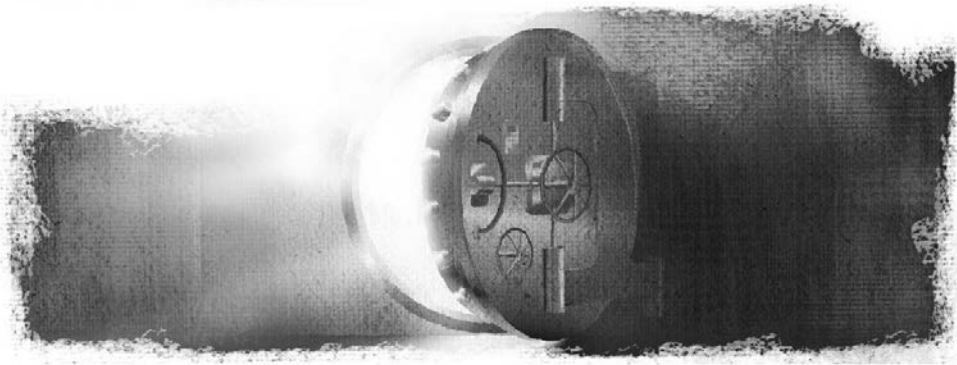


Saving Your Treasure in Heaven



SABBATH—FEBRUARY 4

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON: Genesis 6:5–14; Genesis 12:1–3; Genesis 13:10–12; Genesis 32:22–31; Hebrews 11:24–29.

MEMORY VERSE: “ ‘It is worth nothing for you to have the whole world [everything this life offers us] if you yourself are lost’ ” (Mark 8:36, ERV).



“ ‘The treasures in heaven cannot be destroyed by moths or rust. And thieves cannot break in and steal that treasure’ ” (Matthew 6:19, 20, ICB).

JESUS gives us the best advice about what we should do with our money and our treasures. Jesus says: “ ‘Don't store [collect] treasures for yourselves here on earth. Moths and rust will destroy treasures here on earth. And thieves can break into your house and steal the things you have. So store your treasure in heaven. The treasures in heaven cannot be destroyed by moths or rust. And thieves cannot break in and steal that treasure’ ” (Matthew 6:19, 20, ICB).

Jesus finishes by saying, “ ‘Your heart will be where your treasure is’ ” (Matthew 6:21, ERV). So, Jesus really is saying, “Show Me what you spend your money on. That will show Me where your heart is.”

Do you want to build up God's kingdom? If yes, then support God's work with your money. Put your time, money, prayer, and energy into God's work. If you do, you soon will become more interested in His work. Your heart will be filled with more love for God's work, too. This week, we will study Bible verses and ideas that teach us how to save our treasures in heaven. Then God will give us an everlasting reward at the Second Coming.

NOAH MADE THE LORD HAPPY (Genesis 6:5–14)

Often, God asks people who want riches to make big changes in life. Are you ready to do something big for God? Get ready to make big changes!

Read about Noah in Genesis 6:5–14. What big changes happened to Noah because he chose to obey God? Noah warned everyone that a flood was coming. We also must warn people that we are in the end times. What important lessons can we learn from Noah’s example?

Noah didn’t spend his time and money only making himself happy. Noah chose to do what God asked him to do. Noah spent 120 years building the big boat that God told him to make.

Today, many people say that the story about the Flood is make-believe. Their doubt is nothing new. “Before the Flood, the people on earth said that the laws of nature would never change. The laws had stayed the same for hundreds and hundreds of years. Before this time, rain never fell from the sky. Mist or dew watered the earth. The rivers never overflowed. Laws kept the waters from flooding their shores.”—Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 96, adapted. Before the Flood, people argued that a flood could never happen. After the Flood, some people said that the Flood never happened at all!

In the same way, the Bible says that many people in the end times won’t believe that the earth will end (read 2 Peter 3:3–7). What does God expect us to do during this time? We should be patient. We should do the work God has asked us to do. God promises us a wonderful reward in the future. We don’t know when Jesus will come back. But do we need to know the exact date? What matters is that we do what Noah did. We must do what God asks us, even if we must make some big changes in life.

God asked Noah to make a big change in his life. How ready are you to make whatever changes God may ask you to make? (Hint: read Luke 16:10.)



