

In the Book of Psalms: Part 2



SABBATH—MAY 24

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON: Psalm 46; Jeremiah 4:23–26; Psalm 47:1–4; Psalm 75; Psalm 67; Revelation 14:6–12.

MEMORY VERSE: “May the people praise You, O God. May all the people praise You. May the nations [people groups] be glad and sing for joy. For You will be fair when You judge the people and rule [control] the nations [people groups] of [on] the earth” (Psalm 67:3, 4, NLV).



The book of Psalms tells us to go to God's temple for answers.

WHEN WE THINK ABOUT THE END TIMES, we often think about the beasts or wild animals and the symbols in the book of Revelation. Of course, these things are important. That's why God included them in the Bible for us to understand (read Revelation 1:3).

At the same time, Bible truth about the end times includes so much more: sin and suffering, God's work as Judge, the fight between good and evil, the need to be fair, attacks against God's people, and more.

The book of Psalms also talks about these topics. In the book of Psalms, we read about Israel getting ready for war against evil armies. We read about people who try to understand why God doesn't stop evil from happening. For sure, we all have asked this question. The book of Psalms tells us to go to God's temple for answers. Many of the poets who wrote the book of Psalms talk about God as the One who made everything. We care about all these topics today, too. That is why we will continue to study the book of Psalms to learn more about these important Bible truths.

GOD ALWAYS HELPS IN TIMES OF TROUBLE (Psalm 46)

Read Psalm 46. What message of hope does this psalm give us now and for the future during the end times?

Psalm 46 talks about a topic we read about in the book of Hebrews: the idea of something better. Jesus is a better high priest than the top religious leader on earth. Jesus' death is better than all the animal offerings. The temple in heaven is better than the temple on earth.

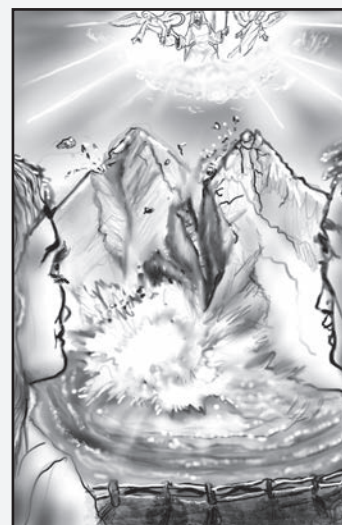
Psalm 46 doesn't talk about good things and compare them with better things. The writer of the poem compares life on this sin-filled earth with the promise of the better things God plans for us.

Psalm 46 is filled with hope and promise. When we suffer because of hard times or wars, "God says, 'Stop fighting and know that I am God!'" (Psalm 46:10, ERV). God wants us to have faith that someday all this evil will end. Then God "will be honored in the earth" (Psalm 46:10, NLV).

Notice, too, what else the writer of Psalm 46 says: "So we will not be afraid if the earth shakes, or if the mountains fall into the sea" (Psalm 46:2, ICB).

This verse helps us think about what will happen at the Second Coming: "The sky was split in the middle and both sides rolled up like a scroll [rolled up piece of paper]. And every mountain and island was moved from its place" (Revelation 6:14, ERV). Also, "You should look for the day of God to come. You should do what you can to make it come soon. At that time the heavens will be destroyed by fire. And the sun and moon and stars will melt away with much heat" (2 Peter 3:12, NLV). This life, with all of its evils, isn't going to continue forever. What comes after this earth ends promises to be something that we can't make a picture of in our minds. For now, we need to hold on with faith to the understanding about God that we have. We must believe in Jesus and everything He did for us on the cross.

Sometimes, things may be very bad on this earth. (We know they are going to get worse.) What hope does the Cross give you when you suffer during the hard times in life?



The writer of Psalm 46 compares life on this sin-filled earth with the promise of the better things God plans for us.

HOPE DURING HARD TIMES (Jeremiah 4:23–26)

The history of this earth will end with the total breakdown of the kingdoms on this earth.

Much of the writing in the book of Psalms uses word pictures and symbols. But when the book of Psalms talks about how God will make the earth new, we know this promise is not a word picture or symbol. The promise of a new earth is real. Psalm 46 helps us remember that the Second Coming will change this earth. More than the rocks and the sea will change. The history of this earth will end with the total breakdown of the kingdoms on this earth. These human governments have caused many people to suffer over the thousands of years of human history.

