CORNERSTONECONNECTIONS

DECEMBER032022

Scripture Story: John 20:1-18.
Commentary: *The Great Controversy* (or *Love Under Fire*), chapter 39.

the time of trouble



Photo by The Crystal Lenz

keytext

"At that time Michael shall stand up, the great prince who stands watch over the sons of your people; and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation, even to that time. And at that time your people shall be delivered, every one who is found written in the book."

(Daniel 12:1, NKJV)

flashlight

"When the third angel's message closes, mercy no longer pleads for the guilty inhabitants of the earth. The people of God have accomplished their work. They have received 'the latter rain,' 'the refreshing from the presence of the Lord,' and they are prepared for the trying hour before them. . . . All who have proved themselves loyal to the divine precepts have received 'the seal of the living God.' Then Jesus ceases His intercession in the sanctuary above. He lifts His hands and with a loud voice says, 'It is done. . . . He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still.' Revelation 22:11" (*The Great Controversy,* p. 613).

what do you think?

What have you heard about the time of trouble? Below are several words that describe the way people sometimes feel when they speak or hear about the time of trouble. Rank the following words according to the emotions that most affect you. Place a 1 by the word that best describes how you feel, 2 by your second choice, and so on.

_____ No emotion
_____ Fear
_____ Joy
_____ Relieved
_____ Stressed
_____ Unprepared
_____ Hopeful
_____ Grateful
_____ Sick
_____ Ready
_____ Sinful

Why did you choose the ones you did?

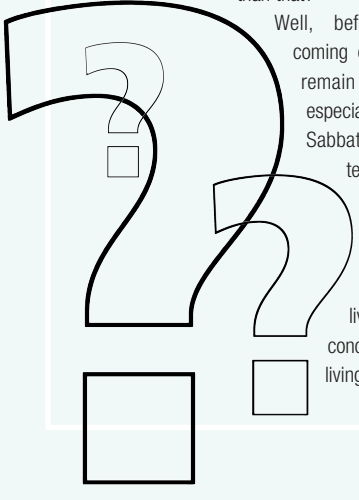
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did you know?

Did you know that the mental uncertainty of whether or not all our sins are forgiven will be more trying than the events of the time of trouble themselves? It's hard to grasp that, isn't it? If you're being hounded to the point of death by angry mobs who believe that you've brought destruction on the world because of your beliefs, what can be more painful than that?



Well, before the second coming of Jesus, those who remain faithful to God—especially as it relates to the Sabbath—will be faced with terrible persecution, even death. However, Revelation 12:11 says: "And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death" (NKJV). They will not be overly concerned about dying. They will be concerned about living with Jesus Christ forever.

INTO THE STORY

"He who is unjust, let him be unjust still; he who is filthy, let him be filthy still; he who is righteous, let him be righteous still; he who is holy, let him be holy still."

"Then Jacob was left alone; and a Man wrestled with him until the breaking of day. Now when He saw that He did not prevail against him, He touched the socket of his hip; and the socket of Jacob's hip was out of joint as He wrestled with him.

"And He said, 'Let Me go, for the day breaks.'

"But he said, 'I will not let You go unless You bless me!'

"So He said to him, 'What is your name?'

"He said, 'Jacob.'

"And He said, 'Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel; for you have struggled with God and with men, and have prevailed.'

"Then Jacob asked, saying, 'Tell me Your name, I pray.'

"And He said, 'Why is it that you ask about My name?' And He blessed him there.

"So Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: 'For I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved.'"

"He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, 'He is my refuge and my fortress; my God, in Him I will trust.'

"Surely He shall deliver you from the snare of the fowler and from the perilous pestilence. He shall cover you with His feathers, and under His wings you shall take refuge; His truth shall be your shield and buckler.

"You shall not be afraid of the terror by night, nor of the arrow that flies by day, nor of the pestilence that walks in darkness, nor of the destruction that lays waste at noonday. A thousand may fall at your side, and ten thousand at your right hand; but it shall not come near you. Only with your eyes shall you look, and see the reward of the wicked."

(Revelation 22:11; Genesis 32:24-30; Psalm 91:1-8, NKJV)



OUT OF THE STORY

Several different passages of Scripture make up this week's *Into the Story* section. Read each passage and *highlight* one thing from each passage that is directly related to the time of trouble. *Place an X* by the item you select in each passage.

In Revelation 22:11 who is speaking? Who is the audience? Remember, the apostle John is seeing all of this while imprisoned on a deserted island. Why do you think God gave John this view of events, even though John could not understand fully what he was seeing?