**“Before this time,
rain never fell
from the sky.”**

ABRAM: MAN OF FAITH (Genesis 12:1–3)

God commanded Abram to leave his homeland and his family. God told Abram to go to a land that He would show him. For sure, this decision wasn't easy to make. No doubt Abram gave up some pleasures and comforts to follow God.

Read Genesis 12:1–3 about God's promise to Abram. Abram accepted the promise. How did God use Abram "to bless all the people on earth" (Genesis 12:3, ERV)?



“God called Abraham to travel to another place that he promised to give him” (Hebrews 11:8, ERV).

Abram left his home and his family. This move was a big, life-changing decision for Abram. “God called Abraham to travel to another place that he promised to give him. Abraham did not know where that other place was. But he obeyed God and started traveling because he had faith” (Hebrews 11:8, ERV). “Abraham didn't question God. Abraham obeyed. Abraham's obedience is one of the most powerful examples of faith in the whole Bible.”—Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 126, adapted.

Most of us wouldn't want to leave our homes, families, and friends. But Abram did so. Abram was happy to be where God wanted him to be. During their lifetimes, Abram, Isaac, and Jacob didn't get the land God promised them. But these men trusted God anyway.

What main message can we see in Hebrews 11:8–13?

People knew Abram was a prince. Abram was brave, giving, and caring, too. We can follow Abram's example when we tell other people around us about God. God will give Abraham and us an everlasting reward. “‘Abraham believed God, and because of this faith he was accepted as one who is right with God’ [quote from Genesis 15:6]. So you should know that the true children of Abraham are those who have faith” (Galatians 3:6, 7, ERV). “If you belong to Christ, then you have become the true children of Abraham. What God promised to him is now yours” (Galatians 3:29, NLV).

Abraham's story is about someone who makes a big, life-changing decision just the same as Noah did. Both men made their decisions because they chose to obey God.

What important rule is in 2 Corinthians 4:18? How did Noah and Abraham follow this same rule? How should this rule help us make our own spiritual decisions?

LOT'S BAD DECISIONS (Genesis 13:10–12)

When Abram left home to follow God, Lot chose to go with him. Lot was the son of Abram's brother. Genesis 13 shows us how much God blessed Abram: "At this time Abram was very rich. He had many animals and much silver and gold" (Genesis 13:2, ERV). The Bible adds, "Lot also had many sheep, cattle and tents" (Genesis 13:5, ICB). Both Abram and Lot became very rich. God blessed them with many cattle. Abram wanted to avoid any problems between his herdsmen and Lot's herdsmen. So, Abram offered to let Lot choose where he wanted to live. Of course, Lot should have let Abram choose first. Lot was rich because of Abram. But Lot was selfish. He wanted the best land for himself.

Read Genesis 13:10–12 about Lot's decision. Why do you think Lot chose to do what he did?

Lot chose to move to the city. But then something bad happened to Lot. When Abram heard what happened to Lot, what did Abram do? Did Abram say, "Well, too bad for you, Lot." No! Abram saved Lot from danger (read Genesis 14).

Sometimes our greedy hearts keep us from learning from our mistakes, the same as Lot. Lot moved back to Sodom after Abram saved his life! But God forgave Lot. God planned to destroy Sodom for being so evil. But first, God sent angels to warn Lot and his family to leave Sodom.

Read in Genesis 18:20–33 about God's visit to earth. Why did God visit Abraham? When God tells Abraham His plan to destroy the cities, how does Abraham answer?

Abraham cares for Lot and his family. Abraham tries to save them. He asks God not to destroy the cities if 50 good people can be found there. Abraham starts with 50 good people and then reduces that number little by little to only ten good people. God agrees to everything Abraham asks. It is sad to say, Abraham's bargain is not enough to save the cities. Less than ten good people live in Sodom. God sends His angels to lead Lot, his wife, and two of his daughters out of Sodom to safety. But Lot's wife looks back at the burning city. When she does, she becomes a statue made of salt. Lot went to Sodom a rich man. Lot lost everything when he left Sodom. Please learn from Lot. Be very careful about the decisions you make (read Mark 8:36, 37).



Both Abram and Lot became very rich. God blessed them with many cattle.

