LESSON 13 *March 23–29

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Wait *on the* Lord



SABBATH AFTERNOON

Read for This Week's Study: *Ps. 27:14, Rom. 8:18–25, Psalm 131, Matt. 18:3, Psalm 126, Psalm 92, Mark 16:1–8, 2 Pet. 1:19.*

Memory Text: **"Wait on the LORD; be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart; wait, I say, on the LORD!"** *(Psalm 27:14, NKJV).*

We have reached the last week in this quarter's study of the Psalms. The spiritual journey has taken us through the experience of awe before the majestic Creator, King, and Judge; through the joys of divine deliverance, forgiveness, and salvation; through moments of surrender in grief and lament; and through the glorious promises of God's everlasting presence and the anticipation of the unending universal worship of God. The journey continues, though, as we live in the hope of the Lord's coming when our longing for God will find its ultimate fulfillment. If there is a final word that we can draw from the Psalms, it should be "wait on the LORD."

Waiting on the Lord is not an idle and desperate biding of one's time. Instead, waiting on the Lord is an act full of trust and faith, a trust and faith revealed in action. Waiting on the Lord transforms our gloomy evenings with the expectancy of the bright morning *(Ps. 30:5, Ps. 143:8)*. It strengthens our hearts with renewed hope and peace. It motivates us to work harder, bringing in the sheaves of plentiful harvest from the Lord's mission fields *(Ps. 126:6, Matt. 9:36–38)*. Waiting on the Lord will never put us to shame but will be richly rewarded because the Lord is faithful to all His promises *(Ps. 37:7–11, 18, 34; Ps. 71:1; Ps. 119:137, 138)*.

** Study this week's lesson to prepare for Sabbath, March 30.*

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The Call of Waiting

Read Psalm 27:14; Psalm 37:7, 9, 34; Psalm 39:7; Psalm 40:1; Psalm 69:6; Galatians 5:5; and Romans 8:18–25. What do these texts implore God's people to do?

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Perhaps one of the greatest stresses in life is the stress of waiting. No matter who we are, where we live, what our station in life is, we all at times must wait for things. From waiting in line in a store to waiting to hear a medical prognosis, we wait—which we don't always like doing, do we?

What, then, about waiting for God? The notion of waiting on the Lord is found not only in the Psalms but abounds all through the Bible. The operative word in all this is *perseverance*. Perseverance is our supreme commitment of refusing to succumb to fear of disappointment that somehow God will not come through for us. God's devoted child waits, knowing with certainty that God is faithful and those who wait on Him can trust that if we leave our situation to Him, we can be sure that He will work it out for our best, even if at the time we don't necessarily see it that way.

Waiting on the Lord is more than just hanging on. It is a deep longing for God that is compared to intense thirst in a dry land *(Ps. 63:1)*. The psalmist waits on many blessings from God, but his yearning to be brought close to his God surpasses any other desire and need in life.

As we read in Paul, in this amazing passage in Romans, God and the whole creation are waiting for the renewal of the world and the blessed meeting of God and His people at the end of time. He writes: "For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God" *(Rom. 8:19, NKJV)*.

What an incredible promise!

Yet, while we are waiting for the ultimate salvation and reunion with God, even as "the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs" *(Rom. 8:22, NKJV)*, the Lord still abides with His people now, through the Holy Spirit.

Meanwhile, we are called to bear witness *(Acts 1:4–8)* to the plan of salvation, which will culminate in a new creation. That new creation is, ultimately, what we are waiting for, the final fulfillment of our hopes as Adventist Christians, whose very name, Adventist, contains the idea of the hope that we await. We wait, but we know that it's not in vain. Christ's death and resurrection, at the first coming, is our surety of His second coming.

What are some things you are waiting for now from God? How do we learn to wait in faith and in trust, especially when what we are praying for hasn't yet come?

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Peace of a Weaned Child

Read Psalm 131. What does this psalm teach us about our relationship with God?

