

CORNERSTONECONNECTIONS
JULY 11 2026

the Bible and you

Scripture Story: Daniel 7:25; 2 Thessalonians 2:3-7; Revelation 12:6.
Commentary: *The Great Controversy* (or *Love Under Fire),* chapters 3, 4.
Key Text: 2 Thessalonians 2:7.

PREPARING TO TEACH

I. SYNOPSIS

The Dark Ages were a terrible time for anyone who thought differently or questioned the existing authority. The Catholic Church controlled kings and queens, commoners and servants. Disagreement was not permitted, and "heretics" were searched out and routinely tortured and executed for the crime of independent thought.

One of the highest crimes was that of owning a Bible. The church had mandated that only priests could read the Bible, and that laity would have the contents of the Bible told to them by their spiritual leaders. People were not permitted to read the Bible themselves and draw their own conclusions.

Satan knew that the Bible held power for the believers. The Bible not only showed them the truth about God's character, but it also showed them exactly what they needed to do to be saved. The church had made religion so complicated and heavy that the common person no longer understood that their salvation was a free gift. The church allowed pagan influences to creep into doctrine so that even God's law seemed to be changed.

God did not allow His Word to be shuffled aside, however. He always had His own little remnant of people who protected the Scriptures and passed them down to their children. The Waldenses are an example of these people. They had to live in hiding and were often persecuted, but they carefully guarded God's Word. And God has a remnant of people today who value and guard His Word.

II. TARGET

The students will:

- Understand the value of God's law. *(Know)*
- Sense the benefit of following the laws that God laid out. *(Feel)*
- Choose to explore their Bibles on their own to see what is really there. *(Respond)*

III. EXPLORE

The Law of God, Seventh-day Adventist Fundamental Beliefs, No. 19

"The great principles of God's law are embodied in the Ten Commandments and exemplified in the life of Christ. They express God's love, will, and purposes concerning human conduct and relationships and are binding upon all people in every age. These precepts are the basis of God's covenant with His people and the standard in God's judgment. Through the agency of the Holy Spirit they point out sin and awaken a sense of need for a Savior. Salvation is all of grace and not of works, and its fruit is obedience to the Commandments. This obedience develops Christian character and results in a sense of well-being. It is evidence of our love for the Lord and our concern for our fellow human beings. The obedience of faith demonstrates the power of Christ to transform lives, and therefore strengthens Christian witness" (Exod. 20:1-17; Deut. 28:1-14; Ps. 19:7-14; 40:7, 8; Matt. 5:17-20; 22:36-40; John 14:15; 15:7-10; Rom. 8:3, 4; Eph. 2:8-10; Heb. 8:8-10; 1 John 2:3; 5:3; Rev. 12:17; 14:12).

TEACHING

I. GETTING STARTED

Activity

Refer the students to the What Do You Think? *section of their lesson. After they have completed it, discuss their responses.*

Ask the students a series of questions and ask them to back up their answers using the Bible.

1. God is a good God who loves us.
2. Jesus died for your sins.
3. We don't have to do anything to be forgiven, only ask sincerely.

If the students aren't able to back up their answers with Scripture, ask them if they are sure about their answers, and why they are so sure. Do they know what is in the Bible because they have read it themselves, or because they have been told what is in it?

Illustration

Share this illustration in your own words:

In marketing when a company is trying to sell something, they look at both the value of the item and the perceived value of the item. The value is a combination of the material it is made of and what people are generally willing to pay for it. The perceived value is the customer's opinion of the value of the item to him or her.

Diamonds, for example, are not terribly expensive. To mine for diamonds costs a lot, but not nearly as much as it costs to mine for other minerals or gemstones. The value of diamonds is a combination of the number of diamonds available to be purchased on the market and a clever advertising campaign. There is no natural shortage of diamonds, only a control on how many are available for sale at any given time. In fact, it is never recommended that you invest in diamonds because the price of a diamond is largely based on the perceived value.

How much a diamond is worth is really how much it is worth to *you*.

II. TEACHING THE STORY

Bridge to the Story

Share the following in your own words:

The value of the Bible is similar to that of diamonds. The pages of the book itself is not worth very much. There is the cost of paper, ink, and binding. In fact, you can get entire versions of the Bible for free online. The true value of the Bible and of God's law comes down to how much it is worth to *you*. When the Bible was denied to people in the Dark Ages, they saw immense value in it. Now that the Bible is very common, how much is it worth to you?

