

CORNERSTONECONNECTIONS

AUGUST 22 2026

two witnesses

Scripture Story: Revelation 11:1-14.
Commentary: *The Great Controversy* (or *Love Under Fire),* chapter 15.
Key Text: Revelation 11:3.

PREPARING TO TEACH

I. SYNOPSIS

This week's lesson grows out of the prophetic passage in Revelation 11 that describes an era of stubborn belligerence to God's authority and His Word. The 1260-year period in which "the suppression of the Scriptures" had been foretold by John the revelator demonstrates the scary results of disregarding the Bible and its relevance to mankind. Perhaps the Renaissance and the cultural stand many in France made against the existence of God became a foundation for others to create a religion that served their own desires and purposes. On one hand we have the Christian church refusing to make the Bible accessible to common people followed by a time when the Bible becomes available but is undermined by an emerging secular culture.

This week's theme is really about the role of the Bible in our hearts and lives. The "two witnesses" referred to in the book of Revelation refer to the Old and New Testaments that testify to God's character and plan for salvation. But these "two witnesses" are more than just pages of Scripture—they are the people who declare the risen Christ to the world. They are not simply people who testify about the Bible, but their story becomes part of the story of God and His people. The objective is to engage students to embrace the Bible as God's Word that keeps us connected to Him as our Creator and Redeemer.

II. TARGET

The students will:

- Understand the enduring role of the Bible as what is good, right, and true. *(Know)*
- Embrace the power of God's Word in their personal lives. *(Feel)*
- Decide to live as a witness in these last days to God's authority and grace. *(Respond)*

III. EXPLORE

The Father, Seventh-day Adventist Fundamental Beliefs, No. 3

"God the eternal Father is the Creator, Source, Sustainer, and Sovereign of all creation. He is just and holy, merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness. The qualities and powers exhibited in the Son and the Holy Spirit are also those of the Father" (Gen. 1:1; Deut. 4:35; Ps. 110:1, 4; John 3:16; 14:9; 1 Cor. 15:28; 1 Tim. 1:17; 1 John 4:8; Rev. 4:11).

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.*

Invite the students to share their responses to the ranking activity in the *What Do You Think?* section. Students may choose to say that openly defying

God's Word is ultimately wrong. A good follow-up question might be "Why?"—Why is denying the truth that the Bible is God's Word so damaging? Some might say that to do so makes you ultimately harder to reach, while others might maintain that knowing God's Word is holy but never choosing to honor it by reading or obeying it is even more distressing. Again, invite the students to explain why.

Illustration

Share this illustration in your own words:

Dawson Trotman was born prematurely. In 1906 the baby was not expected to live, but miraculously made it. The little boy's mother attributed the blessing to being a miracle of God while the father maintained that it was simply luck. While this was not the only difference of opinion, the couple divorced. Dawson Trotman managed to become quite a student leader in high school. He was the valedictorian of his class and a leader in the Christian Endeavor Society. But Trotman was leading a double life. It was like the two different voices of his parents urging him down two different roads, only it was one person trying to lead two lives.

After high school Trotman went full on into the Roaring Twenties, in which he lived with reckless abandon for alcohol and gambling. He was going downhill fast. One day he and his girlfriend nearly drowned while swimming. When his girlfriend was unable to swim back to shore he tried to help her, but they both went down. They were both saved by a couple in a boat and Dawson Trotman took stock of his life—both of them. He visited his old church group and found them working on the task of memorizing Scripture. He immediately began to memorize Scripture, and he continued to grow and bear witness to God's powerful Word. He started the Navigators, a group of believers whose motto was: "To Know Christ and to Make Him Known."

Twenty-five years later Trotman was at a Navigators conference where he saw a girl fall out of a speedboat and he dove in to rescue her. He held her up long enough for others to save her, but Dawson Trotman drowned before anyone could reach him. *Time* magazine featured a photo in the obituary section of Trotman that read: "Always holding someone up."

Whom do you know who lives their life completely for the truth in God's Word? Do they ever face persecution or ridicule? How would they answer the skeptics or atheists in this world?