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God's people live in a world that afflicts the faithful, a world full of temptations and hardship for almost everyone. A refreshed conviction that he is a child of God and dependent on God for his life consoles the psalmist and brings him to confess that his pride has no value. The deceitfulness of pride is that it causes the proud to become self-centered and unable to look beyond themselves. The proud are thus blinded to the higher reality of God.

In contrast, the righteous lift their eyes to God *(Ps. 123:1, 2)*. The acknowledgment of God's greatness makes them humble and free from self-seeking and vain ambition. The psalmist confesses that he does not seek "great matters" and "things too high" *(Ps. 131:1)*. These expressions describe God's works in the world that are beyond human comprehension. Modern science has shown us that even the "simplest" things can be incredibly complicated and far beyond our understanding, at least for now. In fact, there's a great irony: the more we learn about the physical world, the greater the mysteries that appear before us.

Meanwhile, the metaphor in Psalm 131:2, "like a weaned child with [its] mother" *(NKJV)*, is a powerful image of one who finds calmness and who is quieted in the embrace of God. It points to the loving relationship a child has with its mother at various stages in that child's young life.

Through weaning us from insubstantial ambitions and pride, God introduces us to the nourishment of solid food, which is to "do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work" *(John 4:34, also Heb. 5:12–14)*. The childlike trust depicted in Psalm 131 is mature faith that has been tried and tested by the hardships of life and has found God to be faithful and true to His Word.

The psalmist's attention at the end rests on the well-being of God's people. Ultimately, we are called to use our experience with God to strengthen His church. That is, from what we have learned, personally, of God's faithfulness and goodness, we can share with others who, for whatever reason, still struggle with their faith. Our witness about Christ can even be within the church itself, where many need to know Him for themselves.

" 'Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven' " *(Matt. 18:3, NKJV)*. What is Jesus saying to us here? What does this idea entail?

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Bringing in the Sheaves

Read Psalm 126. What gives strength and hope to God's people? What is being said here, in this context, that we can apply to our own lives today?

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The Lord's miraculous deliverances in the past are an inexhaustible source of inspiration for God's people and their source of hope for the future. The past deliverance was so great that it could be described as a dream-come-true experience *(Isa. 29:7, 8)*. Notice that the generation that praises the Lord in Psalm 126 for His past deliverance of His people from captivity *(Ps. 126:1)* is presently in captivity *(Ps. 126:4)*.

Yet, the past joy and relief are relived through songs and appropriated in present experience. The new generations keep biblical history alive by counting themselves as present among those who saw the events firsthand. Thus, a living faith cherishes God's great deeds for His people in the past as something that the Lord has done for us and not simply things that the Lord did only for *them* (the past generations of believers).

In fact, the memory of the past spurs renewed hope for the present. The image of "the streams in the south" *(Ps. 126:4)* is a powerful metaphor of God's acting suddenly and powerfully on behalf of His people. The very south of Judah was an arid desert region. The streams were formed suddenly and filled with rushing waters after heavy rainfalls during the rainy season. The early and late rains played a crucial role in the success of the agricultural year *(Deut. 11:14, Deut. 28:12)*. Similarly, the image of sowing in tears and reaping in joy *(Ps. 126:5, 6)* is a powerful promise of divine leading from a difficult present to a happy future.

The end of the harvest season was the time when the ancient Hebrew pilgrimages brought the fruits of the season to God's temple in Jerusalem *(Exod. 34:22, 26)*. The harvest motif provided a potent spiritual lesson to the people at that time. Just as the hard labor of sowing and caring for the fields, orchards, and vineyards is rewarded with the joy of a plentiful harvest, so the present trials of God's people will be crowned with the joy of salvation at the end of time. The image of the great harvest points to God's restoration of His kingdom on earth at Christ's second coming *(Amos 9:13–15, Matt. 9:37)*. Here, too, however, the theme of waiting arises. As with the harvest, we must wait to see the fruit and results of our labor.

