CORNERSTONECONNECTIONS
OCTOBER182025

Scripture Story: John 12:20-43; Matthew 24; Mark 13; Luke 21:5-38.
Commentary: *The Desire of Ages* (or *Humble Hero*), chapters 68 ; 69.

preparing for tomorrow today



Photo by Terrill Thomas

flashlight

"Christ has given signs of His coming. He declares that we may know when He is near, even at the doors. He says of those who see these signs, 'This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled.' These signs have appeared. Now we know of a surety that the Lord's coming is at hand. 'Heaven and earth shall pass away,' He says, 'but My words shall not pass away'" (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 632).

keytext

"Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come. . . . If the owner of the house had known at what time of night the thief was coming, he would have kept watch and would not have let his house be broken into. . . . The Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him."

(Matthew 24:42-44, NIV)

what do you think?

T (true) or F (false)?

____ The second coming of Christ is one of the predominant themes in the Bible.

____ Christians should thoroughly understand biblical prophecy.

____ Believing that Jesus is coming again is an essential part of our identity as Seventh-day Adventists.

____ Events in the Middle East point to the soon return of Jesus.

____ Even if Jesus does not return in my lifetime I can have peace placing my hope in His soon return.

did you know?

One of the most solemn and yet most glorious truths revealed in the Bible is that of Christ's second coming to complete the great work of redemption. To God's pilgrim people, so long left to sojourn in 'the region and shadow of death,' a precious, joy-inspiring hope is given in the promise of His appearing. . . . The doctrine of the second advent is the very keynote of the Sacred Scriptures" (Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 299).

INTO THE STORY

"As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter, James, John and Andrew asked him privately, 'Tell us, when will these things happen? And what will be the sign that they are all about to be fulfilled?'

"Jesus said to them: 'Watch out that no one deceives you. Many will come in my name, claiming, "I am he," and will deceive many. When you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be earthquakes in various places, and famines. These are the beginning of birth pains.

"'You must be on your guard. You will be handed over to the local councils and flogged in the synagogues. On account of me you will stand before governors and kings as witnesses to them. And the gospel must first be preached to all nations. Whenever you are arrested and brought to trial, do not worry beforehand about what to say. Just say whatever is given you at the time, for it is not you speaking, but the Holy Spirit.' . . .

"'At that time people will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory. And he will send his angels and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of the heavens.

"'Now learn this lesson from the fig tree: As soon as its twigs get tender and its leaves come out, you know that summer is near. Even so, when you see these things happening, you know that it is near, right at the door. Truly I tell you, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.

"'But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. Be on guard! Be alert! You do not know when that time will come. It's like a man going away: He leaves his house and puts his servants in charge, each with their assigned task, and tells the one at the door to keep watch.

"'Therefore keep watch because you do not know when the owner of the house will come back—whether in the evening, or at midnight, or when the rooster crows, or at dawn. If he comes suddenly, do not let him find you sleeping. What I say to you, I say to everyone: "Watch!"'"

(Mark 13:3-37, NIV)

OUT OF THE STORY

What does this passage teach us about the second coming of Jesus?

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How does this passage inform our understanding of world issues?

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What does it mean to "watch" for Jesus to come? Is this any different than "waiting" for Him to come? If so, how?

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Contrast Mark's account (Mark 13) of Jesus' teaching on the Mount of Olives with the other Synoptic Gospels (Matthew 24 and Luke 21:5-38). In what ways are they similar? In what ways are they different? What does this comparison study tell you about . . .

Mark? _____
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Matthew? _____
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Luke? _____
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punch lines

"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age" **(Matthew 28:19, 20, NIV).**

"In all history there has never been such a time of terror. It will be a time of trouble for my people Israel. Yet in the end they will be saved!" **(Jeremiah 30:7, NLT).**

"In his kindness God called you to share in his eternal glory by means of Christ Jesus. So after you have suffered a little while, he will restore, support, and strengthen you, and he will place you on a firm foundation" **(1 Peter 5:10, NLT).**

"As for me, I look to the LORD for help. I wait confidently for God to save me, and my God will certainly hear me" **(Micah 7:7, NLT).**

"For the LORD of Heaven's Armies has a day of reckoning. He will punish the proud and mighty and bring down everything that is exalted" **(Isaiah 2:12, NLT).**

further insight

"There's something equally as important as coming to Christ. Are you in a saving relationship with Christ? If you are, then you're ready for His coming right now!"—Morris Venden, Seventh-day Adventist pastor and author

Sabbath

Read Acts 1:9-11.

