

# Worship God Who Made Heaven and Earth



## SABBATH—MAY 19

**READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON:** Revelation 14:6, 7; Matthew 24:14; Galatians 3:22; Luke 23:32–43; Revelation 14:8–12.

**MEMORY VERSE:** “Then I saw another angel flying in the heavens. He was carrying the Good News that lasts [continues] forever. He was preaching to every nation and to every family group and to the people of every language and to all the people of the earth” (Revelation 14:6, NLV).

**AS SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHRISTIANS,** we believe in “present truth.” Present truth is the Bible teaching that God shows truth to humans when they need it the most. Then, over time, God adds more light to the truth He gave us (2 Peter 1:12). An example of how present truth works can be seen in the first promise about the Good News (Genesis 3:15). God gave this promise to Adam and Eve after they sinned. God told them that the Savior would be born to one of Eve’s future children. God’s promise to Abraham in Genesis 18:18 shows us even more truth about the first promise God made to Adam and Eve. Then Jesus came. He was the Savior that God promised He would send. The coming of Jesus to this earth shows us even more truth about the promise of the Good News (Mark 10:45).

Today, we believe that the three angels’ messages in Revelation 14:6–12 are “present truth.” They are the truth that everyone living in these last days needs right now.

This week we will look at the first angel’s message. This message holds important truths for everyone who wants to stay loyal to God in the difficult times ahead.



Over time, God adds more light to the truth He gave us.

**GOOD NEWS FOR EVERYONE (Revelation 14:6)**

**Read Revelation 14:6; Matthew 24:14; and Matthew 28:19. Each of these verses talks about the same idea. What idea is that? How do these verses help us understand how important it is for the church to reach out to other people and to witness to them about Jesus?**

We could say that the first angel's message is the same as Jesus' command to us in Matthew 28:19. The first angel's message is "present truth" for our time. As we learned yesterday, present truth is the truth we need most.

Do you see how all three verses in the question above say that we need to reach out to everyone with this message? Everyone includes "every nation" and "every family group" and "the people of every language" and "all the people of the earth" (Revelation 14:6, NLV). Everyone needs to hear this message because its truths are meant for everyone.



**The first angel's message is "present truth." Present truth is the truth we need most for the time we live in.**

**Read Galatians 3:22. What does this verse say that helps us understand why everyone living on this earth needs to hear the Good News?**

Sin is everywhere. That fact explains why our work for God includes sharing the Good News with everyone. Everyone on earth has done wrong. Everyone has broken God's law. The Bible shows us that everyone "is bound [put in prison] by sin" (Galatians 3:22, ICB). Adam's sin in Eden changed every human. No person has been able to escape the awful things that happened because of Adam's sin. We all must live with the bad things that happened and continue to happen because of sin. With no one to save us, we would suffer punishment for sin. This punishment is everlasting death.

But Someone did save us. That Someone is Jesus. He is the only answer to the sin problem. All people need to know about the amazing gift of hope that God offers to them in Jesus. That is why Seventh-day Adventists have gone all over the earth to share the Good News. They want to tell everyone about Jesus and the things He has done for them.

**Why is our sharing the Good News with other people very helpful to our spiritual lives? Why is our reaching out to other people one of the best ways for us to get ready for Jesus to come back?**

## THE THIEF ON THE CROSS AND THE GOOD NEWS (Luke 23:32–43)

What message must God’s people share with everyone on earth? It is the “Good News that lasts forever” (Revelation 14:6, NLV). This news is hope for all people living on an earth that offers them no hope at all beyond this life.

**Read Luke 23:32–43. How does this story about the thief show us the hope that the “Good News” (Revelation 14:6, NLV) gives to all sinners?**

Ellen G. White wrote about the thief on the cross. The thief was a criminal. But his heart was not fully cold and hard. The thief had been living a life of sin to “try to shut out from his heart a belief in Jesus. The thief fell deeper and deeper into sin. Then he was arrested and put on trial. He was found guilty and sent to die on the cross.”—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, page 749; adapted.

But what happened to the thief? As he hung on the cross, the thief saw who Jesus really was. The thief cried out: “ ‘Jesus, remember me when you begin ruling as king!’ ” (Luke 23:42, ERV).

How did Jesus answer? Did Jesus say, “Well, friend, I would like to help you. But you really should not have shut Me out of your heart by falling deeper and deeper into sin”? Or did Jesus preach to the thief one of His earlier sermons: “ ‘If you are not more pleasing to God than they [the teachers of the law and religious leaders] are, you will never enter God’s kingdom’ ” (Matthew 5:20, ERV)? Did Jesus bring up the thief’s past mistakes?