_____
_____
_____

Who had been searching for Jacob for many years? Why?

_____
_____
_____

What did Jacob believe that the angel could do for him? Share a time in your life when you "wrestled with God" over a difficult issue.

_____
_____
_____
_____

Psalm 91 suggests that God will always protect His people from pain and suffering. Is this true? Explain.

_____
_____
_____
_____

King David is the writer of Psalm 91. Share one "time of trouble" that David went through in his life.

_____
_____
_____

What assurance about the time of trouble can you take away from these verses?

_____
_____
_____
_____

punch lines

"The Lord is near to those who have a broken heart, and saves such as have a contrite spirit. Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivers him out of them all" **(Psalm 34:18, 19, NKJV).**

"The angel of the Lord encamps all around those who fear Him, and delivers them" **(Psalm 34:7, NKJV).**

"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength" **(Deuteronomy 6:5, NIV).**

"For his anger lasts only a moment, but his favor lasts a lifetime; weeping may stay for the night, but rejoicing comes in the morning" **(Psalm 30:5, NIV).**

"Woe to you who are full, for you shall hunger. Woe to you who laugh now, for you shall mourn and weep" **(Luke 6:25, NKJV).**

further insight

"Such will be the experience of God's people in their final struggle with the powers of evil. . . . They will have a deep sense of their shortcomings, and as they review their lives their hopes will sink." But "they will lay hold of the strength of God, as Jacob laid hold of the Angel."

—Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets,* p. 202

connectingtolife

Sabbath

Read Luke 22:39-44.

Did you complete the *What Do You Think?* activity? What word best captures how you feel when speaking about the time of trouble? Perhaps we should look to Jesus for some guidance on handling the trouble to come.

How did Jesus prepare for His death? From today's reading answer the questions below.

Why did Jesus choose to pray instead of running from the danger He faced?

_____

What specifically was Jesus asking His Father to do?

_____

When His Father refused, what did Jesus say?

_____

Do you believe that Jesus can give you the same courage to stand that He showed as He faced crucifixion?

_____

Sunday

Read Revelation 22:11.

After reading the *Into the Story* section, explore the passage by answering the *Out of the Story* questions.

Why do you think our reading today is one of the most powerful verses in the Bible?

_____

After the death of Jesus, the Jewish temple worship was obsolete. Jesus had become the sacrifice slain for humanity's sins. Yet, the Jews continued to worship at the Temple as though nothing had changed, though they had rejected the Savior.

What special work will God do before He seals our fate? (Revelation 14:7)

_____

Monday

Read Daniel 12:1

This week's *Key Text* was written by Daniel, hundreds of years before the apostle John wrote down the visions he received from God while imprisoned on the island of Patmos.

Daniel was himself coming out of a crisis when he received his end-time vision. What do you think Daniel means when he says, "At that time Michael shall stand up"?

_____

The Michael Daniel mentions is Jesus Christ, who is now talking to God for us in heaven. He is our Mediator (Hebrews 8:6; 12:24). There is a point at which Jesus will stop His mediation in heaven. He will "stand up" to ready Himself to return to earth, save His people, and destroy the wicked.

What did the angel tell Daniel to do with the things he had been shown? (Daniel 12:4)

_____

Why? (Habakkuk 2:3) _____

Tuesday

Read Revelation 16.

In this week's *Flashlight* quotation Ellen White picks up on the finality of the moment when God marks the wicked and seals the righteous.

What role will angels play in the time of trouble?

What are the angels in Revelation 16 doing to the earth? What plagues are they pouring out?

What does Psalm 91:11 tell us about the function of angels in times of trouble?

Wednesday

Read each of this week's *Punch Lines* very carefully and apply them to your life.

The apostle Paul found particular comfort in Psalm 34:19. What did Paul say to Timothy about the troubles that he had suffered? (2 Timothy 3:11, 12)

_____

Timothy was still a young man when Paul wrote to him. What message was Paul attempting to give Timothy?

_____

What does Luke 6:25 tell us about the reality of living in a sinful world?

_____

Isn't it good to know that God will be with us through it all?

Thursday

Ephesians 6:10-19.

List the specific tools that God has given His people in their battle with the devil:

_____

Are you dressed for battle?

Friday

Read Isaiah 41:10; 1 Corinthians 16:13.

Someone once noted that "Courage is doing what you're afraid to do. There can be no courage unless you're scared." Are you still afraid of the time of trouble? Not sure that you'll be able to stand up for what's right? Why not tell God that right now?

this week's reading*

The Great Controversy (or *Love Under Fire*), chapter 39.

**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.