CORNERSTONECONNECTIONS
NOVEMBER122022

Scripture Story: Revelation 12:17; 2 Timothy 3:1-5; 2 Peter 3.
Commentary: *The Great Controversy* (or *Love Under Fire*), chapter 36.

the world's worst terrorist



Photo by Terrill Thomas

flashlight

"Satan's policy in this final conflict with God's people is the same that he employed in the opening of the great controversy in heaven. He professed to be seeking to promote the stability of the divine government, while secretly bending every effort to secure its overthrow. . . . While Satan seeks to destroy those who honor God's law, he will cause them to be accused as lawbreakers, as men who are dishonoring God and bringing judgments upon the world" (*The Great Controversy,* p. 591).

keytext

"Then the dragon was enraged at the woman and went off to wage war against the rest of her offspring—those who keep God's commands and hold fast their testimony about Jesus."

(Revelation 12:17, NIV)

what do you think?

Ellen White touches on a number of ways in which Satan will deceive people in the last days (see *The Great Controversy,* chapter 36). In the end, Satan will reveal his true identity as the world's worst terrorist. Next to each method that Ellen White mentions, see if you can find a current example of it by doing an Internet search, scanning magazines and newspapers, and talking with friends and family members. Write your example in the blank provided.

"The press publishes the revolting details of vice" (p. 586).

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"Through the two great errors, the immortality of the soul and Sunday sacredness, Satan will bring the people under his deceptions" (p. 588).

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"Through spiritualism" (p. 589).

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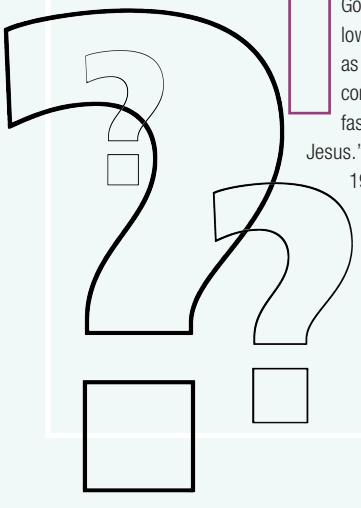
"Satan works through the elements also to garner his harvest of unprepared souls" (p. 589).

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"He will bring disease and disaster" (p. 589).

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did you know?



In Revelation 12:17 God's devoted followers are defined as those who keep His commandments and "hold fast their testimony about Jesus." According to Revelation 19:10, this "testimony of Jesus" is the "spirit of prophecy," meaning that Jesus communicates to His people through the gift of prophecy.

INTO THE STORY

"But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.

"But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything done in it will be laid bare.

"Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat. But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, where righteousness dwells.

"So then, dear friends, since you are looking forward to this, make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with him. Bear in mind that our Lord's patience means salvation, just as our dear brother Paul also wrote you with the wisdom that God gave him. He writes the same way in all his letters, speaking in them of these matters. His letters contain some things that are hard to understand, which ignorant and unstable people distort, as they do the other Scriptures, to their own destruction.

"Therefore, dear friends, since you have been forewarned, be on your guard so that you may not be carried away by the error of the lawless and fall from your secure position. But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever! Amen."

"But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God—having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with such people."

(2 Peter 3:8-18; 2 Timothy 3:1-5, NIV)

OUT OF THE STORY

How does the message that Peter sent to believers regarding the last days (2 Peter 3:8-18) compare with the excerpt from Paul's letter to Timothy (2 Timothy 3:1-5)?

In what ways are the passages similar?

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How are the passages different?

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How would you define "holy"? What does it mean to live a holy life? (Do a word search of "holy" at www.blueletterbible.com.)

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How does a person "grow in the grace and knowledge" of Jesus Christ?

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Based on what you know about Peter's story, what else would you expect him to say to Christians waiting for Jesus to return?

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Based on what you know about Paul's conversion, what else would you expect him to say to Christians waiting for Jesus to return?