No! Instead, Jesus turned to this criminal who had lived a life of sin. The thief was far from holy. He had nothing to offer Jesus. Earlier, the thief even cursed Jesus to His face (Matthew 27:44). But Jesus saw the thief as a new man. Jesus said to him: *I am telling you, right now, that your sin, your crimes, your mistakes are forgiven. So, I tell you, today, that one day: “ ‘you will be with Me in Paradise [heaven]’ ”* (Luke 23:43, NLV).

Jesus’ message to the thief is the Good News that continues forever. This Good News is the first angel’s message. It is the center of everything we teach. What good are our teachings without the Good News that Jesus saves us?

**What hope does the story about the thief give you?**



**Jesus’ message to the thief on the cross is the Good News that Jesus saves us from our sins and gives us everlasting life.**

## HONOR GOD AND GIVE GLORY TO HIM (Revelation 14:7)

The first angel's message begins with an announcement to everyone on the earth about "the Good News" in Revelation 14:6 (NLV). We learn more about this Good News in verse 7. God gave Seventh-day Adventists the job of announcing this message to everyone on the earth. As part of that job, we must share the truths in verse 7. These truths are the Good News for this time. Revelation 14:7 is "present truth" for the last days. We learned that present truth is the truth we need most for the time we live in.

**Read Revelation 14:7. What does it mean in this verse to "fear God" (ERV) and to "give him glory" (NirV)? How do we do that? What is the connection between these ideas and the "Good News" in Revelation 14:6, NLV?**



**Our evil actions make us worthy of death. Our knowing this truth about ourselves is what it means to "fear God." This fear helps us know that, with no Cross, we would lose our souls.**

We will look at what the Bible means by the wording "fear God." But first, notice that the command to "fear God" is connected to the command to "give him glory." If we truly "fear God" in the way that the Bible means, we will give Him glory. One action should lead to the other action.

**Read Genesis 22:12; Exodus 20:20; Job 1:9; Ecclesiastes 12:13; and Matthew 5:16. How do these verses help us understand what it means to "fear God"? How do these verses teach us that our fearing God is connected to our giving Him glory?**

In these verses, the command to "fear God" is connected to obeying Him. When we obey God and do right, we bring glory to Him. Many people say that to fear God means to respect God and worship Him. That is true. But the true meaning of "fear God" goes deeper than even respect and worship. It points to the truth that we are born sinners. We have done evil. Our evil actions make us worthy of death in the eyes of a fair and holy God. Our knowing this awful truth about ourselves is what it means to "fear God." It is this fear that sends us to the Cross for forgiveness. It is this fear that leads us to accept God's power to cleanse us from evil. It is this fear that helps us know that, with no Cross, we would lose our souls (read Matthew 10:28).

**How have you experienced what it means to truly fear God?**

## THE TIME HAS COME FOR GOD TO JUDGE ALL PEOPLE (Romans 2:6)

The first angel's message connects the ideas about fearing God and giving Him glory to the Bible teaching that God will judge all people (Revelation 14:7). The Bible is very clear that God is a God of justice. One day the fairness and justice that are so often missing from this life will come when God judges all people.

No wonder people need to fear God.

That is why the "Good News that lasts [continues] forever" (Revelation 14:6, NLV) includes the truth that God will judge all people. What is the connection between the Good News and the truth that God will judge all people at the end of time? We are all sinners who are worthy of death on the day when God will judge all people. But the Good News is that we will not suffer the punishment for our sin and for breaking God's law. Instead, it will be the same for us as it was for the thief on the cross (Luke 23:32–43).

**Read Matthew 12:36; Ecclesiastes 12:14; Romans 2:6; and 1 Corinthians 4:5. After you read these verses, ask yourself this question: Can my own good actions and good works save me during the time when God judges all people?**

God knows how many hairs are on our heads. This same God will judge all people who have ever lived. But that is exactly why the Good News that continues forever is wonderful news. Yes, we all will be judged. But there is no punishment for the loyal followers of Jesus. God has made them clean from all sin. They have been made holy and right with God in the name of the Lord Jesus (read 1 Corinthians 6:11). Jesus' obedience is their obedience. It is His obedience that frees them when God judges all people.