Reflect on why you answered either true or false for each question in the *What Do You Think?* section. Go back to each question and think about somebody giving the opposite answer as you. What rationale might they use? Could you defend the opposite answer? Why or why not?

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Sunday

Supplement the Scripture reading from *Into the Story* by reading the following passages listed under "READ." Reflect on the thought questions under the heading "THINK" and then put the passages into practice by doing the suggested activity under "ACT."

READ

- 1 Thessalonians 4:17
- Daniel 12:1-3
- Revelation 1:7; 6:14; 13:11-18
- 1 Thessalonians 5:1-6
- 2 Peter 3:10, 11
- 1 Corinthians 15:51, 52
- 2 Thessalonians 2:8

THINK

- Is my faith in Jesus strong enough to carry me through the last days?
- How can I live today in order to be ready for the Second Coming?
- How would I explain to a friend to "watch and be ready" for Jesus' second coming?

ACT

- Pray that you can stay connected to Jesus through every circumstance in life.
- Meet with some friends and talk about current events in light of what the Bible teaches about the Second Coming.
- Read the final chapters in *The Great Controversy* by Ellen G. White.

Monday

Read Matthew 24:42-44.

Consider the following story that illustrates the difference between watching and waiting.

A fishing vessel returned home after many days at sea. As they neared the shore, the sailors gazed eagerly toward the dock where a group of their loved ones had gathered. The skipper looked through his binoculars and identified some of them: "I see Bill's Mary, and there is Tom's Margaret and David's Anne."

One man became concerned because his wife was not there. Later, he left the boat with a heavy heart fearing something tragic had happened to her. He hurried to his cottage. As he opened the door, she ran to meet him, saying, "I have been waiting for you!"

He replied with a gentle rebuke, "Yes, but the other men's wives were watching for them!"

Watching is not a spectator sport. As Oswald Chambers put it: "The only way to wait for the Second Coming is to watch that you do what you should do, so that when He comes is a matter of indifference. It is the attitude of a child, certain that God knows what He is about. When the Lord does come, it will be as natural as breathing."

Tuesday

Read 1 Peter 5:10.

After reading the *Flashlight* section, consider another observation Ellen White wrote about the Second Coming:

"Those who are watching for the Lord are purifying their souls by obedience to the truth. With vigilant watching they combine earnest working. Because they know that the Lord is at the door, their zeal is quickened to co-operate with the divine intelligences in working for the salvation of souls" (Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 634).

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How do you live in the here and now, knowing that our Lord is about to return? What are you doing for the salvation of souls?

Wednesday

Read 1 Corinthians 15:50-58.

After each text included in *Punch Lines*, write a simple summary. For example, after Jeremiah 30:7 you might write, "Salvation is sure!"

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Thursday

Read Micah 7:7.

If I knew Jesus was going to come tomorrow, how would I live today? Is that the way I will live today? Why or why not?

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Friday

Read Matthew 28:19, 20.

As you think with anticipation of Jesus' second coming, what can you do to prepare starting today? How much of your time, energy, means, resources, talents, and spiritual gifts are you willing to contribute to share your hope of Jesus' return with others?

this week's reading*

The Desire of Ages or (*Humble Hero*), chapters 68, 69.

*A special adaptation of *The Desire of Ages*, entitled *Humble Hero*, has been created just for you by the Ellen G. White Estate and Pacific Press® Publishing Association. Get more info about it at: www.cornerstoneconnections.net. By following this plan you will read at least one book of the Conflict of the Ages series each year.