



LAST GREAT DAY

Also on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when you have gathered in the fruit of the land, you shall keep the feast of the LORD for seven days; on the first day there shall be a sabbath-rest, and on the eighth day a sabbath-rest. —Leviticus 23:39

Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. —Revelation 20:11-12

OBJECTIVE

To teach that the Last Great Day pictures the time after the Millennium when all humans who died without the knowledge of God and His way will be given an opportunity to learn the truth, respond to God, receive His Holy Spirit and have eternal life.

Note to parents

We encourage you to read through this material with your children to provide an overview of the meaning of the Last Great Day and what it pictures. Then choose appropriate materials from the supplemental pages that you feel will be helpful in teaching and reinforcing the meaning of the day.

THE MEANING OF THE FESTIVAL

The final holy day illustrating the steps in the great plan of God comes right at the end of the Feast of Tabernacles. Because the Feast of Tabernacles is seven days long, God referred to this final holy day as “the eighth day” in [Leviticus 23](#). We have also traditionally called it the Last Great Day. While it is attached to the Feast of Tabernacles, it is a separate festival with its own distinct meaning.

Countless billions who have lived and died . . . will be resurrected to physical life to be given a full opportunity.



By having us keep this day holy, God teaches us what He will do for all those people who never had a chance to learn God’s way—those who lived and died without correctly knowing God and His way. God promises to bring all those people back to life and teach them His way.



Then they will have a chance to learn and live by God’s law to show Him they want to be in His family. Countless billions who have lived and died, blinded to the knowledge of the true God and His purpose, will be resurrected to physical life to be given a full opportunity. This day shows that God is very fair and will give all people a chance to know Him and live His way.

“Behold, O My people, I will open your graves and cause you to come up from your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel.”

Ezekiel was inspired to write of this resurrection to another physical life when he was given a vision of a great valley full of dry bones. These bones represented many, many people of Israel who had not known God or been obedient to Him during their lifetimes. They died without hope. Yet in spite of their lack of response to God, they are brought back to a physical life so they can have a genuine opportunity to know and obey Him and receive His Spirit: “Therefore prophesy and say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD: “Behold, O My people, I will open your graves and cause you to come up from your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel”’” (Ezekiel 37:12).

Ezekiel hears God tell the bones, “Thus says the Lord GOD to these bones: ‘Surely I will cause breath to enter into you, and you shall live. I will put sinews on you and bring flesh upon you, cover you with skin and put breath in you; and you shall live. Then you shall know that I am the LORD’” (verses 5-6). They had not known who God really was, but after this resurrection—which we often refer to as “the second resurrection”—they receive their one opportunity to come to know God, submit to Him, receive His Spirit and begin living His way.

The pages of the Bible will be opened and explained to them so they can understand and apply the Scriptures.



These resurrected, physical beings will be offered—for the first time—the opportunity to receive salvation through Jesus Christ. The pages of the Bible will be opened and explained to them so they can understand and apply the Scriptures. Once they have had time to hear, understand and grow in the knowledge of God, they will be judged according to their works (Revelation 20:12). During this time, the conditions of the Millennium—God’s government, peace and prosperity—will continue. An outpouring of the Holy Spirit will permeate the earth. From the least to the greatest, all will have full access to God, Christ and the way of eternal life.

Since these resurrected people are going to be judged by their works, they must be given time to produce works. While the Bible does not specifically reveal how long these resurrected people live, there is an indication that this period of the second resurrection might last 100 years (Isaiah 65:20).



Sadly, even with this full, generous chance for life in the family of God, some individuals will persist in living disobedient, sinful lives and refuse to allow His Holy Spirit to govern them. Although God desires that all “come to the knowledge of the truth” (1 Timothy 2:3-4), in His mercy He will remove the incorrigibly wicked so that they do not continue to suffer in an angry, rebellious attitude and so that peace can prevail (Revelation 21:7-8). Those who reject the offer of salvation—eternal life in the Kingdom of God—and willfully rebel against the Almighty will perish swiftly in the lake of fire (Revelation 20:13-15). They will not be forever tormented in an eternal hellfire.

After this restoration of all things, God the Father, along with Jesus Christ, will establish His throne in this magnificent holy city.

Once the overwhelming majority of humanity has yielded themselves to God and received the gift of eternal life, God will purify the earth with fire (2 Peter 3:10-12). He will create a new heaven and a new earth (Revelation 21:1). New Jerusalem will descend from heaven and become the capital of the entire universe (verse 2). After this restoration of all things, God the Father, along with Jesus Christ, will establish His throne in this magnificent holy city (verse 3). The glorified sons and daughters of the everlasting God will live forever in His family.

