

His Return as King and Friend



Teacher's Guide

Materials

black/white board or flip-chart; pens or pencils; Bibles

Surveying the Source

Dan. 9:24–27; Matthew 24; Luke 21:25–31; John 14:1–3; 1 Thess. 4:13–18; Heb. 9:28.

Plotting the Course

The students will:

- ▶ Be able to explain how they can believe in a soon-coming Savior and have assurance of salvation at the same time.
- ▶ Understand how to draw the line between excitement for Christ's soon com-

ing and setting a date for His coming.

- ▶ Be able to explain what “soon” means in the context of the Second Coming.

Preparing to Lead

It's in our name—Seventh-day *Adventist*. The doctrine of the Second Coming is front and center for our church. We believe Jesus is coming back, and we believe His coming will be soon. But here's the problem. We started saying this more than 150 years ago. How long can we

maintain the idea of a soon coming with any credibility? Are we rationalizing the delay, or just ignoring it? In this lesson, I hope the teacher and class will bask in the assurance of salvation with the Second Coming in mind and struggle with the issue of the time delay.

Getting Started

A. (This activity corresponds with Part A of Delving Into the Word). After greeting the class, hand out the Pre-test/Post-test (see p. 43). Tell the class that you want them to write down brief answers to the three questions. Let them know they will retake the quiz at the end of class and that they will compare their second answers with their first answers. After you think the class has had sufficient time to answer the questions (about five minutes), take five more minutes to discuss their answers. Tell them that in this lesson, we will emphasize how assurance in Christ can take away the fear some people face when they think about the Second Coming.

B. (This activity corresponds with Part B of Delving Into the Word). After greeting the class, hand out the Pre-test/Post-test (see p. 43). Tell the class that you want them to write down brief answers to the three questions. Let them know they will retake the quiz at the end of class and that they compare their second answers with their first answers. After you feel the class has had sufficient time to answer the questions (about five minutes), take five more minutes to discuss the answers the class wrote down. Tell them that in this lesson, we will emphasize the problem of defining what “soon” means in reference to the Second Coming.

Delving Into the Word

A. Say: “Seventh-day Adventists don’t believe in the doctrine of once-saved-always-saved. Because we believe that we can lose our salvation, many of us harbor doubts about our salvation. These doubts affect how we feel about the Second Coming. Instead of being filled with joy over the Second Coming, too many of us face it with fear.” Ask the class if they can relate to this. Do they know people who struggle to have assurance of salvation?

Ask individuals to read the following Scriptures which teach salvation assurance: ●John 3:16; ●John 10:27–30; ●1 John 5:11, 12. Ask class members to share the courage they receive from these verses. Ask for other verses that have been meaningful to them in terms of assurance.

Explain that 1 Thessalonians 4:13–18 brings the Second Coming and salvation assurance together. Have a few students read these six verses aloud. *Ask:* ●What message is in verses 13 and 18? ●How do these two verses reduce the fear that can

be associated with the Second Coming? ●When it comes to the two doctrines, what should our focus be?

B. Ask: “What truth is taught in Matthew 24:36?” *Say:* “Even with this clear Scripture, Adventism has had date-setters throughout its history. They are usually more sophisticated than just declaring His coming will be on such and such a day, date and year. Typically they will speak of a ‘season’ or before such and such a month and year. Is it possible that by speaking too much of the soon coming of Jesus we can become de facto datesetters?”

Ask: “In the context of the Second Coming, what does ‘soon’ or ‘imminent’ mean? ●Is it possible to take timing out of the equation and maintain expectancy?” Push the class to come up with some answers. The answer lies in a balanced approach. *Discuss this thought:* Maybe the “He is” coming back is more important than the “when” He is coming back.

Discussing the Ideas

1. What are some suggestions you can offer to reduce the anxiety some have about the Second Coming?

2. How many years can the church say Jesus is coming soon and still be taken seriously?

3. Explain how increasing your salvation assurance can increase your excitement for the Second Coming.

4. What are the dangers in deemphasizing how soon the Second Coming will be?

5. What things other than how soon Jesus will return can make you excited about His return?

6. How do you explain what John was thinking in Revelation 22:20?

Closing the Activity

Are you read for Jesus to come? Give the Pre-test/Post-test again, and have the students compare their second answers with their first answers. Give one last opportunity for class members to share their experiences. *Ask:* ●Why do you look forward to Jesus’ coming? ●How do you stay excited about His coming de-

spite the delay?

Say: When it comes to the Second Coming and salvation assurance, the question should be, Where is our focus? If our focus is on ourselves, we will be insecure. If our focus is on Jesus, our joy will be full (John 15:11)!

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Pre-test/Post-test

1. It is near the end of June, the 4th of July (U.S.A. Independence Day) is coming soon. Is saying that Jesus is coming soon like saying that the 4th of July is coming soon?

First answer:

Second answer:

2. If Jesus is coming really soon (by Monday), am I happy or nervous?

First answer:

Second answer:

3. What scriptural reference to the Second Coming is the most comforting to you?

First answer:

Second answer: