



# PREPARING TO STAND

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“In this age, just prior to the second coming of Christ in the clouds of heaven, God calls for men who will prepare a people to stand in the great day of the Lord.” SW 3-21-05

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## **Do You Really Want to Go to *Heaven*? —Or Is That Just the Best Option?**

by Jim Buller

Suppose it was possible to go and visit “Heaven” —kind of like going to a “theme” park. So, as an “average” Adventist family, you decide to go there for your next vacation.

When vacation time comes, you drive with your family to the nearest town and check in to a motel for the night, with plans to go visit “Heaven” the next day. In the morning, after you get ready for the day, you all go out for breakfast. Then you drive out to “Heaven,” park in the parking lot and walk up to the entrance way. As you start to pay the entrance fee, the “attendant” (an angel) waves you on in saying, “Jesus has already ‘paid’ for you, Heaven is free.” You think, “This is cool! At least this vacation won’t cost an arm and a leg.” And you walk on in.

As you step inside, the air seems fresher and everything looks brighter. There are all sorts of *beautiful* flowers everywhere, and everyone looks so pleasant and happy. At a kiosk just inside the entrance, you find a map, and posters letting you know where you can play with the tigers, swim with the dolphins, and ride an elephant. You can go and meet Jesus, and listen to concerts by the angel choir. There are instructional sessions on practical Christian living and family relationships, different exhibits on the wonders of the universe, presentations on how to take care of the plants and animals with actual hands-on experience, and you can even take flying lessons! So, you begin wandering around and enjoying all the “attractions.”

After a while you get hungry, so you look around for a fast food joint —but don't find any. You look for one of the “attendants” (angels) and ask him where you can get something eat. He says that you can just help yourself to the fruit and nuts off of any of the trees, or eat the seeds from many of the plants. So, with a bit of a question in your voice you say, “OK,” look around at the trees, and begin sampling some of what you find.

Later that afternoon, you can tell the kids are starting to get tired, even though they are still having fun. So you begin wondering when the place closes. Seeing one of the “attendants” (angels) nearby, you ask him, and he tells you that you can stay as long as you like. If you get tired, you can just sleep out under the trees. Or, if you

want, you can stay in one of the cabins—which to your surprise, he says, is already reserved for you. After asking him for directions, you thank him, and go off to check out “your” cabin. When you get there, you find that it is nice, but it only has one room, and is very simply furnished.

By now the kids are hungry again—and you are too. They ask if you can go somewhere and get some “real” food, and then go back to the motel. Out of curiosity, you ask them if they haven’t enjoyed their visit to “Heaven,” and they say they’ve liked it really well, they just want to do something else. Still curious, you ask them why they want to go back to the motel. They reply that they just want to watch TV, and play the video games they’ve brought along. So, although you feel kind of strange, and that something isn’t quite the way it should be, you head for your car.

When you get to the exit, you notice Jesus standing there. He seems strangely sad as you thank Him, and tell Him goodbye; and as He watches you go out the gate, you think you notice a tear running down His cheek.

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Parents, I hope the application of the above is obvious. The idea for this article came from watching the reactions of my students to trips into natural areas that we’ve taken over the last several years, as I have observed a definite pattern. Unfortunately, most kids nowadays have had a lot of exposure to the media, and very little exposure to nature; and one subtle message of our culture especially through the media, is that nature is not “where it is at.” As a result, most of our children have a hard time appreciating, for any length of time, what God has created for us to enjoy.

Think about it. By the way we simply live our day-to-day lives, are we preparing ourselves to get tired of being in heaven? Once the novelty of it all has worn off will we be bored for the rest of eternity? Is this what we are enduring the trials and suffering associated with the Christian life for?

Is it possible to truly appreciate Jesus dying so we can live, if we don’t appreciate the natural world He has created for us to *live in*?—the things we will be surrounded by when we get to heaven? Possibly, one of the reasons for the country and wilderness living experiences is to wean us from our worldly life-style, and prepare us to live with nature in heaven. So, shouldn’t we be preparing ourselves and our children to *actually enjoy* living *forever* among the vast creations of God?

“Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.”  
Proverbs 22:6

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### Your Help Is Needed to Get this Out

God has blessed me with the ability to put these studies together. However, to be honest, I am *not* very good at getting these messages out. So, if you feel “Preparing to Stand” is worth sharing, please pass it on. Thank you so much for your help.

“Preparing to Stand”  
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## Selected Ellen White Quotations on the Importance of Nature

*Child Guidance* pg 45

Next to the Bible, nature is to be our great lesson book.

*Testimonies for the Church Volume Eight* pgs 326-328

... Every shrub, every tree bearing fruit, all vegetation, has lessons for our study. In the growth of the seed are to be read the mysteries of the kingdom of God.

To the heart softened by the grace of God, the sun, the moon, the stars, the trees, the flowers of the field, utter words of counsel. ...

Fathers and mothers, teach your children of the wonder-working power of God. His power is manifest in every plant, in every tree that bears fruit. ...

The book of nature and the written word shed light upon each other. Both make us better acquainted with God by teaching us of His character and of the laws through which He works.

*Counsels on Health* pg 164

In itself the beauty of nature leads the soul away from sin and worldly attractions and toward purity, peace, and God.

*The Ministry of Healing* pg 365

In the beginning He placed our first parents amidst the beautiful sights and sounds He desires us to rejoice in today. The more nearly we come into harmony with God's original plan, the more favorable will be our position to secure health of body, and mind, and soul.