SCRIPTURE DISCUSSION POINTS

You can use the following guided discussion topics to stimulate dialogue about the Last Great Day. As you discuss these concepts, be mindful of the maturity level of your children and adjust the discussion based on their level of personal development.

Eighth Day observance commanded

The eighth day is a sacred assembly (Leviticus 23:33-36, 39)

Explain that the Feast of Tabernacles is seven days long and the eighth day is a separate festival. This festival begins immediately upon completion of the Feast of Tabernacles.

Explain that the Eighth Day is the seventh and final holy day in God’s plan of salvation.

Explain that the number 7 biblically represents completion and perfection: this seventh holy day pictures the final, culminating events in God’s perfect plan.

Review the six previous festivals and their meanings:

Passover, a memorial of Christ’s sacrifice for the forgiveness of sins

Feast of Unleavened Bread, a seven-day festival that reminds us of our need to turn from sin and obey God’s laws

Feast of Pentecost, a festival that reminds us of the necessity of God’s Holy Spirit for the overcoming of sin

Feast of Trumpets, a festival that depicts Jesus Christ’s return to establish the Kingdom of God and the moment of the first resurrection



Day of Atonement, a festival that depicts God’s reconciliation with all of humanity

Feast of Tabernacles, a seven-day festival that pictures the millennial reign of Jesus Christ on earth

Explain that the Eighth Day pictures the time when all those who have lived and died never knowing the true God will live again. We refer to this event as the second resurrection ([Revelation 20:11-12](#)).

Emphasize the importance of observing these commanded annual Sabbaths. By observing these yearly festivals, we are able to continually learn and review God’s plan and purpose for all of humanity.

Write out on poster board and display all seven annual festivals and their meanings.

A solemn assembly ([Numbers 29:35](#))

Notice that the Eighth Day is an annual Sabbath of rest.

Explain that the Scriptures do not give this festival a specific name. We have traditionally referred to it as the Last Great Day based on the reference in [John 7:37](#). Scripture refers to this day simply as the “eighth day” ([2 Chronicles 7:9](#)).

Explain that the number 8 biblically signifies a new beginning or a new order of things: this will be a new beginning for those called from their graves.

What is the fate of those who die with no real knowledge of Jesus Christ?

Salvation comes only through Jesus Christ ([Acts 4:10-12](#))

Explain that one can only receive salvation by accepting the sacrifice of Jesus Christ ([John 6:39-40, 44; 11:23-26](#)).

Explain and define *salvation*: a process of repenting, forsaking sin, receiving the Holy Spirit and growing toward the stature and fullness of Christ.

God is allowing Satan current dominion, which ultimately teaches humans that humanity’s ways do not work.

Today is a day of salvation ([Isaiah 49:8; 2 Corinthians 6:2; 1 Peter 4:17](#))

Explain that today (now) is a day of salvation, not the *only* day of salvation.

Explain that today is a day of salvation, or judgment, for those few whom God has granted understanding of His ways—the “house of God” ([verse 17](#)). The Millennium will be a day of salvation for millions, and the period of time immediately after the Millennium will also be a day of salvation for billions.



Emphasize that God is not in competition with Satan for control of this world. God is in complete control and is carrying out His plan. God is allowing Satan current dominion, which ultimately teaches humans that humanity's ways do not work. Humanity's ways bring a very small amount of good, but unfortunately they also bring many bad and evil things.

God desires that all people be saved (1 Timothy 2:3-4; 2 Peter 3:9)

Explain that God desires that all people be saved, but He does not guarantee that all will be saved. God has created the best process for people of all generations and nations to receive salvation and eternal life.

Explain that each individual must make a personal decision to obey God. When God grants an individual understanding of His way, he or she must then act upon that knowledge, choosing righteousness and shunning evil. It is necessary to overcome one's wicked human nature and develop holy, righteous character through the power of God's Holy Spirit.

God will render Satan completely powerless—unable to deceive the rest of the dead who will be resurrected to physical life.

Explain and define *repentance*: genuine sorrow that leads to change (Psalm 38:18; Isaiah 66:2; 2 Corinthians 7:10; Hebrews 10:26; 1 John 1:6-10).

Emphasize that God the Father is a patient and merciful God who wants to offer us eternal life (Romans 6:23).

Second resurrection

The rest of the dead (Revelation 20:5)

Explain that the second resurrection will occur after the 1,000-year millennial period and after Satan's removal.

Contrast 1 Thessalonians 4:16 with Revelation 20:5—"the dead in Christ" versus "the rest of the dead." The "dead in Christ" belong to Christ; they are His firstfruits. The "rest of the dead" are simply those who died never having access to the knowledge of God's plan and truth.

Emphasize that it is through the name and power of Jesus Christ that all physical beings have the opportunity to be granted life (John 5:25-29; 1 Corinthians 15:20-22).