"Man stands guilty before God. But Jesus stands between God and man. Jesus tells God the Father that many souls have turned away from their sins. By faith they have given their souls to Jesus. Jesus asks God to have mercy on them. Satan accuses them of wrongdoing and guilt. But Jesus clears these souls of all blame by pointing to what He did for sinners on the Cross. Jesus' obedience cost Him His life. But His victory gave Him all power on heaven and earth. So, Jesus asks His Father to show mercy to sinners who turned to Him."—Ellen G. White, *Testimonies [special messages] for the Church*, volume 5, page 471; adapted.



**God knows how many hairs are on our heads. This same God will judge all people who have ever lived.**

## WORSHIP GOD WHO MADE HEAVEN AND EARTH (Revelation 14:6–11)

**Read Revelation 14:6, 7 again. Break these verses down into smaller pieces of information. What is each of these parts talking about, and how do they all connect together?**

Jesus tells His people to share with other people the Good News that continues forever. He asks us to witness about Him to other people. He also asks us to fear God and give glory to Him. But there is something else that Jesus asks His people to do in the last days. He asks them to worship God as the One who made them. This command is part of present truth. We learned that present truth is the truth we need most for the time we live in. Present truth for our time includes: (1) the Good News that continues forever, (2) the command to witness about Jesus to other people, and (3) the truth that we are living in the time when God will judge all people. All these parts of present truth for this time mean nothing without the truth that we must worship God as the One who made us.

All parts of present truth come from the larger truth that the Lord is the One who made all things. When we worship God as the One who made us, we understand what it means to be human and to really live. We understand that we are different from any other living thing on this earth. We understand what it means to be made in God's own likeness. That means God made us to be the same as Himself in many ways. When we worship God as the One who made us, we show everyone that we depend on God for life and for our future hope. That is why keeping the seventh-day Sabbath is very important. The Sabbath shows people that God alone is the One who made us and that we should worship only Him. So, that is why the first angel's message makes it very clear that we should worship God as the One who made us.



**Present truth for our time includes: (1) the Good News that Jesus saves us from sin, (2) Jesus' command to us to tell others about the Good News, and (3) the truth that we are living in the time when God will judge all people.**

**Read Revelation 14:8–11. What do these verses say that could help us understand why it is very important to worship the Lord as the One who made us?**

Soon the things Jesus warned about in the last days will happen. Many people will feel the pressure to worship the "beast [wild animal that comes from the sea]" (Revelation 13, ERV, NLV) instead of Jesus. But the warnings are clear about what will happen to people who worship this false religious power. So, we must stay true to Jesus.

**ADDITIONAL THOUGHT:** For a long time, Bible students have noticed a connection between the command to worship God in Revelation 14:7 and the fourth commandment in Exodus 20:11 to keep the Sabbath holy. Let us look at the two verses more closely to see how they are the same. Revelation 14:7 says: “Worship Him Who made heaven and earth and the sea and the places where water comes out of the earth” (NLV). Now look at Exodus 20:11: “In six days the LORD made the heavens, the earth, the sea and everything in them” (NIRV). Many things in the two verses are the same. But there is one change to the verse in Revelation. What is it? That change points to the Lord as the One “Who made . . . the places where water comes out of the earth.”

Why would John include this change when he wrote Revelation? Writer John Baldwin asks the same question: “The list of things that God made in Revelation 14:7 agrees with the one in Exodus 20:11 until it gets to the part about the water coming out of the earth. Why does the angel in Revelation 14:7 mention ‘the places where water comes out of the earth’ and not trees, birds, or mountains?”

“We must remember that John is talking about the time when God will judge all people. Maybe God uses the wording ‘the places where water comes out of the earth’ to remind readers of the time when God judged the earth by a Flood of waters. The Genesis Flood shows us that God is a Judge. But it also shows us that God is also a God of mercy and love. Maybe God is using the wording ‘the places where water comes out of the earth’ to encourage readers of Revelation to think carefully about the last-day message that God will judge all the people on the earth.”  
—John Baldwin, editor, *Creation [God’s act of making the heavens and earth in six days], Catastrophe [total ruin], and Calvary [Jesus’ death on the cross]: Why a Global [worldwide] Flood Is Vital [important] to the Doctrine [teaching] of [about] Atonement [God’s work to cleanse His people and make them right with Himself]* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald® Publishing Association, 2000), page 27; adapted.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- 1 The sin problem is very big. But why is God’s answer to it more than enough to solve it?
- 2 What other lessons can we learn from the story about the thief on the cross? How does that story show us the power of the Cross to change our lives?



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