



## 2022 4Q On Death, Dying, and the Future Hope—Lesson 8 The New Testament Hope

by Tim Jennings

### SABBATH

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Read Memory Text:

And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life (1 John 5:11,12 NIV84).

What does this text mean? Does it trigger any questions in your mind?

- Why would God need to “give” us eternal life if we already have it?
- Does this text make any sense if the common belief that humans are immortal or have immortal souls was true?
  - And we have asked this before, but what would it say about God if He created humans in Eden with immortality knowing ahead of time they would sin and some humans would live for eternity is torment? Or if He failed to realize the possibility and was caught off guard?
  - There nothing about the common doctrine of natural immortality of the soul that says anything good about God.
- Does our memory verse about having eternal life only in Jesus apply to all humans or only to those who have lived since the time of Jesus?
  - Did Enoch, Elijah, and Moses receive eternal life? And did they receive it through Jesus or through some other path or means?
- Do the Jews have a pathway to heaven that bypasses Jesus?

God created one human race in Adam; Eve was taken from Adam and all other humans were born of their line.

And there is one sin condition which entered through Adam and Eve and all human beings are born infected with it (Ps 51:5). **And there is only one solution for it, and that solution is Jesus Christ!**

Now, why is it that if we have Jesus we have life and why is it that those who don't have Jesus don't have life?

- Is it because those who have Jesus have the proper legal documents to present to immigration control authority at the gates of the New Jerusalem?



- Is it because they have something of enough value to the Father, specifically the shed blood of His Son, that when they present this blood to the Father the Father will be influenced in some way to let us into heaven; whether that is by making a legal payment to satisfy His sense of justice, or to appease His wrath or something else?
- Is it a bargain with God we offer God the blood of His Son and in exchange He gives us eternal life?

Why does having the Son mean we have eternal life?

What does it mean to have the Son?

Can you think of any other place in the Bible where Jesus speaks of what eternal life is?

Now a man came up to Jesus and asked, “Teacher, what good thing must I do to get eternal life?”

“Why do you ask me about what is good?” Jesus replied. “There is only One who is good. **If you want to enter life, obey the commandments.**” (Matthew 19:16–17 NIV84).

Is law-keeping the way to achieve eternal life? If we work really hard and keep the right rules does that mean we can obtain eternal life? If we keep the right commandments does that mean we have Jesus in our life?

I have heard many Adventists use texts like this one in relation to the Sabbath and elevate Sabbath keeping to a litmus test of having Jesus and being among those who have eternal life. Is Sabbath keeping a sign we have eternal life?

Did the Jews who crucified Christ go to synagogue on the wrong day of the week? Did they have the wrong Sabbath?

Why can we not achieve eternal life by law-keeping? Because law-keeping cannot cure the death-causing sin problem. This is a core issue between Satan’s counterfeit religions and true Christianity. True Christianity is based upon God’s design law for life. We understand God’s laws are the laws upon which life and health are built by God to operate and sin breaks that design and results in ruin and death unless remedied by Jesus. However, if one substitutes human law, imposed rules that require imposed penalties, for God’s law then one misunderstands God’s use of law and teaches a pagan method of salvation, specifically legal payments and appeasement sacrifices to the punishing god to assuage wrath and pay for sin. Further, people focus on law keeping as a means of salvation and fail to realize the Ten Commandments were given by God not as a means of salvation, but as a diagnostic instrument to expose the sin-sickness in our hearts and lead us to Christ for healing of the sin condition.

Paul makes this very clear in several places. He describes what a great law keeper he was until he realized the tenth commandment that said thou shall not covet and realized that there is no behavior or



deed he could do to keep that command. He realized the law was actually about the heart and then he realized all ten commandments are about what is happening in the heart, not a list of rules to be kept. He describes the real purpose of the written law in several places (like 1 Timothy 1:8-11), to be a diagnostic instrument to expose or sin condition and bring us to Christ for healing and the law was not given for the righteous but the wicked. Like an MRI is not designed for healthy people but for sick people to diagnose what is wrong. But the MRI doesn't heal and neither does the written law.

