CORNERSTONECONNECTIONS
JANUARY182025

Scripture Story: Genesis 3:15, 16; Genesis 22:18; Isaiah 7:14; Isaiah 9:6, 7; Micah 5:2; Matthew 1:1, 18-23; Acts 2:29, 30; 2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Peter 1:18-21.
Commentary: *The Desire of Ages* (or *Humble Hero*), chapters 2; 3.

countdown to the Savior



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flashlight

"For more than a thousand years the Jewish people had awaited the Saviour's coming. . . . In song and prophecy, in temple rite and household prayer, they had enshrined His name. And yet at His coming they knew Him not. . . .

"Yet God had chosen Israel. He had called them to preserve among men the knowledge of His law, and of the symbols and prophecies that pointed to the Saviour. . . . They were to reveal God to men" (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 27).

keytext

"But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons."

(Galatians 4:4, 5)

what do you think?

Do you agree or disagree with these statements?

The Jewish nation and the Seventh-day Adventist Church are **similar.**

The Jewish nation and the Seventh-day Adventist Church are **different.**

Mark on the continuum where your response to these statements would fall. Be prepared to explain your answer.

did you know?

The Bible contains many prophecies pertaining to the coming Messiah, and specifically to both His first and second advents. The first prophecy is found in Genesis 3:15, speaking not only about Satan's war against God's church, but also the eventual crushing of Satan after the lesser harm (albeit human death) he inflicts on Christ.

Adam and Eve believed their firstborn son would be the Messiah. Every part of the Temple ritual was a foreshadowing of Christ. The last chapter of the Bible ends with the prophecy and promise of the return of Jesus.

INTO THE STORY

Old Testament (Prophecy)

"Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel" (Isaiah 7:14).

"For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end, upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, to order it and establish it with judgment and justice from that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this" (Isaiah 9:6, 7).

"But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of you shall come forth to Me the One to be Ruler in Israel, whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting" (Micah 5:2).

New Testament (Fulfillment)

"Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit. Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly. But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, 'Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins.'

"So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: 'Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,' which is translated, 'God with us' " (Matthew 1:18-23).

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

"Knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you who through Him believe in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith

and hope are in God" (1 Peter 1:18-21).

OUT OF THE STORY

Describe how the various components of the Temple ritual service were symbols of Christ. What symbols of Christ are included in Seventh-day Adventist worship services?

Why were the inhabitants of the unfallen worlds intensely interested in what was happening on earth? Do you think those beings are as interested in today's world?

How can you explain calamities such as the Holocaust and the 2004 tsunami in light of the great controversy? How is it reassuring to know that Jesus has fulfilled the promise given to Adam and Eve in Genesis 3:15 and that He will put an end forever to the consequences of sin and evil in our world?

punch lines

"And He said to them, 'It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth' " **(Acts 1:7, 8).**

"For you are a holy people to the LORD your God; the LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth" **(Deuteronomy 7:6).**

"For I have known him, in order that he may command his children and his household after him, that they keep the way of the LORD, to do righteousness and justice, that the LORD may bring to Abraham what He has spoken to him" **(Genesis 18:19).**

"The LORD has made bare His holy arm in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God" **(Isaiah 52:10).**

further insight

"So in heaven's council the hour for the coming of Christ had been determined. When the great clock of time pointed to that hour, Jesus was born in Bethlehem."—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 32

Sabbath

Read 1 Corinthians 15:51-53.

The second coming of Christ is the blessed hope of the church, the grand climax of the gospel. The Saviour's coming will be literal, personal, visible, and worldwide. . . . The almost complete fulfillment of most lines of prophecy, together with the present condition of the world, indicates that Christ's coming is near. The time of that event has not been revealed, and we are therefore exhorted to be ready at all times" (The Second Coming of Christ, Seventh-day Adventist Fundamental Beliefs, no. 25).

"And yet at His coming they knew Him not" (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 27). Do you believe the adage "What is past is prologue"? Will there be a group of people in the last days who, like the ancient Jewish nation, are students of the Scriptures and who will recognize that the hour of His coming is at hand? How can we be part of that group? What can we do to be alert to the signs of His coming?

Sunday

Read Romans 12:1, 2 and 2 Corinthians 6:16-18.

Adventists are called to be a separate people, meaning that we do not conform to the degenerate ways of this world, yet are still part of this world.

The Messiah did not come as quickly as the patriarchs thought He would. Over time, many people lost hope. Others lost the vision entirely. Ellen White states: "God's purposes know no haste and no delay." What are your personal thoughts on the second coming of Christ?

How does this promise of Jesus give you comfort: "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him" (1 Corinthians 2:9)?

Monday

Read 2 Peter 3:9.

Who comprises the heavenly council? If things on earth are transpiring according to a metaphorical "great clock of time," is there merit to the idea of predestination? Is it possible we humans can hasten or delay the second coming of Christ?

Tuesday

Read Hebrews 3:7, 8, 12, 13, 15.

Have you heard people say that the second coming of Jesus will happen in the distant future? How can you help someone who has such a perspective by pointing their attention to the counsel found in the Bible in light of the passages listed for today's reading?

How do Seventh-day Adventists reveal God to men and women? Here's another way to think about that: When your classmates, friends, neighbors, coworkers, teachers, police officers, parents, see you, what is it about God they also see?

Wednesday

Read Jeremiah 23:3 and Luke 15:10.

You're not out here all alone. Someone is looking after you or for you as a shepherd does his sheep. Does that thought bring you comfort or annoy you? That may depend on where you're at in relation to the rest of the flock. And the someone could be a Someone or others such as a grandparent, parent, pastor, teacher, friend. Maybe you're sometimes the someone looking after or for another person. With the "finding" of a lost sheep, coin, or person comes rejoicing on earth as it does in heaven. Have you had a "rejoicing" experience—either from your "being found" or from "finding" someone else?

Thursday

Read Mark 10:29, 30, and John 14:1-3.

Should time last long enough for you to establish a home of your own, would you want to enter mission service in a country or environment far different from your own? Why or why not?

Friday

Read 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 and Revelation 22:12.

How do these promises about Jesus' second coming strengthen your confidence and hope in Him and give you assurance of salvation? What are you doing to share this hope with those around you?

this week's reading*

The Desire of Ages (or *Humble Hero*), chapters 2; 3.

**Humble Hero* is a special adaptation of *The Desire of Ages*, created 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-companionbooks#.URlhF1rBO9s. By following the weekly reading plan, you will read at least one book of the Conflict of the Ages series each year.