II. TEACHING THE STORY

Bridge to the Story

Share the following in your own words:

Trotman chose to add his witness to the two witnesses John refers to in this prophecy. Prophecies in Revelation are timeless, so they are not always easy to understand. But take the time and energy to study this passage, which reveals some amazing truths about how God's Word will ultimately prevail.

Out of the Story for Teachers

As you read this prophetic passage in Revelation 11, first know that it is the story of God's people who emerge from a dark season in earth's history. What are some basic themes that you think are prominent in this passage?

- Make a list of words and phrases that you don't understand.
- Who are the two witnesses and why are they mentioned?
- Why are they "clothed in sackcloth"?
- What is the significance of the mention of the "forty-two months" and the "one thousand two hundred and sixty days"?
- Whom do "Sodom" and "Egypt" represent? Why are they linked with Jerusalem, particularly where "the Lord was crucified"?
- What are some examples from Scripture of open rebellion against God and His Word?

Extra Questions for Teachers:

Read the stories found in the following verses and note how they describe an outright disregard for God's Word, and even God's existence.

Jeremiah 36

Exodus 5:2

Psalm 73:1-12

Use the following as more teachable passages that relate to today's story: 1 Kings 18; Genesis 11; 6.

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 tempting to pass over difficult sections of Bible prophecy when teaching young people, but this section is immensely relevant to the growing secular world in which they live. *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary* is very helpful, as is Ranko

Tips for Top-Notch Teaching

RABBI 101

Jigsaw

Sometimes what you teach is part of a puzzle of continual concepts that build the picture. When you have a large amount of material to cover, consider "jigsawing" the job out to the students. This means asking a student or group of students to read, study, and report on a part of the lesson they master. You might give each student or pair of students a verse in which they are required to look up the meaning of that in the commentary or other sources you provide. Invite them to become experts in that one portion and they will have to pay attention to the other parts as well. You might assign this ahead of time and use the time in class to report and put the puzzle together.

Stefanović's commentary on the book of Revelation.

The setting of this passage is an interlude of sorts between the sixth and seventh trumpet in Revelation. The whole mood of Revelation is moving toward the events of the world at the end of time. As you read this prophetic passage, consider a couple of key sections that are pivotal to understanding the message.

What are the forty and two months?

Jerry Moon demonstrates in detail the background of the day-for-a-year principle in an online article that strengthens the two most popular passages that refer to a day equaling a year in Bible prophecy (Numbers 14:34 and Ezekiel 4:6).[1]

Here is how the time period is delineated in the Bible:

- 42 months (Revelation 11:2; Revelation 13:5)
- 1,260 days (Revelation 11:3; Revelation 12:6)
- "a time, times and half a time" (Revelation 12:14, NIV)

If we do the math, 42 months =1260 days.

Also, a time (a year) = 360 days.

A times (two years) = 620 days.

A half a time (half a year) = 180, which comes to a total of 1,260 days. And if you apply the prophetic day-for-a-year principle to this prophecy, then you have a time period of 1,260 years of persecution and repression of God's Word and His people.

What does it mean that the two witnesses' dead bodies "will lie in the street of the great city which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified" (Revelation 11:8, NKJV)?

Stefanović explains:

"The 'great city' where the witnesses are martyred integrates the wickedness and moral degradation of Sodom (Genesis 18:20, 21; 19:4-11) with the

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 quotes in Further Insight *convey the point of the story in this lesson.*

atheistic arrogance and self-sufficiency of Egypt (Exodus 5:2). Both cities were places where God's people "lived as aliens under persecution."[2] The reference to the place where "our Lord was crucified" notes that what happened to the two witnesses later in history is essentially what happened to Christ when He was rejected and put to death.

This section of Revelation ultimately speaks to the way that God's people will be persecuted at the end of time, as God's Word has been undermined, and as Christ had been treated on earth (John 1:10). But, as Christ was raised from the grave, as God's Word has endured through seasons in which people sought to destroy it, so will God's faithful people in every generation bear witness to God's great plan of salvation.

III. CLOSING

Activity

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

Invite (or choose) students to select key characters in the Old and New Testaments. Give the students a card that has a name of a biblical hero that corresponds with the section (e.g., Elijah—1 Kings 18 and 19, or Daniel—Daniel 1 and 6). Ask each student to write out what you think they would say in a court of law if asked: "What can you say about God in 25 words or less?" Have the students write and read what they think the person would say. Ask the students: "What would you say if you were asked to testify in the way others have been called on in history?"