Dwell on some times when you clearly and unmistakably saw the Lord working in your life or in the lives of others. How can you draw hope from those experiences for whatever you might be going through now?

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Waiting in God's Sabbath Rest

Read Psalm 92. What two aspects of the Sabbath day are highlighted in this song for the Sabbath day?

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The praise of God for the great works of His hands *(Ps. 92:4, 5)* and the Eden-like portrayal of the righteous *(Ps. 92:12–14)* clearly point to Creation, the first aspect that the Sabbath commemorates. The psalm also magnifies the Lord for His victory over enemies as the God of justice *(Ps. 92:7–15)* and so reinforces the second Sabbath theme—redemption from evil *(Deut. 5:12–15)*. Thus, Psalm 92 extols God for His past Creation and present sustaining of the world, and it points to the end-time hope in eternal divine peace and order.

The people can enjoy Sabbath rest because God is the "Most High" *(Ps. 92:1, NKJV)*; His superior position on the high places gives Him an unparalleled advantage over their enemies.

Yet, although He is the Most High, the Lord readily reaches down to rescue those who call on Him. The Lord's work of creation and especially redemption of that creation should inspire people to worship God and love Him. After all, living in a fallen creation, without the hope of redemption, isn't anything to be particularly thrilled about. We love, we suffer, we die—and do so without any hope. Hence, we praise the Lord, not only as our Creator but as our Redeemer, as well.

"Fresh oil" conveys the psalmist's renewed devotion to serve God as His reconsecrated servant *(Ps. 92:10)*. The anointing with oil was done for consecration of chosen people such as priests and kings *(Exod. 40:15, 1 Sam. 10:1)*. Yet, the psalmist chose an unusual Hebrew word, *balal*, to describe his anointing that does not typically depict anointing of God's servants but denotes "mixing" of oil with other parts of the sacrifice *(Exod. 29:2, NKJV; Lev. 2:4, 5)*. The psalmist's unique use of *balal* implies that the psalmist wishes to present himself as a living sacrifice to the Lord and to consecrate his whole self to God *(Rom. 12:1)*.

It is not surprising to find thoughts about consecration in a psalm that is dedicated to the Sabbath because the Sabbath is the sign that the Lord sanctifies His people *(Exod. 31:13)*. The images of palm trees and cedars of Lebanon portray God's people growing in faith and true appreciation of God's wonderful purposes and love. The Sabbath is the sign of the Lord's eternal covenant with His people *(Ezek. 20:20)*. Thus, the Sabbath rest is essential to God's people because it empowers them to trustingly wait upon the Lord to fulfill all His covenantal promises *(Heb. 4:1–10)*.

Read through Psalm 92 again. What great hope is offered to us there, and how can we, even right now, take comfort in what it says?

Joy Comes in the Morning

Read Psalm 5:3, Psalm 30:5, Psalm 49:14, Psalm 59:16, Psalm 92:2, Psalm 119:147, 2 Peter 1:19, and Revelation 22:16. What time of day is symbolically portrayed as the time of divine redemption and why?

In the Psalms, morning is typically the time when God's redemption is anticipated. Morning reveals God's favor, which ends the long night of despair and trouble *(Ps. 130:5, 6)*. In Psalm 143, God's deliverance will reverse the present darkness of death *(Ps. 143:3)* into the light of a new morning *(Ps. 143:8)*, and from being in the pit *(Ps. 143:7)* into residing in "the land of uprightness" *(Ps. 143:10)*.

Read Mark 16:1–8. What happened in the morning talked about here, and why is that so important to us?

The resurrection morning of Jesus Christ opened the way for the eternal morning of God's salvation for all who believe in His name. Jesus' disciples experienced the full strength of the promise in Psalm 30:5: "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning," when they met the resurrected Lord. It is only by God's favor and unconditional love that our weeping is transformed to joy *(Ps. 30:5, 7)*.