Satan released (Revelation 20:7-10)

Explain that Satan will be allowed a short season to deceive the nations at the end of the Millennium.

Explain that despite being taught the truth, many will still be deceived when tested by Satan after he is released.

Explain that God will permanently remove Satan, and he will never again have access to God, Christ or humanity (Matthew 25:41; Jude 12-13).



Emphasize that Satan will be removed before the second resurrection occurs. God will render Satan completely powerless—unable to deceive the rest of the dead who will be resurrected to physical life.

The dead, small and great (Revelation 20:11-12)

Emphasize that “small and great” means all those who have lived and died never having had a chance to understand God’s truth. God has perfectly planned for everyone who has ever lived to receive an opportunity for salvation.

Explain that God is fair: He will give everyone a chance to be in His family (Hebrews 8:11).

The rest of the “dead, small and great” (verse 12) will be in the second resurrection and receive another physical existence of flesh and blood.

Explain that “books” (verse 12) refers to the books of the Bible—Scripture. Through the giving of the Holy Spirit, God’s Word will be fully opened to billions of people who have never heard the name of Christ or truly understood God’s way. There will be an outpouring of spiritual understanding—of living waters (John 7:37-39).

Explain that the Book of Life is God’s record of those who will be brought into His family by being given eternal life (Revelation 20:15; 22:14).

Each person will have a genuine, personal opportunity to obtain salvation and have his or her name written in the Book of Life.

The people of Nineveh and the queen of the South (Matthew 12:41-42)

Explain that all who lie in their graves at the end of the Millennium await their first opportunity to learn God’s way to spiritual life.

Explain that God’s mercy toward humanity clearly extends beyond the Millennium. Each person will have a genuine, personal opportunity to obtain salvation and have his or her name written in the Book of Life.

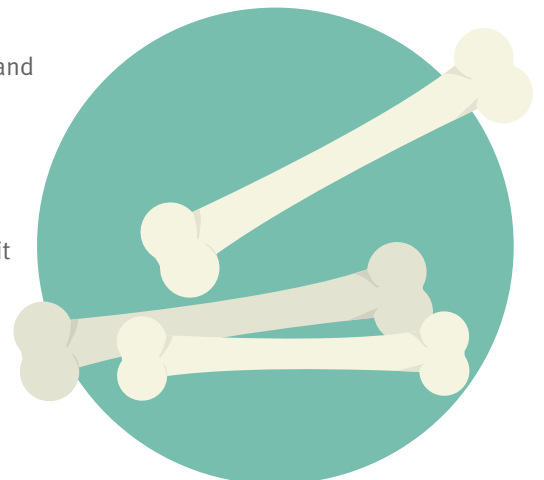
Valley of dry bones (Ezekiel 37:1-14)

Explain that this is a resurrection to physical life—corruptible bodies, flesh and blood, dependent upon air to sustain physical existence.

Explain that this will be the first opportunity for these individuals to understand God’s truth.

Emphasize that God will grant these physical beings access to His Holy Spirit (Ezekiel 36:25-27).

God’s Holy Spirit supplies the missing link so they can understand the Scriptures.





The Holy Spirit, the very nature and character of God, will be imparted to those who repent and are baptized during this time.

Outpouring of God's Holy Spirit (Joel 2:28-29)

Explain that “all flesh” (verse 28)—all of humanity—will have the opportunity to be called into God’s eternal family. Their minds will be opened to real understanding.

Explain that the Holy Spirit, the very nature and character of God, will be imparted to those who repent and are baptized during this time (Acts 2:38).

Explain that unless people have received the Holy Spirit and have this Spirit dwelling in them, they are not Christians—they do not belong to Christ (Romans 8:14-17).

The child shall die 100 years old (Isaiah 65:18-25)

Explain that this time will be as peaceful and productive as the Millennium. For the first time, these resurrected physical human beings will experience the abundance and joy of living God’s way.

Explain that each individual will be given ample time (this scripture might indicate a 100-year period) to come to repentance and demonstrate a desire to live a life obedient to God and qualify for the gift of eternal life.

Explain that judgment will occur over time as these individuals come to learn and understand God’s way of life.

Who will judge these individuals?

Judged according to works (Revelation 20:11-12)

Explain that God the Father has given Christ the authority to judge (Acts 10:42; 2 Timothy 4:1).

Explain that billions have lived separated from God and His truth, never having been judged.

Explain that this time of judgment is not to condemn people, but rather to test and try them.

Explain that judgment will occur over time as these individuals come to learn and understand God’s way of life.

Explain that the vast majority of these individuals will be receptive to the truth and be responsive to their teachers, fully submitting to God.





All must come before the judgment seat of Christ to give an account of how they have lived their lives.