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punch lines

"My people come to you, as they usually do, and sit before you to hear your words, but they do not put them into practice. Their mouths speak of love, but their hearts are greedy for unjust gain. Indeed, to them you are nothing more than one who sings love songs with a beautiful voice and plays an instrument well, for they hear your words but do not put them into practice" **(Ezekiel 33:31, 32, NIV).**

"Keep my decrees and follow them. I am the Lord, who makes you holy" **(Leviticus 20:8, NIV).**

"Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ" **(1 Corinthians 11:1, NIV).**

"These, then, are the things you should teach. Encourage and rebuke with all authority. Do not let anyone despise you" **(Titus 2:15, NIV).**

"Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the city" **(Revelation 22:14, NIV).**

further insight

"The word of God, received into the soul, will be manifest in good works. Its results will be seen in a Christlike character and life."

—Ellen G. White, *Christ's Object Lessons,* p. 60

"We shall no longer live the common life of selfishness, but Christ will live in us. His character will be reproduced in our nature. Thus shall we bring forth the fruits of the Holy Spirit."

—Ellen G. White, *Christ's Object Lessons,* p. 61

connectingtolife

Sabbath

Read Romans 10:9, 10.

Discuss the following questions with your friends:

What are some other deceptions that are not mentioned by Ellen White that you see Satan using today to ensnare Christians?

If you were the devil how would you attack the people of God in the last days?

What can you do to ensure your salvation?

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Sunday

Read 2 Peter 3:10-13.

Brainstorm a list of ways that you can "be on your guard so that you may not be carried away by the error of the lawless and fall from your secure position" (verse 17, NIV).

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Complete the following sentence in light of today's reading: Because Christ will return, Christians should _____

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Monday

Read Revelation 12:17; Ephesians 6:10-12.

Read the *Key Text.* Reflect on the following excerpt from *The Great Controversy,* pages 582, 583.

"God's holy Word, which has been handed down to us at such a cost of suffering and blood, is but little valued. . . .

"Though in a different form, idolatry exists in the Christian world today as verily as it existed among ancient Israel in the days of Elijah. The god of many professedly wise men, of philosophers, poets, politicians, journalists—the god of polished fashionable circles, of many colleges and universities, even of some theological institutions—is little better than Baal, the sun-god of Phoenicia."

Tuesday

Read Matthew 24:24.

Compare the comments in the *Flashlight* section with the warning of Jesus in Matthew 24:24 Spend some time in prayer seeking God's wisdom today so that you will not be deceived in the last days.

Wednesday

After reading the *Punch Lines,* reflect on the following letter that was written by Karen Watson, a missionary to Iraq. The letter was dated March 7, 2003. Karen was killed, along with four other missionaries, on March 15, 2004.

"Dear Pastor Phil and Pastor Roger:

"You should only be opening this letter in the event of my death.

"When God calls there are no regrets. . . . I wasn't called to a place. I was called to Him. To obey was my objective, to suffer was expected, His glory my reward, His glory my reward.

"One of the most important things to remember right now is to preserve the work. . . .

"I thank you all so much for your prayers and support. Surely your reward in heaven will be great. Thank you for investing in my life and spiritual well-being. Keep sending missionaries out. Keep raising up fine young pastors.

"In regards to any service, keep it small and simple. Yes, simply, just preach the gospel. . . . Be bold and preach the life-saving, life-changing, forever-eternal gospel. Give glory and honor to our Father.

"The Missionary Heart:

"Care more than some think is wise.

"Risk more than some think is safe.

"Dream more than some think is practical.

"Expect more than some think is possible.

"I was called not to comfort or success but to obedience. . . . There is no joy outside of knowing Jesus and serving Him. I love you two and my church family.

"In His care,
"Karen."*

Thursday

Read Philippians 4:12, 13.

How am I ready for the impending conflict that Ellen White describes?

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Friday

Read Revelation 12:17; 2 Chronicles 20:15.

Scripture warns us that in the last days the evil one will "make war with the remnant" (Revelation 12:17, KJV). Do you see the effects of spiritual warfare in the world today? How about personally, in your life? If so, how? What is the best way to fight spiritual battles (see 2 Chronicles 20:15)?

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* "Keep Sending Missionaries," *Baptist Press,* March 24, 2004.

this week's reading*

The Great Controversy (or *Love Under Fire*), chapter 36.

**Love Under Fire* is a special adaptation of *The Great Controversy,* created for you by the Ellen G. White Estate and Pacific Press. Get more information about it at http://www.cornerstoneconnections.net/article/191/about-us/conflict-of-the-ages-companion-books#.URlhF1rBO9s. By following the weekly reading plan, you will read at least one book of the Conflict of the Ages Series each year.