Paul also describes this in Romans 7, I am going to read this from the Remedy verses 4-13:

Therefore, your selfish, fear-ridden heart died when you accepted the truth revealed by Christ's death, and you received a new heart from him who was raised from the dead, in order that you might grow in character—to be like Jesus—and live to honor God. For when we were controlled by the infection of fear and selfishness — which resulted from distrust — the destructive passions revealed by the law were ravaging our bodies, we were terminally ill and spreading death wherever we went. But now, as we die to the distrust, fear and selfishness that once bound us, the law no longer diagnoses us as infected and terminal. In fact, the law now confirms that we have a new heart—not by observing rules, but created within by the Spirit. We are now healthy and loving like Jesus.

What shall we say then? Is the law evil and selfish because it increases the amount of evil and selfishness we see? Absolutely not! I would not have known what evil and selfishness looked like if it wasn't for the diagnostic efficacy of the law. I would not have realized that coveting was evil and selfish if the law didn't say, "Don't covet." But selfishness, taking advantage of the fact that the law is only a diagnostic instrument—and not a Remedy—magnified every covetous desire within me. For apart from the diagnostic ability of the law, sin is unrecognizable. Once I thought I was healthy and free from the infection of distrust, fear and selfishness, but then the commandment examined me, exposed how utterly infected I was, and diagnosed me as terminal. I discovered that the very commandment given only to diagnose my condition I had unwittingly attempted to use as a cure, and thus my condition only worsened. For selfishness, taking advantage of the fact that the commandment could only diagnose and not cure, deceived me into thinking that I could be cured by working to keep the commandments; but instead, my terminal state only worsened. So understand this: The law diagnoses perfectly, and the commandment is the standard of what is right and good, set apart by God to reveal what is evil and destructive.

Did the law, which did good by diagnosing what was wrong with me, become the source of my terminal condition? Of course not! It only exposed what was already in me, so that I could recognize how totally decayed, putrid and near death I was, and so that through the lens of the commandment I might become utterly disgusted with evil and selfishness, and long for a cure. (Romans 7:4-13 REM)

But Jesus still connected eternal life with obeying the commandments, why? What is the basis of the Ten Commandments? Notice this exchange between Jesus and a Jewish lawyer:



On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. “Teacher,” he asked, “**what must I do to inherit eternal life?**”

“What is written in the Law?” he replied. “How do you read it?”

He answered: “ ‘**Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind**; and, ‘**Love your neighbor as yourself.**’ ”

“You have answered correctly,” Jesus replied. “Do this and you will live.” (Luke 10;25-28 NIV84).

Is there a connection between loving God with our entire being and loving our neighbors as ourselves and keeping the commandments?

If you love someone—and we are talking operationally not emotionally, the love of God is not restricted to sentimental or warm feelings, God’s love functions in a positive way toward the best interest of others. So when the Bible talks about loving God and others it isn’t restricted to having feelings of affections, but is primarily focused on the actions and function of your life. If you love someone you won’t murder them, you won’t cheat on them, you won’t bear false witness about them, you won’t steal from them, you won’t even covet anything of theirs. If you love them all their successes you celebrate and you actively seek to protect them and build them up as you are able. You speak well of them, or you remain silent if you cannot speak well of them—just like Jesus did.

So, can we love God and our neighbors by following a list of rules? What enables us to love others? The ability to genuinely live godly lives of love is to first experience God’s love in our own lives. We must be renewed in heart and mind by faith/trust in God through Jesus Christ! We must individually and deeply know God for ourselves.

Thus Jesus said:

Now **this is eternal life: that they may know you**, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent (John 17:3 NIV84).

Knowing in the Bible is intimate knowledge of and experience with, not knowing about.

How is knowing God and Jesus related to having the Son, which means having eternal life?

Can we have the Son, which means having eternal life, if we do not know God and Jesus?

Jesus prays just a few verses later in John 17:

My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. **May they also be in us** so that the world may believe that you have sent me. **I have given them the**



**glory that you gave me**, that they may be one as we are one: **I in them and you in me**. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me. (John 17:20-23 NIV84).