Summary

Share the following thoughts in your own words:

When John the revelator refers to the two witnesses, he is also referring to you and me—people who testify. It's crucial to remember that God's Word is the only anchor for us through the deceptive season ahead. Some get wary of danger, evil, war, earthquakes, and famine. While those events threaten the lives of people on earth, an even greater danger awaits in the notion that the Bible is irrelevant and that God does not exist. While some may get set in their ideas about God and His Word, continue to pray and live out His Word in your life. Like Dawson Trotman, make Scripture a part of your mind and memory. It is not always easy to make studying the Bible a priority. It can be challenging, but there are many resources that are available to help you in your study of God's Word. Start by praying for wisdom and the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

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[1] www. sdanet.org/atissue/end/yearday.htm

[2] Ranko Stefanović, *Revelation of Jesus Christ,* p. 350.



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),* chapter 15.

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STUDENT LESSON

Scripture Story: Revelation 11:1-14.
Commentary: *The Great Controversy* (or *Love Under Fire*), chapter 15.

two witnesses



Photo by A Truman

flashlight

"The suppression of the Scriptures during the period of papal supremacy was foretold by the prophets; and the Revelator points also to the terrible results that were to accrue especially to France from the domination of the 'man of sin'" (*The Great Controversy*, p. 266).

keytext

"And I will give power to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy one thousand two hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth."

(Revelation 11:3, NKJV)

what do you think?

Either/Or

Choose one of the positions given and explain why you think the statement is true.

Which is worse, openly opposing the Bible because you believe it is false or continually neglecting God's Word even though you know it is true and life-giving?

Which position did you take? Explain.

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did you know?

Throughout history there have been those who have tried to silence God's message of love. But the Bible continues to speak to us. In spite of the fact that throughout history many have sought to defame or flame the Bible out of existence, God's Word has now been translated into more than 438 different languages.



INTO THE STORY

"Then I was given a reed like a measuring rod. And the angel stood, saying, 'Rise and measure the temple of God, the altar, and those who worship there. But leave out the court which is outside the temple, and do not measure it, for it has been given to the Gentiles. And they will tread the holy city underfoot for forty-two months. And I will give power to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy one thousand two hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth.'

"These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands standing before the God of the earth. And if anyone wants to harm them, fire proceeds from their mouth and devours their enemies. And if anyone wants to harm them, he must be killed in this manner. These have power to shut heaven, so that no rain falls in the days of their prophecy; and they have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to strike the earth with all plagues, as often as they desire.

"When they finish their testimony, the beast that ascends out of the bottomless pit will make war against them, overcome them, and kill them. And their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified. Then those from the peoples, tribes, tongues, and nations will see their dead bodies three-and-a-half days, and not allow their dead bodies to be put into graves. And those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them, make merry, and send gifts to one another, because these two prophets tormented those who dwell on the earth.

"Now after the three-and-a-half days the breath of life from God entered them, and they stood on their feet, and great fear fell on those who saw them. And they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, 'Come up here.' And they ascended to heaven in a cloud, and their enemies saw them. In the same hour there was a great earthquake, and a tenth of the city fell. In the earthquake seven thousand people were killed, and the rest were afraid and gave glory to the God of heaven.

"The second woe is past. Behold, the third woe is coming quickly."

(Revelation 11:1-14, NKJV)

OUT OF THE STORY

As you read this prophetic passage in Revelation 11, first know that it is the story of God's people who emerge from a dark season in earth's history.

What are some basic themes that you think are prominent in this passage?

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Make a list of words and phrases that you don't understand.

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Who are the two witnesses and why are they mentioned?

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Why are they "clothed in sackcloth"?

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What is the significance of the mention of the "forty-two months" and the "one thousand two hundred and sixty days"?

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Whom do "Sodom" and "Egypt" represent? Why are they linked with Jerusalem, particularly where "the Lord was crucified"?

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What are some examples from Scripture of open rebellion against God and His Word?