In the end, all these kingdoms and the suffering and evil they caused people will come to a complete end.

Read Jeremiah 4:23–26. What do these verses tell us about what will happen to this earth, at least until Jesus makes a new earth and skies (Revelation 21:1)?

The Bible shows us what will happen to this earth. Daniel's dream in Daniel chapter 7 shows us a stormy sea. The nations or people groups on this earth come from this sea. The winds of war blow across the Gentile or non-Jewish sea (a symbol for the people on the earth). One kingdom after another kingdom comes up from the sea. Not one of these kingdoms can solve the very real problems that cause human suffering. The leaders of these kingdoms always disappoint us. The leaders are as selfish and filled with sin as the rest of us.

In his dream, Daniel sees many kingdoms on this earth. None of these kingdoms is a safe home for God's people. But we have hope in the promise that we are citizens of God's kingdom (Philippians 3:20). God on His throne is more powerful than the leaders of any kingdom on earth. Jesus told us that things on this earth will become more and more evil before He comes back (Matthew 24). But we can trust that God hasn't lost control. God will keep His promises: "Nations will shake with fear and kingdoms will fall when God shouts and makes the earth move. The Lord All-Powerful is with us. The God of Jacob is our place of safety" (Psalm 46:6, 7, ERV).

Life on our earth looks out of control. How should the dream in Daniel 7 give us hope that God will work things out if we trust in Him?

UNDER HIS FEET (Psalm 47:1–4)

Read Psalm 47:1–4. What do these verses tell us about God’s kingdom?

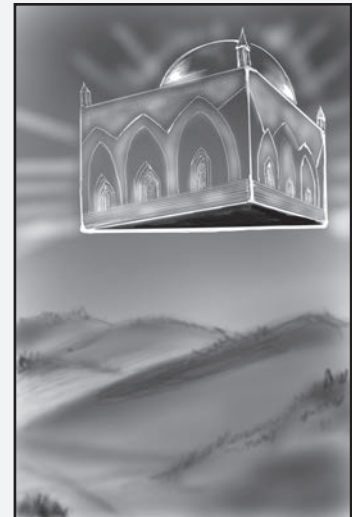
In the end, our future is filled with hope. Until then, life is filled with suffering because we gave the control over our planet to Lucifer. When Satan showed up at the meeting hall in heaven, he bragged to God that the earth belonged to him. “The LORD said to Satan, ‘Where have you come from?’ Satan answered, ‘From traveling all around the earth. I’ve been going from one end of it to the other [end]’ ” (Job 1:7, Nlrv).

What was Satan really planning? He was announcing that the earth **belonged** to him. In Old Testament times, the foot was used to show that someone owned something. That’s why God told Abraham, “ ‘Go! Walk through the land. See how long and wide it is. I am giving it to you’ ” (Genesis 13:17, Nlrv).

Compare 1 Thessalonians 4:13–17 and Zechariah 14:4. How are these two sets of verses different? What do these verses teach us about these two different but connected parts of Jesus’ control over this earth?

Ellen G. White talks about what Jesus will do at the end of the Thousand Years: “Jesus comes down on the Mount of Olives. Jesus was lifted up from this same place when He went back to heaven after He woke up from the dead. On this same spot, angels told Jesus’ followers that He would come back again. God’s special messenger Zechariah says, ‘Then the Lord my God will come. And all the holy ones will be with him. On that day he will stand on the Mount of Olives, east of Jerusalem. The Mount of Olives will split in two. . . . Then the Lord will be king over the whole world. At that time there will be only one Lord. And his name will be the only name.’ Zechariah 14:5, 4, 9, ICB. The New Jerusalem will come down to the earth from heaven. The shining city will rest on the place that God made clean and ready for it. Jesus, with His people and the angels, enters the Holy City.”—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, pages 662, 663, adapted.

How hard would this life be if everything ended forever with death? What hope does God give us in Jesus?



“The New Jerusalem will come down to the earth from heaven.”

WINE AND BLOOD (Psalm 75)



God's people are inside the Holy City with their holy King when the armies of evil come around them.