*Education* pg 21

The book of nature, which spread its living lessons before [Adam and Eve], afforded an exhaustless source of instruction and delight. On every leaf of the forest and stone of the mountains, in every shining star, in earth and sea and sky, God's name was written. With both the animate and the inanimate creation--with leaf and flower and tree, and with every living creature, from the leviathan of the waters to the mote in the sunbeam--the dwellers in Eden held converse, gathering from each the secrets of its life. God's glory in the heavens, the innumerable worlds in their orderly revolutions, "the balancings of the clouds" (Job 37:16), the mysteries of light and sound, of day and night--all were objects of study by the pupils of earth's first school.

*Testimonies for the Church Volume Two* pg 584

Those who sacrifice simplicity to fashion, and shut themselves away from the beauties of nature, cannot be spiritually minded. They cannot understand the skill and power of God as revealed in His created works; therefore their hearts do not quicken and throb with new love and interest, and they are not filled with awe and reverence as they see God in nature.

All who are under the training of God need the quiet hour for communion with their own hearts, with nature, and with God. In them is to be revealed a life that is not in harmony with the world, its customs, or its practices; and they need to have a personal experience in obtaining a knowledge of the will of God. We must individually hear Him speaking to the heart. When every other voice is hushed, and in quietness we wait before Him, the silence of the soul makes more distinct the voice of God. He bids us, "Be still, and know that I am God." Psalm 46:10. This is the effectual preparation for all labor for God. Amidst the hurrying throng, and the strain of life's intense activities, he who is thus refreshed will be surrounded with an atmosphere of light and peace. He will receive a new endowment of both physical and mental strength. His life will breathe out a fragrance, and will reveal a divine power that will reach men's hearts.

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### Noah and Lot

Jesus said that the end-times would be similar to the way it was in the days of Noah and the days of Lot. (See Matthew 24:37, and Luke 17:26-32.) While there are some obvious similarities between the experiences of Noah and Lot, there are also some important differences. Noah *and his family* prepared—they spent a *lot* of their time, energy, and resources preparing. So, when the time came for them to leave, ("flee"), Noah and his family left in a large well-stocked ship. On the other hand, Lot and his family hadn't prepared at all—physically, mentally or spiritually. Due to their reluctance to flee, the angels had to take them by the hand and lead them out. So they probably didn't pack much along either. On their way to the mountains, Lot's wife looked back and turned to a pillar of salt. Lot himself ended up in a cave, most likely with just what he had on, and a couple of twisted daughters who had lived too long with the corrupting influences of the city. (See Genesis 19.)

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### The Closer We Get *to* the End, the Closer We Should Realize We *Are* to the End

In Luke 21:29-30 Jesus said, "Look at ... the trees. When they sprout leaves, you can see for yourselves and know that summer is near." We *can* recognize the weather and seasonal patterns, so Jesus says that we should also be able to recognize the times we are living in. (See also Luke 12:54-56.) For example, although we don't know the *exact date* of that first really hot summer day, the closer we get to summer, the closer we *will know* that we *are* to that first really hot day—because we recognize the weather and seasonal patterns. Therefore, even though we still don't know "the day or the hour" of the final end-times, (Matthew 24:36,) the closer we get *to* the end, the closer we should realize we *actually are* to the end.



## Cordage part 2, Practical Knots

Having cordage doesn't do much good unless you know how to tie some good knots. There are thousands of knots, but basically there are just three types:

- (1) "knots" —that are tied in one end of the rope, such as tying a loop
  - (2) "bends" —that tie two ropes together
  - (3) "hitches" —that tie a rope to something else, such as a pole.
- There are also "lashings" which are used to tie poles together.

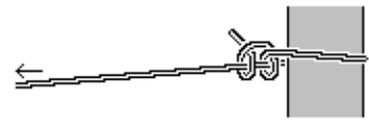
Below is one basic knot from each of the above types. Rather than trying to learn a lot of different knots, you can begin by learning how to tie these, as they will get you by in most situations. These particular knots are also fairly easy to tie —and untie. Notice that the "Bowline" and the "Sheet Bend" are essentially the same knot —they're just used differently. This should make learning them easier, as you just have to learn to tie the one knot with the two different applications. Included is the pattern for "Square Lashing" which is used for tying two poles together —start and end lashings by tying the cordage to one of the poles with "Two Half-Hitches." Also included is the "Square Knot" which is useful for tying bundles together and bandaging. Do NOT use a "Square Knot" for tying two ropes together for more length. This is potentially dangerous, as when it is used this way it can easily slip and come undone.



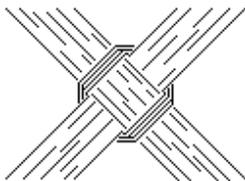
**Bowline** —used to make a loop in the end of the cord. To tie: "the rabbit runs up the hole, around the tree, and back down the hole." Essentially the same knot as the sheet bend but used to make a loop.



**Sheet Bend** —used to tie two lengths of cordage together. If cords are of uneven thickness, the one shown in black should be the thicker of the two. Pull on the ends shown by the arrows to tighten.



**2 Half-hitches** —used to tie the cordage to a pole. Can be tied with the rope pulled tight. This knot is essentially a Clove Hitch tied on the working side of the cord.



**Square Lashing** —used to tie two poles together.



**Square Knot** —used to tie off bandaging, and to tie bundles together with cordage. Tie: "left over right, then right over left."

Other useful knots:

- Overhand Knot
- Figure "8" Knot
- Fisherman's Knot
- Clove Hitch
- Taut Line Hitch
- Timber Hitch
- Alpine Butterfly Knot
- Jug Sling

\* Check out the many good websites with animated knot tying instructions.