As the morning star announces the birth of a new day, so faith heralds the new reality of eternal life in God's children *(2 Pet. 1:19)*. Jesus is called the bright and morning star *(Rev. 22:16)*, whom we eagerly await to establish His kingdom in which there will be no more night, evil, and death *(Rev. 21:1–8, 25)*. In the end, more than anything else, this is what we are waiting for when we talk about waiting on the Lord. And, surely, the wait is worth it.

"Over the rent sepulcher of Joseph, Christ had proclaimed in triumph, 'I am the resurrection, and the life.' These words could be spoken only by the Deity. All created beings live by the will and power of God. They are dependent recipients of the life of God. From the highest seraph to the humblest animate being, all are replenished from the Source of life. Only He who is one with God could say, I have power to lay down My life, and I have power to take it again. In His divinity, Christ possessed the power to break the bonds of death."—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages,* p. 785.

Death, it has been said, has been etched in our cells at birth. Though true, at least for us fallen beings, what has the resurrection of Jesus promised us about the temporality of death? Why must we never forget just how temporal death is for us?

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Further Thought: Read Ellen G. White, "Growing Up Into Christ," pp. 67–75, in *Steps to Christ.*

The Psalms utter fervent appeals to wait on the Lord. "Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for Him" *(Ps. 37:7, NKJV)*. When waiting strikes us as burdensome, uncertain, and lonely, we should remember the disciples on the day of Jesus' ascension to heaven *(Acts 1:4–11)*. Jesus was taken up to heaven before their eyes, while they were left behind to wait for Him to come back on some unknown future day. Who has ever experienced a more intense yearning to receive God's blessing now than the disciples on that day? They surely longed, "Lord, take us with You now." Yet, they were instructed to wait for the promise of the Father and for Jesus' return. If we think that the disciples were filled with despair and disappointment, we will be surprised. They returned to Jerusalem and did exactly what Jesus told them—they waited for the gift of the Holy Spirit and then preached the gospel to the world with power *(Acts 1:12–14, Acts 2)*.

Our Lord's commandment to wait on Him is an impossible one unless He has done His work in us through the Holy Spirit. No amount of human enthusiasm will ever stand up to the strain that waiting will impose upon our frail self. Only one thing will bear the strain, and that is abiding in Jesus Christ, namely, a personal relationship with Him. "Then if Christ is dwelling in our hearts, He will work in us 'both to will and to do of His good pleasure.' Philippians 2:13. We shall work as He worked; we shall manifest the same spirit. And thus, loving Him and abiding in Him, we shall 'grow up into Him in all things, which is the head, even Christ.' Ephesians 4:15."—Ellen G. White, S*teps to Christ*, p. 75. As we continue to wait on the Lord, we will find peace and contentment in the Psalms. Our prayers and songs are where God's heart and our hearts meet daily.

Discussion Questions:

❶ Why is waiting significant in our spiritual life? Discuss the experiences of waiting of some biblical heroes of faith. How did waiting purify and strengthen their faith? *(Rom. 4:19–22, Hebrews 11)***.**

❷ What is the end of our waiting? *(Ps. 37:34–40)***. That is, what are we promised when all things are, finally, resolved? What hope do we find in these texts, for instance, about the justice that has so long been missing in this life?**

❸ Why, as far as the dead are concerned, and as far as their own experience goes *(Eccles. 9:5)***, is their waiting for Jesus almost done? What hope can we take from the answer?**

INSIDE *Story*

Waldensians in Poland

By Andrew McChesney

Ryszard Jankowski couldn't get the police to leave him alone. Every time he set up a stand to sell Ellen White's *The Great Controversy* and other books in a Baltic resort town in Poland, the police showed up and demanded that he remove the stand and the books.

