

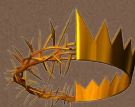


## Anchoring the Soul: Prioritizing Daily Worship

MODULE 4

# RTT MODULE 4 SCRIPT

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**GOD FIRST**  
ADVENTIST STEWARDSHIP MINISTRIES

# REDEEMING THE TIME:

## Anchoring the Soul

Just a little less than a decade ago, in 2017, the former Sunday Times Washington Bureau Chief wrote an article titled, “*Will the Permacrisis Ever End?*” In it, he described what felt, at the time, like an exhausting new normal:

“An age of permanent crisis; stumbling blindly from one calamity to the next, scrolling anxiously through phone alerts and Twitter threads, trying to make sense of the latest Very Bad News.”

He went on:

“It feels as though the armbands have come off and we’ve been cast once more into the whirlpool of history, with events swirling rapidly in a way that none of us can predict or make sense of.”<sup>1</sup>

I remember quoting those lines in sermons and articles at the time. They seemed dramatic. Almost overstated.

### Crisis – What Crisis?

And yet...

With the benefit of hindsight, I find myself smiling – not dismissively, but knowingly.

Because if 2017 felt like a whirlpool, you could say we had barely stepped into the current!

The crises that followed would not simply swirl – they would collide.

The uncertainties would not just unsettle – they would redefine.

The headlines would not slow – they would accelerate.

When Glancy wrote of permacrisis, he understood that crises would not simply disappear. But could any of us in 2017 have imagined how the world would look by 2026? A global pandemic. War returning to the European continent. Conflict across the Middle East and North Africa –

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**1 The Sunday Times, 27 February 2017**



local battles with global consequences. Trade wars and tariffs reshaping economies. The rise of nationalist, strongman leadership. And perhaps most significantly, a steady erosion of trust in international institutions, and a growing doubt about the very “rules-based order” that had underpinned geopolitics since the end of the Second World War.

There is a hymn line our community often sings – “Nations are angry – by this we do know – Jesus is Coming Again”,<sup>2</sup> reflecting the reality that a time will come when geopolitical permacrisis turbulence will end and God will establish His new Kingdom of perfect peace in every sense of the words.

## **Kingdom Living Between the Now and the Not Yet**

But until then – how do we redeem the time? How do we ensure that our faith and trust in Him is secure?

What I have learned through my own life and ministry is this: living on the perpetual ping of push notifications, doomscrolling through headlines, and obsessing over end-time prophetic charts is not the same as redeeming the time or anchoring the soul.

Rather, I am convinced that the answer lies not in prophetic charts, but in anchoring the soul through the beautiful, steady development of Christlike hearts. And for me there is something special about Hebrews that not only stirs my soul, but anchors it – not in an idea, a philosophy, a prophetic template, but deeply and solidly in the person of Jesus!

I love Hebrews because I love the author’s sheer expectant enthusiasm for Jesus. His unshakable conviction about who Christ is – supreme, sufficient, the One who grants unlimited access into the very presence of God. I take seriously the warning not to “fall back,” but to keep my eyes fixed firmly on Him. And when life hurls its unpredictable rubbish – whether global permacrisis or personal crisis – Hebrews steadies me. It calls me to keep going. In this way, Hebrews not only redeems the time; it anchors my soul in the storm – because of Jesus.

The letter to Hebrews was written to group of first-century Christians who were in danger of giving up. Former Jews were walking targets – persecuted, publicly ridiculed, physically assaulted, homes burgled, and thrown into prison, all because of their absolute trust in Christ. “Safer to stick with Abraham and Moses,” many Jews who’d joined the church may have said. And Gentile converts were struggling too. “This Kingdom stuff – ‘can’t do it anymore. With all that is going on around us, it’s just too challenging. So, we’ll chill and go with the flow.”

As I read the letter again, I try to imagine how the AD 60 listener reacts. “Is it true?” someone asks. “Is Jesus worth it?” another wonders. “Jesus – superior to Moses? Really? And you’re telling us that we no longer need the priest to offer the sacrifices for to God?”

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## **2 Jesus is Coming Again (Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal, 213)**

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## Help and Support When We Need It Most

“That’s right,” says the author. Because of Jesus *“We do not have a high priest who is unable to empathise with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are – yet he did not sin. Let us then approach God’s throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need”* (Hebrews 4:15-16 NIV).

Does Hebrews speak to the ‘Permacrisis’? You bet it does! As Raymond Brown points out in his commentary on Hebrews, “First as a matter of the utmost importance, he has turned their eyes, not to themselves, hoping for sufficient inward strength, nor to the agonizing troubles, nor to their persecuting contemporaries, but to Christ. No believer can cope with adversity unless Christ fills his horizons, sharpens his priorities, and dominates his experience.”<sup>3</sup>

### The Heart of the Matter

But how do we do that? By developing an ever-growing, ever-deepening appreciation of the Gift. It was soon to be Mary’s fourth birthday. Knowing every birthday to be very special for their young Mary, her parents carefully chose a present that would bring most joy – a doll.

When the day arrived, the excited girl jumped up and down the house while asking, “Can I have my present yet?” At last, the moment arrives when Mary sees her present. Wrapped in the brightest rainbow coloured paper and with the words ‘happy birthday’ scrawled all over it.

Dad is excited too, taking photo after photo of Mary, from every angle, as she unwraps the present. As the doll is removed from the box, Mary’s face beams with joy. She gives mum and dad big hugs and repeats, “thank you” many times. Yet, after a few minutes of playing with the doll, something strange happens. Placing the doll on a chair, Mary turns to the wrapping paper and plays with it for a very long time, screwing it up into a ball, and throwing it across the room. “Let’s play catch mummy. Let’s play catch daddy,” she shouts. “Don’t you like your doll, Mary?”, ask the confused parents. “Oh yes mummy,” she says, but continues to play with the wrapping.

As I reflect on redeeming the time and anchoring the soul, I sometimes wonder whether some within the community of faith I serve have gone on an adventure in missing the point. Have we, at times, played more with the wrapping paper than treasured the gift – focusing on prophetic charts rather than Christlike hearts? Prophetic charts may help us sense the times but knowing them alone will never anchor the soul. Only Christ can do that. And He can do so because He redeemed the time at the Cross.

If this is true, how do I anchor the soul? Eugene Peterson’s Message translation of Hebrews 12:2-3 reminds again of how its all because of Jesus and what he has done for us past, present and future – that the time has been redeemed and as a result – we are secure!

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**3 Brown, R. (1982). The message of Hebrews (p. 12). Emphasis added.**



*“Keep your eyes on Jesus, who both began and finished this race we’re in. Study how he did it. Because he never lost sight of where he was headed—that exhilarating finish in and with God—he could put up with anything along the way. Cross, shame, whatever. And now he’s there, in the place of honour, right alongside God. When you find yourselves flagging in your faith, go over that story again, item by item, that long litany of hostility he ploughed through. That will shoot adrenaline into your souls!”*

## **The So What of All This?**

Don’t wait for the coming crisis – it’s here and it’s here to stay. Nations are indeed angry as we often sing – but as significant are some other words from another hymn.

We have an anchor that keeps the soul  
Steadfast and sure while the billows roll,  
Fastened to the Rock which cannot move,  
Grounded firm and deep in the Saviour’s love. <sup>4</sup>

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### **4 Will Your Anchor Hold (Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal, 534)**

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