A THIEF BECOMES A PRINCE (Genesis 32:22–31)

As a young man, Jacob loved and respected God. But he made some very bad choices. He and his mother, Rebekah, lied to his father, Isaac, to get his blessing. Because of this wrong choice, Jacob had to flee from home so his brother wouldn't kill him. Rebekah told Jacob, "So, son, do what I say. My brother Laban is living in Haran. Go to him and hide. Stay with him for a short time until your brother stops being angry. When your brother forgets what you did to him, I will send a servant to bring you back" (Genesis 27:43–45, ERV). So, Jacob left home. He was gone for 20 years. He never saw his mother again.

Read the story in Genesis 32:22–31. What happened to Jacob in this story? What important lessons does this story teach us about God's mercy, even when we make bad choices?

"Jacob was a sinner. He made mistakes. But he emptied his heart of all pride. He was sorry for his sins. He gave himself fully to God. That is why Jacob won with God. Jacob believed in the promises of God. God could not turn away from Jacob. God's love is without limits. God showed Jacob his sin. Jacob understood that he lied and cheated to get the blessing from his father. Jacob failed to trust God's promises. Jacob tried by his own efforts and strength to get the blessing from God. . . . God forgave Jacob for lying and cheating. Jacob got the pardon from God that he wanted so much."—Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pages 197, 198, adapted.



"He [Jacob] gave himself fully to God. That is why Jacob won with God."

Read the story in Genesis 49:29–33. What did Jacob ask his sons to do for him when he died? Who also was buried in the cave? Why do you think Jacob wanted to be buried there?

The Bible tells us that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, along with their wives, are buried in the same cave. Jacob's trust in God was strong. Jacob knew that he was only a stranger and traveler on this earth (read Hebrews 11:13). Yes, Jacob made mistakes in life. He left home with nothing. But he came back to Canaan a very rich man.

God can bless us, even if we make mistakes. What choices do you need to make? How can you stop yourself from making the wrong ones?

MOSES IN EGYPT (Hebrews 11:24–29)

Moses is a very important person in the early years of Bible history. When Moses was a baby in Egypt, Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, made a law to kill all the baby boys born to Hebrew slaves. God helped Moses' mother and his sister to protect him when he was a baby in Egypt.

Pharaoh's daughter found baby Moses in the Nile River. Moses was sleeping in a little boat made by his mother. Pharaoh's daughter paid Moses' mother to take care of Moses. Moses' mother, Jochebed, was a slave. God blessed her anyway by letting her take care of her son. Pharaoh's daughter allowed Jochebed to keep Moses for only 12 years. During that time, Jochebed taught her child to pray, trust, honor God, and to serve Him. After that, Moses went to live in the palace with Pharaoh's daughter. There, Moses learned how to become the next king of Egypt. The Bible tells us, "The Egyptians taught Moses everything they knew. He was powerful in all he said and did" (Acts 7:22, ERV). While Moses grew up, he made a very important decision that changed his life and history.

Read what Paul says about Moses in Hebrews 11:24–29. What decision did Moses make? What did Moses give up when he made his decision? Also, what did Moses accept when he left Egypt?

Egypt was one of the richest and most powerful countries on earth at the time that Moses lived. The Nile River made Egypt an excellent place to grow crops. Pharaoh chose Moses to be the top leader of his kingdom.

But what did Moses choose to do? The Bible tells us that Moses "chose to suffer with God's people instead of enjoying sin for a short time" (Hebrews 11:25, NCV). Moses suffered many things because of his choice. The book of Exodus tells us all about the troubles and hard times that Moses suffered. Sad to say, Moses didn't enter the Promised Land (read Numbers 20:12). At times, Moses may have wondered if he made the right choice. In the end, we know that Moses made the best choice.

Some people may say that Moses should have stayed in Egypt. Do you agree? Explain your answer. As Christians, we have Bible promises for a better life. How can these promises help us when we suffer hard times?



Pharaoh's daughter found baby Moses in the Nile River.



“By faith, Moses saw the crown that God will put on the head of everyone who wins the fight against sin.”