Then the Polish Seventh-day Adventist publishing house released a special issue of the *Signs of the Times* magazine, and church leaders sent copies to members of the Polish government. One government minister liked the issue so much that he wrote a letter asking towns across Poland to support its distribution. Ryszard took the letter and a copy of the magazine to the mayor of the resort town where he had trouble with the police.

The mayor was impressed. He knew the government minister.

"He was my university professor," he said. "Of course, you can freely distribute this magazine here."

"Can I get your permission in writing?" Ryszard asked.

The mayor wrote a letter and gave it to Ryszard.

Ryszard took the letter and again set up his book stand on the street. He placed the *Signs of the Times* magazine on the stand together with *The Great Controversy* and other books. Before long, the police appeared.

"You can't sell your books in our city," a police officer said.

"Look, I have a letter from the mayor," Ryszard said.

The police officers read the letter carefully. Then they saluted.

"OK, you can stay," one said.

But that wasn't the end of the story. Shortly afterward, a grandmother stopped by the book stand. Someone had given her *The Great Controversy* some time earlier, and she had read it to her grandson. He had liked it very much, especially the portrayal of Waldensian young people clandestinely sharing the Word of God at the risk of their lives in the Middle Ages. The grandmother told Ryszard that her grandson wanted to be like the Waldensians. Her grandson understood that he needed to be like them—faithful to the Word of God at all costs.

"He saw your stand and your book *The Great Controversy*," she said. "He said to me, 'Grandma, the Waldensians are in our town.' "

So, the grandmother sought out Ryszard to tell him about her grandson. She later joined the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Thank you for your Thirteenth Sabbath Offering in 2017 that helped build a television studio for Hope Channel Poland. Ryszard Jankowski is the president of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Poland and a regular speaker on Hope Channel Poland, the local affiliate of Hope Channel International.

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Part I: Overview

Key Text: *Psalm 27:14*

The concept of *waiting* in the book of Psalms denotes having, and demonstrating, an enduring faith. Believers are called to wait upon the Lord for the fulfillment of His promises, just as Abraham and Sarah were called to wait for the blessing of the promised child *(Gen. 12:1–4, Gen. 21:1–5)*, which, finally, was bestowed after 25 years. Similarly, Israel waited for deliverance, enduring 430 years in Egypt, before departing for the Promised Land *(Gen. 15:13; Exod. 12:40, 41)*. Likewise, the psalmists, with enduring faith, held on to God's promises, as did Daniel, who, in fulfillment of the 70 years of Jeremiah's prophecy *(Jer. 29:10, 11)*, waited for the return of the Jews to the Promised Land *(Dan. 9:1, 2)*. The Jews also waited hundreds of years for the promised Messiah until the fullness of time was reached and Jesus came to this earth in human flesh.

Waiting is made up of two variables: (1) the anticipation of the fulfillment of a promise, and (2) the expectation that what is promised will be fulfilled within, or by, a certain time. In life, when we wait, we actively anticipate an event to come, whether we await a new job, an imminent wedding, the birth of a baby, the completion of an academic degree, an upcoming voyage, a new appointment, et cetera. A lapse of time must transpire between the anticipation of the event itself and its fulfillment. The same is true for God's promises in our daily life as well as for the ultimate fulfillment of the great events in the plan of Redemption.

Part II: Commentary

Six Hebrew verbs or words are used by the psalmists when they wish to express the challenges associated with waiting. We shall consider each of them briefly.

Qawah

Qawah is the most common Hebrew verb used to express the concept of *hope*, which also can be expressed in the verbal form "to wait for," "to await," "to expect." Of the 20 times in which *qawah* is used in the Psalter, the Lord is the object or the One longed for: "Let no one who waits on You be ashamed" *(Ps. 25:3, NKJV; see Ps. 69:6)*; "Let integrity and uprightness preserve me, for I wait for You" *(Ps. 25:21, NKJV)*; "My soul, wait silently for God alone, for my expectation is

from Him" *(Ps. 62:5, NKJV)*. As these verses amply show, our confidence should always be in the Lord.