Out of the Story for Teachers

After you read the Into the Story *section with your students, use the following in your own words to process it with them.*

- *Underline* the sections that you think describe God's true believers.
- *Circle* the words that describe the agency working against God's true believers.
- Laws and lawlessness are mentioned in relation to the agency that works against God's people. What will this agency do with God's law?

Use the following as more teachable passages that relate to today's story: John 14:15; Matthew 12:1-14.

Sharing Context and Background

Use the following information to shed more light on the story for your students. Share it in your own words.

It is very important to remember in this study that while the Catholic Church grew corrupt and was used by Satan to persecute those who were loyal to God, Catholic people are not evil. Power corrupts, and when a few people hold a great deal of power, it is very difficult for those people to maintain their perspective without God's strength.

Governments have done very wicked things on a global scale without the people under those governments being wicked people. Government workers may also be completely ignorant of what their government is really up to! It is too easy for Protestants to point the finger at Catholics and declare them "the beast." However, there have been times in history when Protestants had the political power, and it is sad to report that they did not do much better when it came to fair and humane treatment of Catholics. Power, it seems, taps into human weakness and leaves us vulnerable to temptation and that slippery slope.

The real issue here is not Protestants versus Catholics, or one denomination being superior to another. The Bible is the focus of this lesson because God's law is what should guide us. When the Bible is

Tips for Top-Notch Teaching

RABBI 101

Almost but Not Yet

Don't treat teens like children. Remember that in two or three short years these young people will be old enough to vote, get married, move away from home, and pursue their own lives. They are no longer children and respond best to being treated with the respect of young adults. However, they are not adults yet! Their attention spans are short and they tend to be impulsive. Don't hold the fact that they aren't all the way grown up against them.

removed from our lives, we enter a personal Dark Age. We lack the guidance, wisdom, hope, and direction that God wants us to have.

In the Dark Ages the Bible was taken away from the general population, and those who tried to hold on to their beliefs were horribly persecuted. Revelation 12:6 (NIV) says that "the woman fled into the wilderness to a place prepared for her by God, where she might be taken care of for 1,260 days." When we use the "day equals one year" formula, we can see that 1,260 years is exactly how long the Dark Ages lasted.

Daniel 7:25 speaks about a power that will speak against the Most High, oppress the saints, and attempt to change the "set times and the laws." The reason many theologians as well as Ellen White believed that this pointed to the Catholic pope was that the pope declared himself Jesus Christ on earth. The Catholic Church actively persecuted believers in the Dark Ages, and the Catholic Church declared that it had the power to change the Sabbath (one of God's laws) from the seventh day of the week to the first day of the week. However, we must remember that the power at work behind these political maneuvers was Satan's, not a human being's. The Catholic Church was used by the devil to do some evil things, but Satan uses many avenues to get his work done. The important thing to watch is that we turn to God for His strength so that the devil is not able to use us in the same way. But for the grace of God, there go WE.

III. CLOSING

Activity

Close with an activity and debrief it in your own words.

As a class, make a list of reasons why your Bible is valuable to you. There is no wrong answer here. The point is to make them think honestly about God's Word and how it impacts (or fails to impact) their lives. Examples of *honest* reasons their Bibles are valuable to them might be:

- That they have had it since they were little.
- That it was a gift from a loved one.
- That it has gotten them through difficult times.
- That it reminds them that they aren't alone, etc.

Teaching From the Lesson

Refer your students to the other sections of their lesson.

- **Key Text**
  Invite students to share the Key Text *with the class if they have committed it to memory.*
- **Flashlight**
  Read the Flashlight *statement, pointing out that most of the time it is from the commentary on this week's story found in the book* The Great Controversy. *Ask what relationship they see between the statement and what they have just discussed from* Out of the Story.
- **Punch Lines**
  Point out to your students the verses listed in their lesson that relate to this week's story. Have them share the verse that spoke most directly to them and allow them to explain why they chose it.
- **Further Insight**
  Ask them how the quote in Further Insight *conveys the point of the story in this lesson.*

Look at the list and leave them with this question:

What dollar value would you put on your Bible? Why?

Summary

Share the following thoughts in your own words:

In the Dark Ages people did not have access to the Bible, yet they realized its value. If they tried to gain access to a Bible, they were persecuted and often killed. It was a terrifying time for believers. However, during this time God did not allow His Word to be eradicated. He always had His own people who protected the Scriptures.