ADDITIONAL THOUGHT: God honored His promise to Abraham. God blessed Abraham with many things. Abraham honored God by loving God more than all his riches. “God promises His people a special reward. But God’s people will not get this reward in this life. God didn’t give Abraham any land to own in this life, ‘not even a foot of it.’ Acts 7:5, [NCV]. Abraham owned many things. Abraham used his riches to honor God and help other people. But Abraham knew that this earth wasn’t his home. The Lord commanded Abraham to leave his country because the people there worshiped false gods. God promised Abraham the land of Canaan. Abraham would own this land forever. But Abraham didn’t get this land in his lifetime. His son and his grandson also did not get this land in their lifetime. When Abraham needed a place to bury his dead, he had to buy the grave from the Canaanites. The only thing Abraham owned in the Promised Land was the grave in the land of Machpelah.”—Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 169, adapted.

So often in life we may want riches or pleasure. We need to have strong faith to say no to living just to get these things. We need to wait for the reward God has promised. “Moses did not choose to live in Pharaoh’s palace or sit on his throne and be very powerful. Moses knew that the palace was filled with pleasures that would cause him to forget all about God. Moses wanted better things than to live in a palace and wear a king’s crown. Moses wanted the reward that God promises to give His loyal people. Moses wanted to live in a kingdom where there was no sin. By faith, Moses saw the crown that God will put on the head of everyone who wins the fight against sin. This crown is everlasting. By faith, Moses turned away from everything that the kings of this earth offered him.”—Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 246, adapted.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- ① What will happen to the things we own when Jesus comes? Read 2 Peter 3:10 for the answer. What can happen to our stuff before Jesus comes? Read James 5:2, 3 and Luke 12:16–21. Why must we remember these Bible truths?
- ② What does Jesus warn us about in Mark 4:19? How can a love for money weaken our love for Bible truth?

MIRACLE OF AN ADVENTIST FRONTIER SCHOOL

John Phiri went to two schools when he was young. The two schools were very different from each other.

As a youth, John left his home in Malawi to go to Zanzibar. Zanzibar is an island in the Indian Ocean. John studied his family's religion there for three years. John learned how to start houses of worship in places where there weren't any in Africa.

John finished school. Then he went back to Malawi. John was put in charge of two houses of worship. He also was told to spy on local Christians in his area carefully. The leaders of John's religion told him to read a King James Bible to help him understand Christians and their religion better.

During the next few years, John joined three different Christian churches. John became a top leader in one of these churches. John continued to collect information about Christians for the leaders of his religion in Zanzibar. At the same time, John served as the leader at worship centers for his religion in two towns in Malawi.

John's heart was touched as he read the Bible. Soon, John understood the teachings of the Bible better than he understood the teachings of his own religion. The more John learned, the more he wanted to know about Jesus.

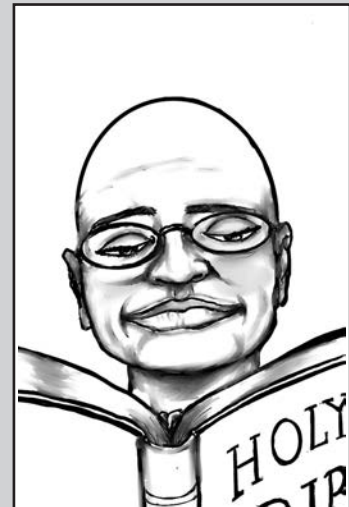
John decided to go to a Seventh-day Adventist school in the frontier of Malawi. This school was very different from the school in Zanzibar. John was interested in the school's Pathfinder club. He joined the club.

John fell in love with Jesus during a week of prayer at the Adventist school. John gave his heart to Jesus and got baptized. John stopped sending information to Zanzibar. John's father was angry when he learned that John became a Christian. John's father blamed his wife for John's decision to become a Christian. So, John's father divorced his wife.

Years passed. John wanted to serve God. So, John used everything he learned in school to serve God. In the past, John started houses of worship for his old religion in Zanzibar. Now, John decided to do the same thing for Jesus. John started churches in his country where there were none. John did this work for ten years. At this time, many people from John's family gave their hearts to Jesus.

Later, John studied to be a pastor. John went to Malawi Adventist University. Today, John serves as an Adventist pastor. John said the Adventist frontier school changed his life. "Frontier schools are very important," he said. "They help people get to know Jesus and accept Him as their personal Savior."

INSIDE
Story
by CHIFUNDO KANJO



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