The noun form, "hope" (Hebrew *tiqvah*), also comes from the verbal root of *qawah*: "You are my hope, O Lord GOD, you are my trust from my youth" *(Ps. 71:5, NKJV)*. For the psalmist, the only hope we have in this life is in God. After considering how ephemeral this existence is, the psalmist exclaims to the Lord, "My hope is in You" *(Ps. 39:7, NKJV)*.

The verb *qawah* can be used in a negative sense, as in waiting for the destruction of God's people at the hands of the enemy *(Ps. 56:6, Ps. 119:95)*. The negative use of this word reminds us, as sinners, that the focus of our hope is often centered on an anticipation of an evil outcome. To guard against this tendency, our expectations must come from hearts regenerated by the Holy Spirit.

Yahal

Yahal means "to wait, hope, endure, long for." After *qawah*, it's the verbal root most used in the Old Testament to express hope. Of the 48 times in which it is used, 21 of those instances occur in the book of Psalms. *Yahal* is usually connected with *qawah (Job 30:26, Ps. 39:8, Ps. 130:5, Prov. 10:28, Prov. 11:7, Isa. 51:5)*.

In the book of Job, *yahal* is usually applied to hope that is futile or seems useless, and is thus not connected to God *(Job 6:11, Job 14:14, Job 29:21)*. But such is not the case in the Psalter. God is the explicit object of the hope that is rendered from *yahal*, as indicated in Psalm 31:24, "all you who hope in the LORD" *(NKJV)*; Psalm 33:22, "just as we hope in You" *(NKJV)*; Psalm 38:15, "for in You, O LORD, I hope" *(NKJV)*; Psalm 39:7, "my hope is in You" *(NKJV)*; Psalm 42:11, "hope in God" *(NKJV)*; and Psalm 69:3, "my eyes fail while I wait for my God" *(NKJV)*. Our Creator is worthy of all our confidence. Our trust in His faithfulness and love is the foundation of all true religion, and the basis of the relationship between God and humans. This relationship is based on His mercy and on His loving-kindness, which He bestows upon those who trust in Him *(Ps. 33:18, Ps. 147:11)*.

In light of the aforementioned Bible truths, we find it expedient to direct our attention, once again, to Psalm 119. As this psalm testifies, the object of hope is the Word of God *(Ps. 119:43, 49, 74, 81, 114, 147)*. Moreover, the words from the mouth of God, as recorded in the Scriptures, are the only true foundation for the Christian faith. It is within the pages and promises of the Scriptures that the Christian may find the assurance of his hope and salvation. The enemy is well aware of this fact and has made the Bible a special focus of his attacks, attempting to distract the believer from its truths or to deceive him into believing that the Scriptures are mere myth, invented by humans. All

evidence we encounter in support of the Bible, its transforming power, its fulfilled prophecies, and its wonderful promises, should impel us to join with the psalmist in asserting, "And in His word I do hope" *(Ps. 130:5, NKJV)*. Above all else, our attention should be focused on the Scriptures as the source of all our hope.

Hkah

The verb *hkah* means "to wait, endure, expect, hope." As with the previous verb, *yahal*, the object of *hkah* is usually God *(Isa. 8:17, Isa. 30:18, Isa. 64:3, Zeph. 3:8)*.

Hkah is used only twice in the Psalter. The first usage appears in Psalm 33:20, a song that exalts the Creator and Sustainer of the world *(Ps. 33:1–11)*. Psalm 33:12 is the key verse of this psalm, stating the election of God's people by the Lord. Such election is the foundation of a believer's confidence in God. By contrast, we cannot trust in force of arms, weapons, or warriors *(Ps. 33:16, 17)*. The psalmist proclaims, "Our soul waits for the LORD; He is our help and our shield" *(Ps. 33:20, NKJV)*. As humans living in a secular, materialistic culture, we tend to put our faith in our money, in our abilities and diplomas, in science, or in our country; but, as Christians, our trust should rest solely in the Lord.