Read Psalm 75. What does this psalm teach us about some of the evils that God will correct when He judges the people on this earth? Also read Matthew 26:26–29 and Revelation 14:9–12. How do these other verses help us understand the work that God will do?

Some Bible thinkers believe that the Jews sang Psalm 75 when God destroyed Sennacherib's army (2 Chronicles 32; 2 Kings 19). This story shows us the final end of the lost people in Revelation 20. God's people are inside the Holy City with their holy King when the armies of evil come around them. God Himself destroys the army of lost people.

When God judges the earth, one of the things He corrects is the wrong use of power and control. Many people no longer live for other people or for God's glory, but for self. Today in many ways, we are living with the terrible problems that come from choosing to believe that no real meaning or law governs heaven and earth. The thinker Friedrich Nietzsche said that we must invent meaning for ourselves. Each person behaves as if he or she is a god.

You may ask, How well did this thinking work out for Nietzsche? Not too well, really. Nietzsche went crazy. He fell down on a street in Italy after he tried to stop a man from beating a horse. Then Nietzsche spent the next 11 years of his life with a confused mind before he died in 1900.

Our problems may be very bad at times. But as Christians, we must live with hope. We must not judge the future by the bad things that are happening now. Sure, we can feel upset when people, who don't know God, destroy beliefs we hold dear in our hearts. We now live in a time when ideas as basic as male and female are under attack, at least in some parts of the earth. Some sins that many people were ashamed to talk about privately in the past are now praised in public. That's how bad things are getting in some parts of the earth.

We all must do our part now to try to make life better for other people. Why is it always important to remember that God must first destroy this earth and then make it new before all things can be made right or corrected?

**ALL PEOPLE WILL SEE YOU CAN SAVE SINNERS
(Psalm 67)**

Read Psalm 67. How does this praise hymn help you understand the special work God’s people must do? Read Revelation 14:6–12 for the answer.

Scientists at MIT invented a new black paint. When objects are covered with this black paint, you almost can’t see them anymore. This new paint is many times darker than any other black material invented in the past. This new paint can soak up nearly 99.995% of all light that we can see. The brightest light can’t make visible the objects covered in this black paint.

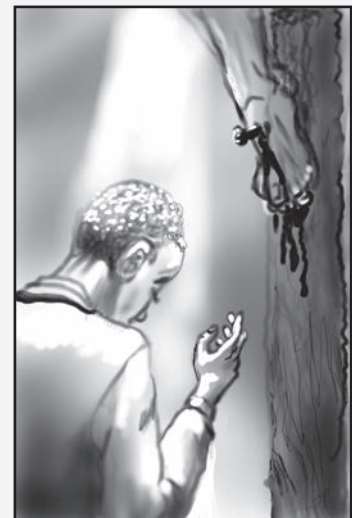
Psalm 67 starts with the poet’s asking God to “have mercy on us and bless us. May you be pleased with us. Then your ways will be known on earth. All nations [people] will see that you have the power to save” (Psalm 67:1, 2, NIRV). God’s plan to save people includes a way for Him to accept them into His light without His glory destroying them. Even now, in this life, the Cross of Jesus permits God’s love to shine on us.

But there is more good news: God wants us to show His love to the rest of the people on this earth. God gave this job to Israel. God wanted His temple to be a house of prayer for all the people on the earth: “ ‘Then I will bring them to my holy mountain of Zion. I will give them joy in my house. They can pray there. I will accept their burnt offerings and sacrifices [animals] on my altar. My house will be called [named] a house where people from all nations [people groups] can pray’ ” (Isaiah 56:7, NIRV).

In Psalm 67, David tells us that God wants people on the earth to know that He can save them (verse 2). Sad to say, God’s people often failed Him in this task. Israel’s history in the Old Testament contains some dark chapters. So does the history of the Christian church over the past 2,000 years. Did we paint our hearts with the same dark paint we talked about earlier? We feel good when we stand in God’s light. But we must share it with other people.

God’s end-time church in Revelation 14 doesn’t just stand on Zion with Jesus. They go everywhere on earth to invite other people to join them on God’s holy mountain.

What personal duty should we feel to teach other people about the Bible truths we love so much?