What does it mean to be in Jesus and in the Father? Is this speaking of physical cellular occupation? No! It is speaking of in union, in unity of heart, mind, motive, values, desires, principles, practices, having the law of God written upon our hearts:

This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time, declares the Lord. **I will put my laws in their minds and write them on their hearts**. I will be their God, and they will be my people. No longer will a man teach his neighbor, or a man his brother, saying, ‘**Know the Lord,**’ because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest (Hebrews 8:10-11 NIV84).

Is knowing the Lord connected with His law being written upon the heart? And is this connected with eternal life? Why?

This is beautifully described in the book *Christ's Object Lessons*:

When we submit ourselves to Christ, **the heart is united with His heart, the will is merged in His will, the mind becomes one with His mind, the thoughts are brought into captivity to Him; we live His life. This is what it means to be clothed with the garment of His righteousness**. Then as the Lord looks upon us He sees, not the fig-leaf garment, not the nakedness and deformity of sin, but His own robe of righteousness, **which is perfect obedience to the law of Jehovah**. COL 311.4

This author connects our faith relationship with Jesus, with the transformation of our inner being, in which our hearts, will, mind, and thoughts are brought into unity and harmony with Jesus receiving the perfection of Christ's character and we live a life like Jesus through the indwelling Spirit. This is law keeping, loving God and others through Christ. It is not legal, it is transformational, healing, recreational, actual, real, as Paul wrote in 2Corinthians 5:21 “we become the righteousness of God.”

What is another name for being united as one with God? For the work of Jesus bringing us into unity with the Father and the Son? It is called at-one-ment. And is there another Biblical relationship in which two are to become one? Marriage—and in a marriage, as God designed, do the people lose their individuality? No! But do they come into unity, oneness? And the church is described as the bride of Christ, we are to be united with God, to know Him, because we have the Son and the Son is the exact revelation of the Father to us.

And to know Him is to be one with Him in heart, mind, attitude, desires, motives, principles, methods, practices why? Because of a list of rules? No, because we love His ways, it is the only way we want to live, we experience our greatest joy, happiness, and fulfillment in living out God's living law in how we treat others.



Death is caused by just the opposite, by not knowing the Lord:

Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil (Hebrews 2:14 NIV84).

Satan has the power of death and what is that power? His lies about God that we believe that keep us from knowing God (John 8:44).

Remember, lies believed break the circle of love and trust.

Believing lies about God does NOT necessarily mean people stop believing in God.

Consider this for a moment: If we had a time machine and could travel back to crucifixion Friday and stand beside those who were mocking Jesus as He hung on the cross, and if we asked them the following questions, what do you think their answers would be?

- Do you believe in God? –absolutely we are so committed to God that we seek to root out heresy and this man is a heretic
- Do you believe in the Bible? –of course, this man refused to follow what the Bible teaches, He wouldn't stone a woman caught in adultery
- Do you believe in the Sabbath? -absolutely and this man wouldn't correct his disciples from harvesting grain on Sabbath
- Do you believe in the sanctuary and its role in God's plan to save sinners? -of course, and this man threatened to destroy the temple and we cannot allow for anyone to threaten us in that way

Go down the list, what was the problem in the belief system of the Jews who insisted that Christ must die?

**It was not any specific doctrinal point—it was that they did not know God.** Every single doctrine they held was processed through the lens of imposed law with a god who is an imperial dictator and who is the source of inflicted punishment upon rule-breakers, a god who must be appeased with sacrifice, or works, or offerings, and thus, via the design law of worship, they became like that abusive and unjust god. They held a fraudulent trial, bribed witnesses, intimidated the Roman governor and killed the Son of God and then demanded He be taken off the cross before sunset to keep the Sabbath of the God they just killed. They did this so they could keep the right rules and thereby feel good about themselves, proving to themselves by their law-keeping that they are righteous and good and in good standing with God. After all, they were fastidiously keeping the Sabbath.

Understand, Satan's lies are not restricted to those who do not believe in God or are outside people called by God. Satan's lies have deeply infect Christianity because Christianity holds the truth and where God is revealing is truth is where Satan works most aggressively to oppose it.



