

CORNERSTONECONNECTIONS
OCTOBER 10 2026

shut door. open books.

Scripture Story: Genesis 7:6-23.
Commentary: *The Great Controversy* (or *Love Under Fire*), chapter 28.
Key Text: Genesis 7:23.

PREPARING TO TEACH

I. SYNOPSIS

This week's lesson brings students to the sobering reality that there will be a judgment. In truth God is doing the work of judgment today and Adventists refer to this phase as the investigative judgment, the time before Christ returns and everyone's life is accountable to God. Ellen White wrote about the judgment: "Every man's work passes in review before God and is registered for faithfulness or unfaithfulness."[1] Throughout the Bible the theme of accountability continues to emerge in direct and clear terms. Even the image of an open book conveys the courtroom atmosphere of the investigative judgment. Malachi wrote: "A scroll of remembrance was written in his presence concerning those who feared the Lord and honored his name" (Malachi 3:16, NIV). The world today is reticent to hear about this truth, and yet around the world the three angels' messages cry out, "Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come" (Revelation 14:7, NIV).

One of the tasks for this lesson will be to remind the students that God will pronounce everyone who confesses their sin and claims the blood of Christ "not guilty." Pardoned. Redeemed. Forgiven. Restored. Righteous—according to the eyes of heaven. Students need to be challenged with the truth that today is the time of judgment and they need to make the choice to follow Christ. The story of Noah is perfect because the antediluvians needed to make the decision to come into the ark before the Flood came. It may appear to young people, and the rest of the world, that decisions about loyalty to God can wait. This attitude is pervasive and as old as the world, but it is foolish. This week is a crucial time to urge young people to confidently, but seriously, face the truth about the judgment.

II. TARGET

The students will:

- Discover the reality and the rewards of the investigative judgment. *(Know)*
- Grasp the need to live each day with the knowledge that the books of heaven are open. *(Feel)*
- Choose to be faithful and loyal to God's rule and reign in their life today. *(Respond)*

III. EXPLORE

Christ's Ministry in the Heavenly Sanctuary, Seventh-day Adventist Fundamental Beliefs, No. 24

"There is a sanctuary in heaven, the true tabernacle that the Lord set up and not humans. In it Christ ministers on our behalf, making available to believers the benefits of His atoning sacrifice offered once for all on the cross" (Lev. 16; Num. 14:34; Ezek. 4:6; . . .).

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.*

The *What Do You Think?* activity involves choos-

ing key words that relate to the message of God's judgment of all who have lived. As they share the words that resonate with them, invite them to share the words they are unfamiliar with. It is likely that many students will respond to words such as "forgiveness" or "assurance" because they are more common, but probe them about what they know about the other words they might want to know more about.

Illustration

Share this illustration in your own words:

During the mid-1500s the Anabaptists were severely persecuted in Germany and the Netherlands. Hans Smit and Hendrick Adams were meeting in a home near the German-Dutch border for Bible study and prayer. Suddenly the entire house was surrounded, and they were all arrested, brought before a judge, and sentenced to prison. The councilor Aix-la-Chapelle bitterly and viciously sought to put these two men to death for speaking against "the church." They were both tortured and brought again and again before the judgment seat and pressed to recant. But Hans and Hendrick stood firm each time they were brought to face questions about their faith. The vindictive councilor screeched out a verdict shouting, "Away with them, away with them, to death and the fire . . . no pardon should be offered them anymore!" Clearly Aix-la-Chapelle was out of control. Hendrick Adams looked him straight in the face and calmly prophesied, "You will not live to see my death." Hans Smit sang joyfully as they led him through the streets and he walked deliberately to the stake, where the bloodthirsty church leaders ended his life and his body was burned. However, it was clear to all present that day that this man answered to a different judge and a higher court. Three days later Hendrick Adams was led to the stake with the same brave enthusiasm for truth, and was executed. But the councilor who eagerly sought the deaths of these two men became stricken with an illness shortly after he pronounced their death sentence. He confessed in his final moments that he had sinned and God would judge him for his bloodthirsty behavior. He died before Hendrick Adams was led to the stake for execution, fulfilling the words that were spoken to him three days prior.