All judgment committed to the Son (John 5:19-30)

Explain that God has granted Christ the authority to judge.

Explain that Christ has the same judgment as the Father.

Emphasize that all will be judged by the same standard: the Word of God.

Explain that all must come before the judgment seat of Christ to give an account of how they have lived their lives ([Romans 14:10-12](#); [2 Corinthians 5:10](#)).

Explain the difference between “resurrection of life” and the “resurrection of condemnation” ([verse 29](#)).



What is the fate of those whose names are not found in the Book of Life?

The sinner will be accursed (Isaiah 65:20)

Explain that some individuals will stubbornly insist on choosing their own way—the way of death ([Proverbs 14:12](#)). God will not force anyone to choose His way of life; He has granted humanity free moral agency.

Emphasize that God will provide sufficient time for all people to live a full, physical life under His law to qualify to enter into His Kingdom and ultimately to gain eternal life as full members of His divine family. Those who willfully persist in evil, rejecting God’s way of life, will perish in the lake of fire ([Matthew 25:41](#)).

Explain that one who suffers the second death will have been judged and found guilty of persistent disobedience.

The second death (Revelation 20: 13-15)

Explain that this resurrection—the third resurrection—is the resurrection to destruction ([Malachi 4:1](#)).

Explain that the “second death” is final; there will be no resurrection from this final death. All those who have died once in their sins will be raised to die a second, eternal death in the lake of fire ([Hebrews 10:26-31](#)).



Explain that these individuals will be resurrected to flesh and blood, and they will be consumed within the fire quickly. God will put these people out of their misery; He will not torture them forever in an ever-burning hell. Although God will execute His full justice, He remains merciful ([Malachi 4:1-3](#)).

Review that there are three resurrections (you can download the supplemental chart **“Three Resurrections”** to record the differences among the resurrections):

The first resurrection takes place at Christ’s second coming. The “dead in Christ” will be resurrected to eternal life.

The second resurrection takes place after the Millennium and Satan’s permanent removal. The “rest of the dead” will be resurrected to physical life and offered salvation for the first time.

The third resurrection takes place when God’s plan for physical human beings is complete. The unrepentant wicked will be raised to physical life to suffer the second death. They will never again be resurrected ([Revelation 21:8](#)).

God has no pleasure in the death of anyone ([Ezekiel 18:29-32](#))

Emphasize that God would like everyone to receive eternal life ([1 Timothy 2:3-4](#); [2 Peter 3:9](#)).

Explain that sinful people must be removed so they can no longer make life miserable for themselves and others. These individuals will have proven through their actions that they have willfully rejected God and His government.

All who will choose to submit to God and His government will have received eternal life. The Kingdom of God will be eternal.

All things new

New Jerusalem ([Revelation 21:1-7](#))

Explain that the New Jerusalem will come down out of heaven to earth.

Explain that since the earth will have been purified of humanity’s defilement, God the Father will come to earth and live with His glorified people.

New heavens and a new earth ([Isaiah 65:17-18](#); [2 Peter 3:13](#))

Explain that this will occur at the end of human history. All who will choose to submit to God and His government will have received eternal life. The Kingdom of God will be eternal. Death and destruction will be no more ([1 Corinthians 15:24-26](#)).

Emphasize that God is working His plan of salvation through Jesus Christ ([1 Corinthians 15:57](#)).

**New Jerusalem described (Revelation 21:10-22:5)**

Explain that the size of New Jerusalem will be about 1,500 miles wide in each direction.

Emphasize that rivers of living water will flow from the capital city.

Explain that God the Father and Jesus Christ will dwell with their immortal, spiritual family for all eternity (Daniel 7:18, 27).

After observing the eighth day, all of Israel left the celebration and festival observance, renewed in the goodness of God.

Stories related to the Last Great Day

King Solomon leads Israel in keeping the Feast of Tabernacles and the Last Great Day in 2 Chronicles 7:1-11 (also 1 Kings 8): “And on the eighth day they held a sacred assembly.... On the twenty-third day of the seventh month he sent the people away to their tents, joyful and glad of heart for the good that the LORD had done” (verses 9-10). After observing the eighth day, all of Israel left the celebration and festival observance, renewed in the goodness of God.

Revival under Ezra in Ezra 3:4; Nehemiah 8:13-18: Ezra read the law of God to the people. This led to the restoration of the holy days and the keeping of the Feast of Tabernacles in booths: “Day by day, from the first day until the last day, he read from the Book of the Law of God. And they kept the feast seven days; and on the eighth day there was a sacred assembly, according to the prescribed manner” (verse 18). Throughout Scripture we read that whenever God’s people return to Him, they keep His Sabbath day and annual festivals. God blesses them for their repentance and obedience.

Memory Verse

And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away. —Revelation 21:4