We have the exact same problem the Jews had 2000 years ago, Satan has infected Christianity with the lie that God's law functions like human law, and therefore God is the source of pain, suffering, defects, deformity, and death and that God needs something done to Him in order for God to forgive, to be merciful, and to save. This is paganism, this is Satan's lie, and it is how Satan sets himself up in God's temple proclaiming himself to be God (2 Thessalonians 2:4).

Read second paragraph:

Thus, for Christ and the apostles, the Christian hope was not a new hope but, rather, the unfolding of the ancient hope already nurtured by the patriarchs and prophets. For example, Christ mentioned that Abraham foresaw and rejoiced to see His day (John 8:56). Jude stated that Enoch prophesied about the Second Coming (Jude 14, 15). And the book of Hebrews speaks of the heroes of faith as having expected a heavenly reward that they would not receive until we receive ours (Heb. 11:39, 40). This statement would be meaningless if their souls were already with the Lord in heaven.

Yes, the same hope for salvation that we have in Jesus, is the hope that all humans have had throughout human history.

But what do you think of the about the argument that “the book of Hebrews speaks of the heroes of faith as having expected a heavenly reward that they would not receive until we receive ours (Heb. 11:39, 40).” If they stopped there I would agree completely with this statement. But then then added this “This statement would be meaningless if their souls were already with the Lord in heaven”?

Hebrews 11:39 states: “These were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised” (Hebrews 11:39 NIV84).

Of these faithful folk, the Bible says “none of them” received what had been promised—and who was included in the list? Enoch—who is in heaven—has not received what has been promised, but didn't Enoch receive eternal life? Yes, so the fact Enoch, who is in heaven, is on the list of heroes in Hebrews undermines the last point in the lesson, that the statement would be meaningless if their souls were already in heaven. So the promise not yet received must be talking about something more than eternal life, what?

**They did not receive the things promised;** they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance. And they admitted that they were aliens and strangers on earth. People who say such things show that they are **looking for a country of their own**. If they had been thinking of the country they had left, they would have had opportunity to return. Instead, they were longing for **a better country—a heavenly one**. (Hebrews 11:13–16 NIV84).

What is the promise of God? That the meek shall live forever in heaven? No, that the meek will inherit the Earth (Matthew 5:5). Jesus prayed for God's will to be done on Earth as it is in heaven (Matthew 6:10). God has promised to not only deliver us from sin, but to cleanse and renew the Earth from sin and make Earth our home by bringing God's government and kingdom to Earth. Then we can live on a



sin-free Earth, a home without sickness, pain, suffering, exploitation, crime—a place where everyone loves each other truly and freely, a better land than what we have now. This is what the heroes were longing for and what has not yet been received.

The more we become like Jesus on this Earth, the more this Earth torments the soul, the less true peace we have in this wicked and evil place. Yes, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, but we do **not** have peace in this world. Remember what the Bible says about Lot:

Lot, a righteous man, who was distressed by the filthy lives of lawless men (for that righteous man, living among them day after day, was tormented in his righteous soul by the lawless deeds he saw and heard)— (2 Peter 2:7-9 NIV 84).

## MONDAY

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The lesson focuses our attention on the promise of Jesus that He will come again.

Do you believe this? What would give you cause to believe that Jesus is coming soon, even within our lifetime?

Can you list any signs of Jesus soon return?

- Fulfillment of various Bible prophecies—such as the 1260 years ending in 1798 which places us in the “last days.” But that has been over 200 years ago, why would we think Christ’s return could be soon rather than 200 years into the future?
- Wars and rumors of wars have been going on for 2000 years
- Pestilences—certainly we have seen those, but they also have been going on for 2000 years
- What about “Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold” (Matthew 24:12)? Do we see ever increasing selfishness and a lack of human decency and love for each other?
- The persecution of the righteous? But throughout all human history the wicked have always persecuted the righteous, what is different about now?
  - In every previous era, when the righteous have been persecuted there was always someplace on Earth the righteous could flee and establish a new society of liberty. The USA was established just for that reason. But when the USA betrays its founding and Constitutional principles of civil and religious liberty, then there will be no place left on earth for the righteous to flee and a worldwide system of abuse will soon follow, and Jesus will come shortly thereafter.
  - Did we see evidence during COVID that such a system of abuse and coercion of conscience could be set up and implemented in very short order?