II. TEACHING THE STORY

Bridge to the Story

Share the following in your own words:

Throughout history there have been many sad moments when men stood in the place of God and passed judgments, condemning others to death. God alone is Judge, and His judgment is not only fair, but merciful.

Although mankind may pretend to deliberate truth and justice, there is only one Judge, and He has declared that the books are open! As you reflect on the story of Noah and the Flood, consider the awesome message and the opportunity for salvation that was freely offered to all. The same sobering message of judgment and salvation goes out today. How will people respond? Will it be like the days of Noah, where only a handful paid attention?

Out of the Story for Teachers

- Read every word and phrase carefully and *underline* the parts that you think are crucial to the story.
- As you read this story, what insights do you see in the account of the Flood that relate to people living at the time of the end?
- Read Matthew 24:39 and note the way the story of the Flood is likened to the judgment scene at the end of time. How is this story a perfect illustration of the judgment scene? How might it be different?
- Read Daniel 7:1-10 and note especially the judgment scene in verses 9 and 10. What is the connection between the judgment that came in the time of Noah and the judgment that is currently taking place today?
- In Matthew 25 there are three parables that describe the judgment scene at the end.
  - —How is it that so few responded to Noah's message? What might be different about "the end" that is before humanity today and the "then end" that was before Noah and the antediluvians long ago?
  - —By the time the door shut and the floodwaters came, everyone had decided how they would stand before God—alone on their own merits, or like Noah, who "found grace in the eyes of the Lord." When does the judgment take place? How does the day of atonement and the heavenly sanctuary speak to this part of the last-day message to the world? Read Chapter 28 in *The Great Controversy* for a

thorough explanation.

- On what basis can believers today be confident that God is declaring them "not guilty"?
- What other stories or events in Scripture remind you of the judgment scene depicted in this lesson?

Extra Questions for Teachers:

- Take a poll in your class about the attitude of people to the idea of a judgment. What are the sentiments of people today about being accountable to God about the truths He has revealed?
- How do you think the last-day message of Revelation 14:7 will be received?

Use the following as more teachable passages that relate to today's story: 1 Kings 18; Genesis 6; 11; Jeremiah 36; Exodus 5:2.

Sharing Context and Background

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

This week's lesson has a couple of different angles to discuss the judgment. (1) There is a personal approach for each student to be accountable to God, genuinely and purposively. (2) There is the big-picture approach to the judgment, looking at the prophetic view of the "investigative judgment" prophesied in Daniel and portrayed in the doctrine of the sanctuary.

Personal angle: Throughout Scripture there are many passages that describe being accountable to God personally about our decision to repent and receive the provision God has made, or trust in our own way. As a result, there tends to be three classes of people described in Scripture, as noted in the book *Seventh-day Adventists Believe*:

"Human beings belong to one of three classes: (1) the wicked, who reject God's authority; (2) genuine believers, who, trusting in the merits of Christ through faith, live in obedience to God's law; and (3) those who appear to be genuine believers but are not."[2] There are various parables (Matthew 6:25; Matthew 7:23; Matthew 13; 20; and especially Matthew 25) that depict a judgment scene where individuals have to face the results of their own choices.

The investigative judgment angle: The message of the sanctuary is not simply an afterthought of the Exodus, but is an earthly portrayal of a heavenly reality. The ministry and message of the sanctuary captures God's plan of salvation, which includes the work of judgment. This topic will take more time than can be achieved in a Sabbath School class, and it is suggested to use *The Great Controversy* as a key resource. You might consider breaking the topic up in three parts, mirroring the outline given in the book *Seventh-day Adventists Believe*:

"The events of the Day of Atonement illustrate the three phases of God's final judgment. They are (1) the 'premillennial judgment' (or the 'investigative judgment') which is also called the 'pre-Advent judgment'; (2) the 'millennial judgment'; and (3) the 'executive judgment' which takes place at the end of the millennium."[3]

Teaching From . . .