The Bible gives power to believers. It holds promises, hope, guidance, and instruction. For those of us today who have constant access to the Bible in any language or version of our choice, we have forgotten the true treasure of God's Word. Having the Bible easily available and all around us has made us take it for granted. But if we look back on the experiences of those who lived during the Dark Ages, we can understand why the Bible was worth the fight!



Remind the students about the reading plan that will take them through the inspired commentary of the Bible, the Conflict of the Ages Series. The reading that goes with this lesson is *The Great Controversy* (or *Love Under Fire),* chapters 3, 4.

CORNERSTONE CONNECTIONS

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STUDENT LESSON

Scripture Story: Daniel 7:25; 2 Thessalonians 2:3-7; Revelation 12:6.
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the Bible and you



Photo by Luis Guerra, Jr.

flashlight

"Satan well knew that the Holy Scriptures would enable men to discern his deceptions and withstand his power. It was by the Word that even the Savior of the world had resisted his attacks. At every assault, Christ presented the shield of eternal truth, saying, 'It is written'" (*The Great Controversy,* p. 51).

key text

"For the secret power of lawlessness is already at work; but the one who now holds it back will continue to do so till he is taken out of the way."

(2 Thessalonians 2:7, NIV)

what do you think?

Answer these questions as quickly as you can:

1. Where is your Bible right now?

_____

2. When did you last read your Bible?

_____

3. What is your favorite Bible passage?

_____

4. How much would you sell your Bible for if you were offered cash right now?

_____

did you know?

Before the invention of the printing press, it took a skilled writer about 10 months to produce a copy of the Bible. Anyone who wanted a Bible must wait almost a year to receive their purchase. In today's standards, the writer would be paid at the rate of any other skilled laborer, possibly $15-$20 per hour. If that laborer worked five days a week, eight hours a day, that would make your Bible cost $24,000!

But wait . . . we aren't considering the cost of keeping a business open. A business never charges you only the fee to pay the basic salary of the employee who is working on your Bible. The fee is much higher to compensate for electricity, taxes, office space, etc. When you get your car fixed, you don't pay the $20/hr for the mechanic; you pay $50-$75/hr to cover all of the other costs as well. If we apply that to your Bible, it could cost as much as $96,000! (https://www.cgg.org/index.cfm/library/article/id/615/how-much-is-bible-worth-to-you.htm, accessed July 16, 2025.)

INTO THE STORY

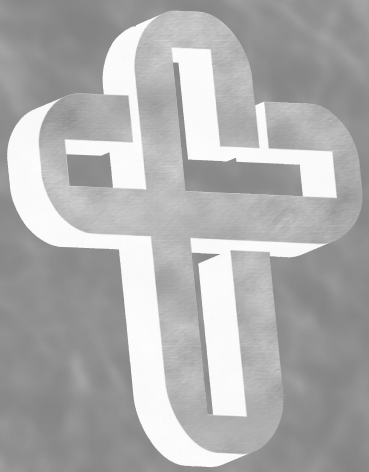
"He will speak against the Most High and oppress his holy people and try to change the set times and the laws. The holy people will be delivered into his hands for a time, times and half a time."

"Don't let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction. He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God.

"Don't you remember that when I was with you I used to tell you these things? And now you know what is holding him back, so that he may be revealed at the proper time. For the secret power of lawlessness is already at work; but the one who now holds it back will continue to do so till he is taken out of the way."

"The woman fled into the wilderness to a place prepared for her by God, where she might be taken care of for 1,260 days."

(Daniel 7:25; 2 Thessalonians 2:3-7; Revelation 12:6, NIV)



OUT OF THE STORY

How do these passages describe the Dark Ages of European history?

_____
_____
_____

When a religious organization sets itself up as having the same power as God Himself, what would that do to the people who were governed by it?

_____
_____
_____

Why do you think God told us ahead of time that these things would happen?

_____
_____
_____

What do you think is the "secret power of lawlessness"?

_____
_____
_____

What are the "set times" and "laws" that this power would try to change?

_____
_____
_____

Is it possible to have an organization that started out with pure intentions, became corrupt with power, but still has good, God-fearing people within it? Explain.