**Even now, in this life,
the Cross of Jesus permits
God’s love to shine on us.**

ADDITIONAL THOUGHT: Read Psalm 133; Acts 1:4–9; and Revelation 5:4–7.

“During Old Testament times, people plainly saw the Holy Spirit at work in special ways. But no one saw the full power of the Holy Spirit before. Now the followers of Jesus prayed for this gift as Jesus commanded them to do. In heaven, Jesus added His prayers to His followers’ prayers. Jesus asked the Father for the gift of the Holy Spirit to pour on His people.”—Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles*, page 37, adapted.

Jesus told His followers to share the Good News about His saving mercy with everyone on earth (Acts 1:8). This work must happen before Jesus comes back (Matthew 24:14). Jesus asks us to continue the work that His first followers started.

When Jesus told us to share the Good News with other people, He didn’t leave us alone to figure out how to do that. Jesus controls the work on earth from heaven’s temple. Our work is connected to Jesus in every way. Jesus guides us and gives us strength. The work is His, not ours. Jesus asks us to follow Him. You will remember how Jesus worked with Israel in Bible times. The Lord asked the Israelites to follow His commands. Then God made miracles happen. The Holy Spirit is already at work in the hearts of our neighbors. God asks us to be there the moment the Holy Spirit asks them to give their lives to Jesus. Then we can invite them to join God’s people as they stand with the Lamb on Zion. We don’t need to invent new plans or ways to save people, because we were never in charge of God’s work.



**Jesus guides us and gives us strength.
The work is His, not ours.**

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- ① We preach the Three Angels’ Messages all over the earth. But many people don’t know about Jesus. How can we, as a church, do the work better that Jesus gave us?
- ② In Revelation 5, John sees someone give the locked book to the Lamb, who is Jesus. When the locks are broken in Revelation 6, we see the history of the church down to the end of time. What does this chapter teach us about how God will finish His work?
- ③ What is happening now that could cause the end of this earth’s history to come that we read about in Revelation 13 and 14?

RUNNING FROM CHURCH: PART 5

Diana and Loren planned to get married. Then they found out they were going to have a baby. At the time, they were living in Santa Fe, New Mexico. Diana delayed the wedding because she didn't want the baby to be the reason for the marriage.

After the baby was born, Diana, Loren, and the children moved to Salt Lake City, Utah, where Diana's parents lived. Diana and Loren were sick of the party life in Santa Fe.

Diana and Loren weren't living as Christians at this time. But Loren wanted to get married in a church. Loren chose an Adventist church and talked to its pastor. Loren also asked his father, an Adventist pastor who lived near Chicago, to perform their wedding. Both pastors had a problem with what Loren wanted because Diana wasn't a church member, and the couple wasn't living a Christian life. But after much prayer, both pastors decided to help Loren and Diana. Loren's father helped get them ready for marriage. He gave them advice over the phone.

On their wedding day, Diana was surprised to see people that she and Loren didn't know. They were church members. Diana thought, "Who comes to the wedding of strangers?" Diana's surprise grew when the church members gave them gifts.

When Diana opened the wedding gifts at home, she found a small book named *Happiness Digest*. Diana thought it was a book from those three women who visited her back in Colorado. Diana started to read the book. She couldn't put it down. When Loren came home from work, she excitedly told him, "This book is God's truth!" The book made her want to visit the Seventh-day Adventist church and learn more about what she read.

When Diana and Loren showed up in church, members accepted her as she was. They took care of her children so she could listen to the sermon. When she heard one of the elders, or church leaders, talk about Bible studies, she told him, "I want to study." Loren told her, "I can tell you whatever you want to know." Loren felt ashamed that he didn't study with her before. Diana said, "No, I want to study the Bible for myself."

The elder, Lorell Herold, and his wife, Carol, came to their home every week for 28 weeks. As Diana studied, she started to change. No one asked her to change. No one preached to her about changing her life. As she learned about God's love, her heart changed. Members also showed Diana how much they loved her.

Loren was surprised at how much Diana loved to study the Bible. He wondered what he missed growing up. He started to study the Bible on his own. Then Loren and Diana decided to get baptized together.

Read more about Diana next week.

INSIDE
Story

by ANDREW MCCHESENEY



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