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.*

Tips for Top-Notch Teaching

RABBI 101

Less Is More

Less is more when more is required. When it comes to topics such as the judgment, where so much information is needed to "get it," it is important to understand what can be done in one Sabbath School class, and what can't be done. Furthermore, if you can identify what you can do effectively, then you have a platform for further study and more interaction with students beyond the class. Every book on youth ministry today will claim that extended time with students, whether in a small group or a social or service-centered activity, deepens your capacity to teach. It is likely with a subject such as the sanctuary or the judgment that you can seize an opportunity to study further—and more effectively—by saying, "If you want to look into this topic more let's meet at . . ." See what happens.

III. CLOSING

Activity

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

Invite the students to respond to the question: "Which would be easier to do, make a list of the good things you have done this year or compose a list of the bad things you have done this year?" They can draw a line down the center of a piece of paper making two columns and begin making a list. Just have them make a mark when they remember events and acts that were either good or bad (O for good, and an X for bad) so as to protect their privacy. On the Day of Atonement (judgment) everyone who wanted to be pardoned placed their hands on the lamb, and they leaned on it so as to represent putting their sin on the lamb. This was an act of confession and repentance.

Then in groups of two or three, invite the students to make a list on another piece of paper of all the things they can remember that Christ did that would be considered "righteous acts" of obedience to God. Have the students report what they compiled. The key issue of the judgment is: do you want to answer by your own works (good and bad) for yourself, or do you want God to judge you based on Christ's righteousness?

You can have the students press their folded papers down on the table and then cover all of the papers with the pages that have the works of Christ, as a symbol of God's pronouncement of their redemption.

Summary

Share the following thoughts in your own words:

We need to convey a sobering message to young people today, not by guilt or by fear, but by the clear and pressing truth that we are living in the hour of God's judgment. It is through our hope in Christ's righteousness that we can bravely face each day knowing that as God looks at the list of our deeds, the word "PARDONED" is written. You could say something like this: "If there is one thing that I want more than anything else, it is that all of you will choose to have God pardon you and write your names in the book of life. It doesn't happen just because you want it, you must deliberately choose it. Confess that your list is not good enough to cover you. Lean fully on the work that Christ has done for you. And claim the truth that God has judged you 'not guilty.'"

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[1] Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1911), p. 482.

[2] *Seventh-day Adventists Believe* (Silver Spring, Md.: Ministerial Association, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1988, 2005), p. 361.

[3] *Seventh-day Adventists Believe*, p. 352.



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 28.

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STUDENT LESSON

Scripture Story: Genesis 7:6-23.
Commentary: *The Great Controversy* (or *Love Under Fire*), chapter 28.

shut door. open books.



Photo by A Truman

flashlight

"All who have truly repented of sin, and by faith claimed the blood of Christ as their atoning sacrifice, have had pardon entered against their names in the books of heaven; as they have become partakers of the righteousness of Christ, and their characters are found to be in harmony with the law of God, their sins will be blotted out, and they themselves will be accounted worthy of eternal life" *(The Great Controversy*, p. 483).

keytext

"Every living thing on the face of the earth was wiped out; people and animals and the creatures that move along the ground and the birds were wiped from the earth. Only Noah was left, and those with him in the ark."

(Genesis 7:23, NIV)

what do you think?

The following is a list of words that describe an aspect of the last-day message of judgment to the world. Which three words immediately resonate with you? Which words do you feel unfamiliar with?