But this is all in place, the systems of human governments are capable of doing this now, so why the delay? **Because God is not waiting for the wicked to become more wicked, God is waiting for all those who can be saved to become righteous!**

As Peter wrote:

But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, **not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.** (2 Peter 3:8–9 NIV84).

What is Jesus waiting for? For us to be ready, which means He is in heaven, working with all the agencies at His disposal, to cleanse His temple, His people, to prepare us to be able to stand in His presence.

The lesson asks us to read John 14:1-3 do you see a connection between this passage, the work of Jesus and the delay:

“Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also” (Jn 14:1–3 NKJV).

What does it mean?

Modern Bible translations don’t use the word “mansions” because the Greek word translated mansions in the King James simply means “dwelling place” and in the 17<sup>th</sup> century when the King James was written the word “mansion” didn’t mean a pretentious posh ornate home, but a simple dwelling place. So most modern translations say “rooms” or “dwelling places.”

From the SDA Bible Commentary: *monai* (singular *monē*) literally, “abiding places”... Our English word “mansion” is from the Latin *mansio*, in meaning almost equivalent to the Gr. *monē*. *Mansio*, as does *monē*, means “a remaining place,” “a place of abode.” The idea of a building of some size or pretentiousness does not attach to the Latin, nor, of course, to the Greek. That idea was a later development of the English word and the meaning should not be introduced into the present verse. Either “mansion” should be understood in its archaic sense of “a dwelling place,” or “abode,” or one of these meanings should be substituted in a translation of the verse. The fact that there are “many” dwelling places makes certain of sufficient room in the Father’s house for all who heed the Father’s invitation. (The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary Vol. 5, p. 1034).

So when Jesus said “In My Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you...” He wasn’t saying that He went to heaven and started a massive construction project to build houses for us, but that in His Father house is room for everyone.



How long would it take the Creator God who speaks galaxies into existence to build some buildings?

Does the Bible use the language of “God’s house,” or what Jesus said, “My Father’s house” anywhere else?

“Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever” (Psalm 23:6 NIV84).

Jesus, who spoke the words in John 14 promising to come again, also spoke the words in Revelation to the seven churches which says the following:

**“I am coming soon.** Hold on to what you have, so that no one will take your crown. Him who overcomes **I will make a pillar in the temple of my God. Never again will he leave it.** I will write on him **the name of my God** and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which is coming down out of heaven from my God; and I will also write on him **my new name**” (Revelation 3:11–12 NIV84).

What does this mean? Twice Jesus has connected His soon return with preparing the house of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, and in Revelation we are being prepared as pillars to be part of that house and we will never leave it. Why will we never leave the heavenly temple? It is not because the heavenly temple is an inanimate building made of gold and silver bricks and we are not chained to a pillar like Samson in that pagan temple; we will not be locked away in some physical geographic location and imprisoned in some building for all eternity. No, the reason we will never leave the heavenly temple is because the temple of God is built out of living beings and we will never leave it because we will never choose to sin and thereby remove ourselves from our love and loyalty to God. We will be pillars in God’s house!

But what must God do to prepare for this day when we live in God’s house? **Must God do something in heaven to get heaven ready for us or must God do something in us to get us ready for heaven?**

Peter wrote:

As you come to him, the living Stone—rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him—**you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house** to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ (1 Peter 2:4–5 NIV84).

So what would Jesus need to do before coming again? Would He not need to apply to the hearts, minds, characters of all who trust Him His perfection, cleansing the Spirit Temples from sin and preparing His bride to meet Him face to face? Wouldn’t He need to polish us, hone us, remove from us all defects of character, all fear of Him, all distrust of Him? And couldn’t this be described as cleansing the sanctuary, or going to heaven to prepare a place for them?