The other usage of the verb, in Psalm 106, shows the lack of a patient, enduring spirit. Psalm 106 is a historical psalm as we saw in a previous lesson. In Psalm 106:6, the writer recalls God's miracles on behalf of His people during the Exodus and the subsequent wilderness sojourn. But God's people "soon forgot His works; they did not wait (*hkah*) for His counsel" *(Ps. 106:13, NKJV)*. We face the same great temptation today, as well. We all too easily can forget what the Lord has done in our lives, making it difficult to wait for His promises. The heart that forgets to wait upon the Lord may make a desperate attempt to "help" the Lord fulfill His promises, as we see in the story of Jacob and his mother, Rebekah. Their impatience to secure the birthright blessing, at almost any cost, serves as a potent reminder to us to wait on the Lord to provide, in His own time, what He has promised.

Dumah

Dumah is a noun that means "silence, rest." "It refers to the silence of death ([Pss.] 94:17; 115:17) . . . *dumah* refers to a silence or rest that reflects trust in God (Ps. 39:2 [3]; 62:1 [2]) or to a lack of silence that results from God's apparent inactivity ([Ps.] 22:2)."—*New International Dictionary of Old Testament Exegesis*, entry on *dumah*, vol. 1, p. 912.

Psalm 62 uses this noun to mean waiting in silence. The word is translated twice, as follows:

Psalm 62:1: "Truly my soul silently waits for God; from Him comes my salvation" *(NKJV)*.

Psalm 62:5: "My soul, wait silently for God alone, for my expectation is from Him" *(NKJV)*.

Elsewhere in the Scriptures, "waiting" implies "to keep silent." In times of waiting, the best way to endure and remain steadfast is to remain silent and meditate on God's Word. Such a mindset helps to sustain and prepare us for the test of endurance that we must pass through before we see the fulfillment of our expectations. The Scripture comforts us in our waiting with these words: "For the vision is yet for an appointed time; but at the end it will speak, and it will not lie. Though it tarries, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry" *(Hab. 2:3, NKJV)*.

Sabar

The verb *sabar* is used less often for hope in the Old Testament than the other words we've considered thus far. *Sabar* conveys the idea of "to expect, hope, examine." The psalmist states with confidence, "Happy is he who has the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope [*sabar*] is in the LORD his God" *(Ps. 146:5, NKJV)*. Trusting the Lord will bring happiness to the believer, even in the midst of trials. We have studied about the reasons to trust God and to worship Him; the core of these reasons is hope.

Interestingly, the psalmist uses *sabar* twice to express the action of waiting and, as such, it exemplifies what waiting is all about. Psalm 104:27 and Psalm 145:15 depict the animals waiting for the Creator to feed them: "these all wait for You," and "the eyes of all look expectantly to You" *(NKJV)*. This imagery evokes the words of Jesus: " 'Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?' " *(Matt. 6:26, NKJV)*. As this imagery instructs us, we should wait, with the patient expectation of the birds of the air, without anguish or desperation, for the blessings from heaven that God has promised us. As we cultivate patience and the humble faith of a child, we will be strengthened in our waiting. Our prayer life, as a result, will become more empowered too.

Hil

The verb *hil* means "to labor, writhe, tremble" and also "to bring to labor" or "brought to birth." Thus, Psalm 37:7 can be translated, literally: "Rest in YHWH and '*travail, or bring forth in birth'* for Him" (emphasis supplied). The implication is that the long-suffering endurance we must have as we wait for God's promises to be fulfilled is like the anguish of an expectant mother ready to deliver her child. This period of suffering implies hard labor, intense pain, and tears. The result of the newborn

baby, however, offsets the anticipation and experience of suffering. In the same way, waiting for the Lord often involves temporary anguish and suffering, but the outcome will be rich in blessings from the Lord.