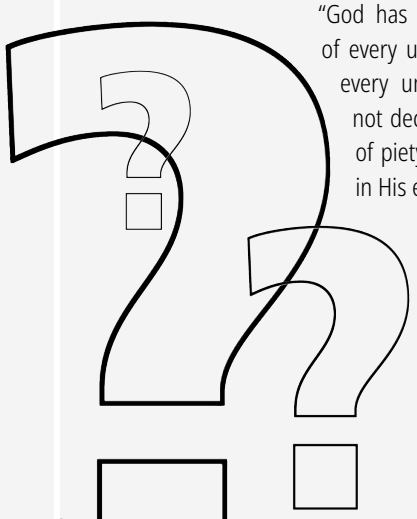
- Intercession
- Reconciliation
- Forgiveness
- Repentance
- Restoration
- Assurance
- Righteousness
- Judgment of sin
- Judgment of the righteous
- Substitution
- Atonement

did you know?

In the book of God's remembrance every deed of righteousness is immortalized. There every temptation resisted, every evil overcome, every word of tender pity expressed, is faithfully chronicled. And every act of sacrifice, every suffering and sorrow endured for Christ's sake, is recorded."

"God has an exact record of every unjust account and every unfair dealing. He is not deceived by appearances of piety. He makes no mistakes in His estimation of character."

"Everyone must be tested and found without spot or wrinkle or any such thing" (*The Great Controversy,* pp. 481, 486, 490).



INTO THE STORY

"Noah was six hundred years old when the floodwaters came on the earth. And Noah and his sons and his wife and his sons' wives entered the ark to escape the waters of the flood. Pairs of clean and unclean animals, of birds and of all creatures that move along the ground, male and female, came to Noah and entered the ark, as God had commanded Noah. And after the seven days the floodwaters came on the earth.

"In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, on the seventeenth day of the second month—on that day all the springs of the great deep burst forth, and the floodgates of the heavens were opened. And rain fell on the earth forty days and forty nights.

"On that very day Noah and his sons, Shem, Ham and Japheth, together with his wife and the wives of his three sons, entered the ark. They had with them every wild animal according to its kind, all livestock according to their kinds, every creature that moves along the ground according to its kind and every bird according to its kind, everything with wings. Pairs of all creatures that have the breath of life in them came to Noah and entered the ark. The animals going in were male and female of every living thing, as God had commanded Noah. Then the Lord shut him in.

"For forty days the flood kept coming on the earth, and as the waters increased they lifted the ark high above the earth. The waters rose and increased greatly on the earth, and the ark floated on the surface of the water. They rose greatly on the earth, and all the high mountains under the entire heavens were covered. The waters rose and covered the mountains to a depth of more than fifteen cubits. Every living thing that moved on land perished—birds, livestock, wild animals, all the creatures that swarm over the earth, and all mankind. Everything on dry land that had the breath of life in its nostrils died. Every living thing on the face of the earth was wiped out; people and animals and the creatures that move along the ground and the birds were wiped from the earth. Only Noah was left, and those with him in the ark."

(Genesis 7:6-23, NIV)

OUT OF THE STORY

Read every word and phrase carefully and *underline* the parts that you think are crucial to the story.

As you read this story, what insights do you see in the account of the Flood that relate to people living at the time of the end?

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Read Matthew 24:39 and note the way the story of the Flood is likened to the judgment scene at the end of time. How is this story a perfect illustration of the judgment scene? How might it be different?

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Read Daniel 7:1-10 and note especially the judgment scene in verses 9 and 10. What is the connection between the judgment that came in the time of Noah and the judgment that is currently taking place today?

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Matthew 25 contains three parables that describe the judgment scene at the end.

How is it that so few responded to Noah's message? What might be different about "the end" that is before humanity today and "the end" that was before Noah and the antediluvians long ago?

_____
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On what basis can believers today be confident that God is declaring them . . . "not guilty"?

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What other stories or events in Scripture remind you of the judgment scene depicted in this lesson?