## TUESDAY

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The lesson focuses upon Jesus identifying Himself as the bread which came down from heaven.

What does this mean to you? How is Jesus the bread that came down from heaven?

When Jesus said,

I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.”

Then the Jews began to argue sharply among themselves, “How can this man give us his flesh to eat?”

Jesus said to them, “I tell you the truth, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. 55 For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in him. (John 6:51–56 NIV84).

What did He mean?

When we think of Bible metaphors and symbols, do we interpret them to their true meaning?

- Is there power in the blood of Jesus?
- What power is in the blood of Jesus?
- If we had some red corpuscles shed by Jesus when He was crucified 2000 years ago, somehow saved in a sealed jar, would those red blood cells have some power? Would they cleanse from sin? Would they pay our debt? Would the Father in heaven be happy to see the blood?
- Or is the power in the one who shed His blood, and the power to impact us in the power of the truth of what was accomplished by Jesus when He shed His blood. The truth destroys lies and sets us free and in trust we open the heart and receive the life of Christ, which is in the blood.

Thus the flesh and blood symbols got replaced by Jesus with the bread and wine symbols. Jesus said the bread represented His body, His flesh, and the wine represented His blood. When we partake of this at a communion service are we taking in literal human flesh and blood? Is it being transformed as we swallow into human flesh? Or are these symbols of something else? What?

When we eat food it is broken down into molecules that become building blocks to our literal body. Jesus is the Word made flesh, to partake the flesh of Jesus means to partake of the Word, to partake of the truth. And the truth becomes building blocks of our beliefs, concepts, schemas, and displaces the lies and our minds are won from fear and distrust of God to trust in God, and then in trust we open the heart to Jesus and He pours in His Spirit of love and we partake of the life of Christ, the life is in the blood. We get a new heart and right spirit, it is no longer we that live but Christ lives in us. Thus,



partaking of Christ is to partake of the truth about God He revealed and the character of Christ that He developed for us.

The lesson points out that without Jesus we do not have eternal life, but does that mean if one claims salvation by Jesus and identifies themselves publicly as a Christian, and does good works in the name of Jesus they are saved? If so, what did Jesus mean by:

“Watch out for false prophets. [A prophet is not merely a person who gives prophecies of the future, the vast majority didn’t. The prophets were God’s spokespeople, whose who came to the people with a message from God. Jesus is saying, watch out for those claiming to be my messenger, claiming to be telling you heavenly truths, but in fact are not, they are false spokespersons.] They come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. By their fruit you will recognize them. [What fruits? Fruits of character—the methods people employ in how they treat others? Are they legalistic, rules oriented, do they present God in a light different that Jesus? Do they practice the methods of God in how they treat others, or would they use the power of their position to coerce consciences under the guise of needing to save lives?] Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? Likewise every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. [You cannot receive Christlike character by worshiping a god that is like Satan in character, even if you call that false god Jesus.] A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them. “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. [Claiming allegiance to Jesus in some legalistic, payment way is not sufficient for salvation, but living out the will of God like Jesus did, being transformed to be like Jesus in character is a requirement—why? Because it is the basis of life, the living law of God written into the heart by the Spirit of God.] Many will say to me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?’ Then I will tell them plainly, ‘I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!’ (Matthew 7:15-23 NIV84). [In whose name were they doing this? Not Buddha or Muhammed but in the name of Jesus. These people would identify themselves as Christians, but Jesus tells them they are evildoers and He never knew them. What is life eternal? Knowing God, why are these people who are doing good works in the name of Jesus described as being evil? If they don’t know Jesus, what are they doing in His name? Misrepresenting Him, doing good works, with the wrong methods and teaching falsehoods, which corrupts their characters and produces bad fruit.

## WEDNESDAY

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Read the second and third paragraph:

There is a historical tendency to read into the expression, “bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus” (1 Thess. 4:14, NKJV) more than the text is saying. Many who accept the theory of the natural immortality of the soul suggest that Christ, at His second coming, will bring with Him



from heaven the souls of the righteous dead who are already in heaven with God. Those souls thus can be reunited with their respective resurrected bodies. But such an interpretation is not in harmony with the overall teachings of Paul on the subject.