Part III: Life Application

Hope is an important component of every aspect of temporal and spiritual life. The apostle Paul ranks it, along with faith and love, as among the three supreme virtues of a fruit-bearing, Spirit-filled Christian life *(1 Cor. 13:13)*.

Hope motivates us to persevere in the face of sickness or tragedy. Hope is the fire that burns inside of us, igniting the desire to grasp the power in God's promises. This flame is fed by the daily reading of and meditation upon the Scriptures. Every trouble in our lives finds its solution in a specific gem of Bible truth. Hope is the hand that catches these scintillating treasures and sets them firmly in the heart. As we wait for God's fulfillment, our endurance will be tested, sometimes for hours, sometimes for years, but hope gives us the strength to be steadfast, no matter the duration or severity of our trial.

Assuredly, hope is the attribute that keeps our eyes turned toward heaven as we await the second coming of Jesus.

Notes

The "great controversy" theme pervades the Bible, from Genesis to Revelation. This quarter's lessons, written by Mark Finley, trace this theme through world history from God's viewpoint, as prophecy reveals it, from the time of Christ down to our day and beyond. God's love is revealed as the great controversy unfolds. We see its height and depth most clearly through the Cross, where God's love was displayed before the entire universe as Christ poured out His life to redeem humanity, and Satan's ultimate defeat was assured.

This quarter will explore the central issues of the conflict between Christ and Satan. We will see the courage of the Waldenses despite persecution, and the determination of the Reformers to follow Bible truth in the face of torture and martyrdom. The Reformers' faith in Scripture and assurance of salvation by grace through faith paved the way for the rise of the Advent movement.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church was raised up by God to build on the foundation laid by the Reformers to restore biblical truths that had been lost through the centuries. Central to our mission is proclaiming the three angels' messages *(Rev. 14:6–12)*, God's final warning to a world soon to come to an end.

Thus, we will use the book, *The Great Controversy*, by Ellen G. White, along with the Bible, as our thematic outline to study this tremendous topic. The book chapters on which each lesson is based are noted to facilitate its use as a companion book for further study and sharing, that we all might more fully "know the love of Christ, which passes knowledge" *(Eph. 3:19, NKJV)*.

Lesson 1—The War Behind All Wars

The Week at a Glance:

SUNDAY: **War in Heaven** *(Rev. 12:7–9)*
MONDAY: **Lucifer Deceives: Christ Prevails** *(Rev. 12:4, Rev. 22:17)*
TUESDAY: **Planet Earth Becomes Involved** *(Gen. 3:15)*
WEDNESDAY: **Love Finds a Way** *(Heb. 2:9)*
THURSDAY: **Our High Priest** *(Heb. 4:15, 16)*
Memory Text—*Rev. 12:7, 8*

Sabbath Gem: Looking at the world through the lens of God's love, in light of the great controversy between good and evil, reassures each of us that right will triumph over wrong, and will do so forever.

Lesson 2—The Central Issue: Love or Selfishness

The Week at a Glance:

SUNDAY: **A Broken-Hearted Savior** *(Luke 19:41–44)*
MONDAY: **Christians Providentially Preserved** *(Psalm 46:1)*
TUESDAY: **Faithful Amid Persecution** *(Acts 8:1–8)*
WEDNESDAY: **Caring for the Community** *(Acts 2:44–47)*
THURSDAY: **A Legacy of Love** *(John 13:35)*
Memory Text—*Isaiah 41:10, NKJV*

Sabbath Gem: Jesus' instruction in Matthew 24 clearly outlines last-day events in the context of Jerusalem's fall.

Lessons for People Who Are Legally Blind The *Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide* is available free in braille, on MP3 disc, and via online download to people who are legally blind individuals who cannot hold or focus on ink print. Contact Christian Record Services, Inc., Box 6097, Lincoln, NE 68506-0097. Phone: 402-488-0981, option 3; e-mail: info@christianrecord.org; website: www.christianrecord.org.