_____
_____
_____

Who or what does the woman represent? How did God take care of her? How will He take care of us?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

punch lines

"Don't suppose for a minute that I have come to demolish the Scriptures—either God's Law or the Prophets. I'm not here to demolish but to complete. I am going to put it all together, pull it all together in a vast panorama. God's Law is more real and lasting than the stars in the sky and the ground at your feet. Long after stars burn out and earth wears out, God's Law will be alive and working" **(Matthew 5:17, 18, *The Message*).**

"You are to have the same law for the foreigner and the native-born. I am the Lord your God" **(Leviticus 24:22, NIV).**

"Follow my decrees and be careful to obey my laws, and you will live safely in the land. Then the land will yield its fruit, and you will eat your fill and live there in safety" **(Leviticus 25:18, 19, NIV).**

"By your words I can see where I'm going; they throw a beam of light on my dark path" **(Psalm 119:105, *The Message*).**

further insight

"In like manner He had established His law, the foundation of His government in heaven and upon earth. The arm of man might reach his fellow men and destroy their lives; but that arm could as readily uproot the mountains from their foundations, and hurl them into the sea, as it could change one precept of the law of Jehovah, or blot out one of His promises to those who do His will."

—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy,* p. 66

Sabbath

Read Psalm 119:105.

We are used to having free and easy access to the Bible. The Bible is used in literature, in poetry, in government, and even in comedy. Most of us have several Bibles in our homes. Bibles are given out for free by churches. Bible verses are displayed on billboards. Count how many Bibles you have in your home right now. Look at how many Bible versions you have available online. If you suddenly had no access to a Bible—not online, in your home, in the library, or in churches—would you miss it? Would you want one? Or would you not notice its absence? Psalm 119:105 says: "By your words I can see where I'm going; they throw a beam of light on my dark path" (*The Message*). How might your Bible guide you today? (Remember, you have Notes pages in the back of your study guide to write longer answers.)

Sunday

Read Romans 15:4.

It is said that absolute power corrupts absolutely. In the Dark Ages, the Catholic Church wielded absolute power over the population of Europe. Corrupt leaders were more interested in controlling people than they were in teaching them. Without access to the Bible, the people had no way of knowing the truth about God.

Next to these mistakes the common people made without the Bible to guide them, write down what these ideas would make them think about God.

1. God changed the Sabbath to a different day.

2. The church has absolute authority equal to God's, and can decide if you are saved or lost.

3. You must earn forgiveness either by paying money or by doing repetitive tasks.

4. The Bible is too complicated to be understood by regular people and must be read only by religious leaders.

Do you even *like* that kind of God?

Monday

Read 2 Thessalonians 2:7.

The *Key Text* refers to the "secret power of lawlessness" that was already at work right after Jesus left earth to go to heaven. How has the idea that God's law no longer matters been insinuated into our lives today? The idea that "rules were made to be broken" is a very dangerous one. Watch the news tonight. Make a list of every "broken rule" that you can see throughout the program. Look at them separately and see how innocent they look, and then consider the repercussions. What ways do you think you can assert your independence and unique perspective without going against the law of God?

Tuesday

Read Psalm 31:24.

Ellen White points out in *Flashlight* that Jesus used the Scriptures to fight off the temptations of the devil. Sometimes we think of the devil's temptations as obvious, such as stealing something or killing someone. However, the devil is smarter than that. He comes at us with fear, despondency, loneliness, and rage. The Bible is not a book of rules; it's a book of promises and hope, and the devil doesn't want us to have access to its power.

Start a journal today, writing down every promise that you find in the Bible. Look back on it often. Memorize the verses that have special meaning to you. Next time you feel like the world is against you, pull out your Bible and your journal, and see what a difference God's Word makes in difficult times!

Wednesday

A common belief out there is that after Jesus died on the cross God's law no longer mattered. Look at the verses in *Punch Lines*. Does this seem to be the case? In fact, there are promises that our lives will be richer and happier for having followed God's guidelines. Look up the Ten Commandments in Exodus 20. Are there any of God's laws that you think don't matter? Why do you think they might still matter today? How would they improve our lives? If Jesus' death really erased these laws, are we free to do all these things?

Thursday

Read Deuteronomy 31:12.

How do you read your Bible? Do you just read a verse here or there? Do you take your parents' or your teachers' word on what the Bible is saying in the bigger picture? Here is a challenge: make it a point to read your Bible cover-to-cover and see for yourself what is in there! Once you see all of it, you'll never be the same again. Guaranteed.

Friday

Read 2 Timothy 3:14, 15.

How does the Bible affect *your* life? How could it improve your life? If Christians in the Dark Ages would pay the equivalent of $100,000 in today's currency for one copy of the Bible, what do you think is in there that is worth so much?

this week's reading*

The Great Controversy (or *Love Under Fire*), chapters 3, 4.

**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.