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punch lines

"This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil" **(John 3:19, NIV).**

"The fool says in his heart, 'There is no God.' They are corrupt, their deeds are vile; there is no one who does good" **(Psalm 14:1, NIV).**

"Since they hated knowledge and did not choose to fear the Lord. Since they would not accept my advice and spurned my rebuke, they will eat the fruit of their ways and be filled with the fruit of their schemes" **(Proverbs 1:29-31, NIV).**

"For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through the endurance taught in the Scriptures and the encouragement they provide we might have hope" **(Romans 15:4, NIV).**

"The grass withers and the flowers fall, because the breath of the Lord blows on them. Surely the people are grass. The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God endures forever" **(Isaiah 40:7, 8, NIV).**

further insight

"The Old and the New Testament. Both are important testimonies to the origin and perpetuity of the law of God. Both are witnesses also to the plan of salvation."

—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy,* p. 267

"The written word, the law of God, will measure the character of every man."—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy,* p. 268

Sabbath

Read Psalm 14:1.

Read and respond to the activity in the *What Do You Think?* section of this week's lesson. Which position did you choose to defend—to defame or to be disinterested in what God says in His Word? Both sides are troubling, but which viewpoint seems harder to change?

In Psalm 14:1 the Bible says, "The fool has said in his heart, 'There is no God'" (NKJV). But Elijah said to the people on Mt. Carmel, "'How long will you waver between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow him; but if Baal is God, follow him.' But the people said nothing" (1 Kings 18:21, NIV). What do you say?

Sunday

Read Isaiah 40:8.

As you read the *Into the Story* section and answer the questions in the *Out of the Story* section, you will notice another prophetic passage that requires a bit more study than a simple story in Scripture. This particular section is about a time in earth's history in which God's people are overshadowed for almost 1260 years by a power that deliberately resists God's Word and even some openly defy it. If you read chapter 15 in *The Great Controversy* you will find that the pieces of the prophetic puzzle fit tightly together. What do you think is the message God is trying to say to people today about the era in which atheism is popular?

Monday

Read Revelation 11:3.

The *Key Text* from this week's lesson is found in Revelation 11:3 where God says: "And I will give power to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy one thousand two hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth" (NKJV). The "two witnesses" are the messages of the Old and New Testaments, and some would even add the two groups of people who testify in both eras (OT and NT) about God and His plan of salvation. Whom do you know who has a deep love for the Old Testament in a way that comes out of their life and their conversation? Think of another witness, or someone you know, who is a real fan of the New Testament. How does their devotion to God's Word show up in their lives?

Tuesday

Read Revelation 22:17-19.

Read the quote from *The Great Controversy*, which summarizes the effect of ignoring or downplaying God's message to people in Scripture. After reading the chapter in *The Great Controversy*, how do you see this kind of thinking and behavior showing up in today's world? Even though God's Word is spreading around the world, so is the sentiment that there is no God and people are on their own. What do you think is the best way to show evidence of God's existence to the world?

Wednesday

As you read the passages listed in the *Punch Lines* section of this week's lesson, which verse speaks most prominently to you today? Think of stories in the Bible that illustrate the sentiments in each verse. Are there people in your life who either do not believe in God or live as though God were not real? Pray for them today that their hearts might be softened or quickened to be open to what God longs to do in their life through His Word, as it says in Isaiah 50:4: "The Lord God hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary" (KJV).

Thursday

Read John 13:34, 35.

Think of the two types of people mentioned in this week's lesson: the apathetic and the atheistic. What acts of kindness or service to others will soften their hearts? What can you do this week for others that might demonstrate to the atheist that God does exist? You don't know who is watching, so just be faithful. Also, how might your passion for God's Word awaken someone whose spiritual life is sleepy? Think about starting a Bible study/prayer small group or a service team and invite others to join you.

Friday

Read 1 Timothy 4:12.

Think about how God has continually brought people through troubled seasons. God has allowed people, world powers, and misguided institutions to have their way for a time, but He has never restricted the influence of individuals to share what He is like to the world. Reflect on those people who have withstood persecution and isolation for the cause of God. How can you be counted among their number?

this week's reading*

The Great Controversy (or *Love Under Fire*), chapter 15.

**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.