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punch lines

"Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need" **(Hebrews 4:14-16, NKJV).**

"And he said to me, 'Do not seal the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is at hand. He who is unjust, let him be unjust still; he who is filthy, let him be filthy still; he who is righteous, let him be righteous still; he who is holy, let him be holy still'" **(Revelation 22:10, 11, NKJV).**

"Then those who feared the Lord spoke to one another, and the Lord listened and heard them; so a book of remembrance was written before Him for those who fear the Lord and who meditate on His name" **(Malachi 3:16, NKJV).**

"He said in a loud voice, 'Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come. Worship him who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and the springs of water'" **(Revelation 14:7, NIV).**

"I watched till thrones were put in place, and the Ancient of Days was seated; . . . A thousand thousands ministered to Him; ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him. The court was seated, and the books were opened" **(Daniel 7:9, 10, NKJV).**

"Take heed, watch and pray; for you do not know when the time is" **(Mark 13:33, NKJV).**

(Other texts: Daniel 7–9; Daniel 4; Matthew 13:28-30; Leviticus 23; Hebrews 8; Hebrews 9)

further insight

"Whatever is done from love, however small it may appear in the estimation of men, is accepted and rewarded of God."

—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy,* p. 487

Sabbath

Read Matthew 7:21-23.

Read and respond to the activity in the *What Do You Think?* section of this week's lesson. Which words seemed to resonate with you? Why? In today's reading Jesus describes a scene at the end where some will believe they are going to heaven, but are informed that they are not. How does this passage impact you? On what were the people Jesus referred to basing their readiness for heaven? On what basis can you know confidently that when God judges you, He is judging you "not guilty"?

Sunday

Read Matthew 24:42-44.

As you read the *Into the Story* section and answer the questions in the study section of this week's lesson, it takes you back to a judgment scene on earth. The story of Noah and the Flood mirrors a similar climate and a similar question that needs to be answered: when judgment comes, what will be the outcome for you? By the time the water fell it was too late to decide. Judgment had been passed. When Christ comes again it will be too late to choose—judgment already will have taken place.

What do you think is the message God is trying to say to people today when He says: "As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man" (Matthew 24:37, NIV)? What do you think God is trying to say to you today?

Monday

Read Genesis 7:23; Revelation 22:10, 11.

The *Key Text* may seem harsh, but when the Bible says that only Noah and his family were safe in the ark, it describes those who have chosen to be faithful to God. Compare the verse in Genesis to the one in in Revelation, where God draws a line for those who are in, and those who are out. While everyone has a choice to make about which side they will stand on, how do you see God's loving character displayed in such a severe setting? How would you answer the question, "How could God be seen as loving in a judgment scene?"

Tuesday

Read Revelation 3:5.

Read the amazing quote from *The Great Controversy* that shows the grace of God in His judgment of people. Do you want to have your name written in the books of heaven? According to this statement by Ellen White, how do you become ready or "worthy of eternal life"?

Take some time and write out a prayer to God asking Him to place your name in the book of life. According to this quote, what are some things you need to say? Think about what it means to repent and admit that all your good works can never qualify you for heaven. Also, think about what it means to have all the good works of Christ pronounced on your behalf. What does it mean to you to have Christ not only die for you, but also live perfectly for you?

Wednesday

As you read the passages listed in the *Punch Lines* section of this week's lesson, how would you organize these verses if you were to use them in a Bible study? Which verse would you start and end with? Why? What verse is speaking to you personally today? What do you think God is trying to say to you?

Thursday

Read Hebrews 4:14-16.

Thinking about the judgment is sobering because there is no moment on earth that has so much at stake. How can you respond to this week's lesson—not out of fear or guilt, but from a heart full of joy and confidence in what Christ has done to pronounce you "not guilty"? This judgment takes place now, while we are alive. When Christ comes, the book is closed, but today the book is open. Remind yourself that today is the hour of God's merciful judgment on you by leaving books open—strategically placed to be a reminder to you that today God's judgment is taking place, and for those who have trusted in Christ, it is good.

Friday

Read John 1:10-13.

Reflect and imagine what the judgment scene looks like in heaven today. Replay in your ears and before your eyes the work of Christ, your Mediator, standing before His throne announcing: "This one is a child of God." Can you think of anything more important today than making your decision about who will represent you in the judgment? How will that decision change how you live? Will it?

this week's reading*

The Great Controversy (or *Love Under Fire*), chapter 28.

**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.