CORNERSTONECONNECTIONS

DECEMBER102022

Scripture Story: Daniel 12:1, 2; Revelation 1:7; Revelation 7:14-17; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18; John 14:1-4.

Commentary: *The Great Controversy* (or *Love Under Fire*), chapter 40.

the end of the world as we know it



Photo by A Truman

flashlight

"The compensation for this sacrifice is the joy of peopling the earth with ransomed beings, holy, happy, and immortal. The result of the Savior's conflict with the powers of darkness is joy to the redeemed, redounding to the glory of God throughout eternity. And such is the value of the soul that the Father is satisfied with the price paid; and Christ Himself, beholding the fruits of His great sacrifice, is satisfied" (*The Great Controversy,* p. 652).

keytext

"At that time Michael, the great prince who protects your people, will arise. . . . Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt."

(Daniel 12:1, 2, NIV)

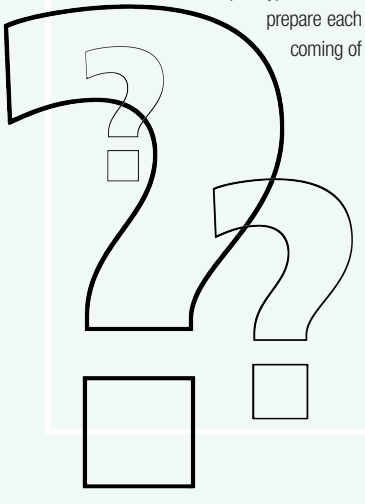
what do you think?

What does "soon" mean to you? We always hear that Jesus is coming "soon." Do you think that it matters if Jesus comes tomorrow, 10 years from now, or 100 years from now? How does it affect your life today?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

did you know?

Some people suggested that a meteor would hit our planet and flip the magnetic poles, causing mass destruction. Others wondered if we might not destroy ourselves with our own nuclear capability. Regardless, a great many people believed that the "end of the world" was coming and tried to prepare themselves for a great apocalypse. What are we doing to prepare each day for the second coming of Jesus?



INTO THE STORY

"At that time Michael, the great prince who protects your people, will arise. There will be a time of distress such as has not happened from the beginning of nations until then. But at that time your people—everyone whose name is found written in the book—will be delivered. Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt."

"'Look, he is coming with the clouds,' and 'every eye will see him, even those who pierced him'; and all peoples on earth 'will mourn because of him.' So shall it be! Amen."

"I answered, 'Sir, you know.' And he said, 'These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore, they are before the throne of God and serve him day and night in his temple; and he who sits on the throne will shelter them with his presence. "Never again will they hunger; never again will they thirst. The sun will not beat down on them," nor any scorching heat. For the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd; "he will lead them to springs of living water." "And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."'"

"For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. Therefore encourage one another with these words."

"'Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. My Father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. You know the way to the place where I am going.'"

(Daniel 12:1, 2; Revelation 1:7; Revelation 7:14-17; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18; John 14:1-4, NIV)



OUT OF THE STORY

From these passages, what kind of mental pictures do you get about Jesus' coming? Look specifically at 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18 and Daniel 12:1, 2.

Look at 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18 and John 14:1-4. What specific comforts are there in these passages?

What do these verses tell you about what happens when people die?

How would you explain to someone from these verses that the righteous dead do not go immediately to heaven upon death?

In Revelation 7:14-17, there is a description of the people who have come out of "the great tribulation." The description is very symbolic. What kind of reward do these symbols show us?

What do you think it means to be faithful to God? What does God expect of us? (Micah 7:8; John 15:9-11 are a couple of examples.)

Revelation 7:14 says that the saved are those who "have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." What does this symbol mean? How will we be ultimately saved and go to heaven?

punch lines

"But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only. But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be" **(Matthew 24:36-39, NKJV).**

"He has also set eternity in the human heart; yet no one can fathom what God has done from beginning to end. I know that there is nothing better for people than to be happy and to do good while they live" **(Ecclesiastes 3:11, 12, NIV).**

"This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you" **(John 15:12, NKJV).**

"He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God" **(Micah 6:8, NIV).**

further insight

"To His faithful followers Christ has been a daily companion and familiar friend. They have lived in close contact, in constant communion with God. . . . In them the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ has been reflected. . . . They are prepared for the communion of heaven; for they have heaven in their hearts."

—Ellen G. White, *Christ's Object Lessons,* p. 421

connectingtolife

Sabbath

Read 2 Peter 3:9.

Complete the *What Do You Think?* activity. The word "soon" can mean different things to different people. One person might think it means this afternoon. Another thinks it means tomorrow. And another might think it's a ploy by their parents to put off their requests: "Mom, when can I get that new dress?" "Soon, dear, soon. . . ."

In light of the fact that when we die we all sleep in the grave, what do you think Jesus' coming "soon" will mean to us? Does that thought have any bearing on how you live your life?

Sunday

Read Psalm 51.

Look at the passages from *Into the Story*. Put aside your preconceptions and just look at those passages. What kind of descriptions do you see? If God were saying these things directly to you, how do you think He would be saying them? Would He be reassuring or comforting?

It's interesting how we can "wash our robes" in *red* blood and have them come out *white!* Of course, we know this to be symbolic of the cleansing that Jesus' blood has on us.

How can you be cleansed by the blood of Jesus? What difference will this cleansing make in your relationship with God? with others? wlth yourself?

Monday

Read Daniel 12:1, 2.

In the *Key Text* this week Michael (or Jesus) is described as "the great prince who protects your people." By choosing Jesus, we become one of His. We put ourselves under His protection. Someone once said that the safest place to be is in the middle of God's will, and that is very true.

Even when we die, when we no longer have any control over anything—even our thoughts—we are being held safely by God until it is time for us to wake up. God keeps that unique personality, all of your memories, everything that is *you* safely sleeping while your body turns back to dust. In what other ways are we safe with God? Write a list of all the ways that God protects us and provides for us. See how long that list can get!

Tuesday

Read John 3:16, 17.

Ellen White gives us a very unique glimpse of God after sin has been destroyed. In the *Flashlight* section she says that after all Jesus endured on earth, after all the misery of sin and the battle that has been fought between good and evil, God will think that the battle was worth it! Jesus' torture and death was worth it! Why? Because fighting that battle brought *you* home! If you think about that kind of love, does it make it easier to trust God to take care of you?

When have you done something very difficult for someone you love? Was it worth it? Explain.

Wednesday

Read Matthew 22:36-40.

The end of the world doesn't need to be frightening if we belong to God. We know that God will protect us and that we will have eternal life, never having to experience pain, death, or sin again. But how do we know if we are *OK* with God? Look at the passages in the *Punch Lines* section. What do we need to do in order to be connected to God? First of all, a relationship with God is the most important thing. We need to know God. We need to talk to Him. We need to listen when He talks back! It isn't about the rules; it's about getting closer to God, and then letting Him love others through us.

Read through the list of the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22, 23. Choose one and explain how God is working in your life to grow that "fruit" so that you can love others on behalf of Christ.

Thursday

Read 1 John 2:3.

What can you do to make sure that you are ready for Jesus' coming? How can you get to know Jesus on a personal level so that when He comes, you'll be confident that you are meeting a Friend, not a Judge?

Friday

Read 2 Peter 3:18.

Do you really know God well enough to be ready for Him to come? If so, what has helped you *know* God? If not, what can you do to prepare a place for Him in your heart and life?

this week's reading*

The Great Controversy (or *Love Under Fire*), chapter 40.

**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.