Read the words of this non-Adventist theologian on the real meaning of this verse: “The reason why the Thessalonian Christians can have hope as they grieve for the dead members of their church is that God ‘will bring’ them, that is, he will resurrect these deceased believers and cause them to be present at Christ’s return, such that they will be ‘with him.’ The implication is that these deceased believers will not be at some kind of disadvantage at the parousia of Christ but will be ‘with him’ in such a way that they share equally with living believers in the glory associated with his return.” — Jeffrey A. D. Weima, 1-2 Thessalonians, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2014), p. 319.

- The place of the soul and its condition:
  - The common view is the soul is in heaven in consciousness awaiting the reunion with a new body
  - The SDA view is the soul is either in the grave or nowhere waiting for the resurrection (real problems with the SDA view if they think literally, where is the soul of those who died in Hiroshima and Nagasaki that were vaporized, or people who were eaten by sharks at sea etc. etc.)
  - The truth is what we have described with the computer metaphor and which the Bible beautifully describes in this passage. A living functioning human being requires three parts, body, soul, spirit, like a computer requires hardware, software, energy. And when the body dies, the software/soul goes into a state of sleep, just like a computer that runs out of power. And just like a computer can have its data backed up on a cloud, so too, our individualities, souls are stored on the heavenly servers, the Lamb’s book of life waiting for download into new bodies at the second coming, but they are in a state of sleep. Just as the Bible describes.

If you read Friday’s lesson they quote EGW from *Acts of the Apostles*:

“Even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him’ [1 Thess. 4:14], Paul wrote. Many interpret this passage to mean that the sleeping ones will be brought with Christ from heaven; but Paul meant that as Christ was raised from the dead, so God will call the sleeping saints from their graves and take them with Him to heaven. Precious consolation! glorious hope! not only to the church of Thessalonica, but to all Christians wherever they may be.” — Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 259.

How do you understand her statement? Is it in conflict with our position?

Does the Bible take a position on human beings being tripartite, having bodies, souls, and spirits? When the body is destroyed where is the soul, the individuality, the psyche? If we say that the individuality, the memories, mindset, beliefs, attitudes, experiences that make a person a unique



individual are retained in the memory of our infinite God, then where are they being kept? Where is God? The Bible actually describes the storage place as separate from God's own memory and uses the language of Lamb's book of life where the "names" are written, and in the Bible names represent character. EGW herself wrote in other places:

**Remember, your character is being daguerreotyped [photographed] by the great Master Artist in the record books of heaven**, as minutely as the face is reproduced upon the polished plate of the artist. What do the books of heaven say in your case? Are you conforming your character to the Pattern, Jesus Christ? . . . {TSB 62.1}

Remember that **this world is God's daguerreotype office. The pictures of all who live here, old or young, are being made in the books of heaven.** What shall the likeness be?—Letter 78, 1901. 3MR 352.3

So is our explanation about souls being asleep and safe upon the heavenly servers and brought with Jesus upon His return wrong? I don't think so. EGW was writing with the understanding she and her audience had regarding these things at the time, emphasizing the salient and critical point of human beings are mortal and in first death they are not aware but in a state of sleep.

## THURSDAY

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The lesson focuses on the second coming, will it be a secret rapture or will it be the full second coming with every eye seeing Him?

I have my belief about this, but I don't really get concerned about it because it doesn't really matter much as it will become self-evident when Jesus comes. What does matter however, is whether we are restored to genuine friends of Jesus who lie and practice the methods of God in how we treat others.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS:

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**Our New Schedule:** Second Sabbath of every month Dr. Jennings will teach in person followed by potluck. Please mark your calendar and plan to attend our monthly potluck and fellowship. Dr. Jennings will teach remotely the other Sabbaths and those in our studio can interact live with him.

Also, we will start having an afternoon Bible study discussion on potluck weekends. We will NOT be recording or broadcasting the afternoon Bible study and discussion, there are a variety of reasons for this. So plan to attend class, enjoy potluck and join us for a monthly Bible study discussion.