Jesus will fill us with the joy of His Spirit. We won’t stay silent about Jesus. If we know that the Lord is good, we will have something to tell other people. We will be much the same as Philip when he found the Savior. We will invite other people to come to Him.”—Ellen G. White, *Steps to Christ*, page 78, adapted.

In Revelation 14, the three angels’ messages are connected to the Good News that continues forever (Revelation 14:6). So, the first message that God’s end-time people will announce is the Good News that Jesus saves sinners. Then God’s people will tell sinners to worship Him and give the warnings about Babylon and the beast power. That’s because the three angels’ warnings and messages don’t mean anything without the hope and promise that we have in Jesus. Without the Good News about Jesus, we don’t have anything of worth to say to other people.



God’s people will tell sinners to worship Him and give the warnings about Babylon and the beast power.



David's life record shows that sin brings shame and suffering. But God's love and mercy can save anyone.

ADDITIONAL THOUGHT: “David’s poems and songs share many human experiences: from sorrow and guilt to faith and love for God. David’s life record shows that sin brings shame and suffering. But God’s love and mercy can save anyone. Faith will cause people who are sorry for their sins to become the children of God. . . .

“ ‘You said, “I made an agreement with my chosen king. I made this promise to my servant David:” . . .

I will always love and support him.

I will always make him strong.

I will put him in charge of the sea.

He will control the rivers.

He will say to me, “You are my father.

You are my God, my Rock, my Savior.”

And I will make him my firstborn son.

He will be the great king on earth.

My love will protect him forever.

My agreement with him will never end.’ Psalm 89:3–28 [ERV].”—Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pages 754, 755, adapted.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- ① David made many mistakes. But God used him to communicate to us the truth about His saving mercy. How does David show us Jesus’ future work? Why can we hope only in one Person, Jesus?
- ② Which of the songs or poems in the book of Psalms helped you in the past? How did they help you understand better an experience you went through?
- ③ Why does the book of Psalms talk so much about God’s temple? What can we learn from David’s love for God’s temple? How can David’s love for the temple help us feel more thankful for Jesus and everything He is doing for us right now in heaven (read Romans 8:34)? Why do God’s people today need Jesus’ help in heaven?
- ④ Read again the Ellen G. White quote above. How did God’s saving mercy help you to feel sorry for your sins? How did you become God’s child?

EX-ADVENTIST BOYFRIEND: PART 4

Diana started to think about God again after the peaceful voice stopped her from killing herself. That Sunday, Diana took her three children to a small church in Santa Fe, New Mexico. They sat in the pew until the church musicians started to play. Diana didn't like the music. It made her remember a bad part of her life. Diana walked out of the church with her children.

Diana's life went from bad to worse. Thieves broke into her apartment and stole what little she owned. Soon, Diana was going to have another baby. Her mean boyfriend was the father. When he learned about the baby, he said, "I'll give you money to get rid of it before its born." At night, when the children were asleep, Diana sat in the dark in her living room. She was filled with shame and self-hatred. She cried out to God, "Is this what You saved me for?" Her anger turned to tears. She prayed, "Jesus. I need You." In that instant, she felt energy fill her. The room was black, but now it seemed filled with light. Diana felt as if God was giving her a hug from heaven. Joy, peace, and love filled her. After that, Diana fell into a deep, peaceful sleep.

A few months later, she met a strange and interesting person. Loren Fish was a Seventh-day Adventist. His father was a pastor and a church planter. But during Loren's first year of college, he left God. He started drinking and dropped out of school. He met Diana at a dance club in Santa Fe, New Mexico, and asked her for a ride home. After that, Loren wouldn't leave her alone. He found out where she worked and visited her there. Diana wasn't interested in dating anyone. She hadn't left the bad relationship she was in. Also, Loren was 4½ years younger than she was. Diana didn't want Loren to know that her life was a mess. She didn't want to get hurt again. So, she pushed him away. Loren left Santa Fe and went to live near Chicago.

Then, Diana's boyfriend cut her car tires and attacked her in the parking lot of the newspaper company where they both worked. That same night, Loren called Diana on the telephone. Diana was happy to hear from Loren. She remembered feeling safe with him. She told him, "You can come visit me any time you want." Loren arrived that weekend, and he never left.

This story offers us a look into how God worked a miracle in the life of Diana Fish. Diana is the growth manager for the Holbrook Seventh-day Adventist Indian School, in the United States, which got the 13th Sabbath Offering in 2021. This quarter's 13th Sabbath Offering on June 28 will help support our sharing the Good News about Jesus worldwide. Read more about Diana next week.

INSIDE Story

by ANDREW MCCHESENEY



Diana didn't like the music. It made her remember a bad part of her life. Diana walked out of the church with her children.