CORNERSTONE CONNECTIONS
DECEMBER 12 2026

the end of the world as we know it

Scripture Story: Daniel 12:1, 2; Revelation 1:7; 7:14-17; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18; John 14:1-4.
Commentary: *The Great Controversy* (or *Love Under Fire*), chapter 40.
Key Text: Daniel 12:1, 2.

PREPARING TO TEACH

I. SYNOPSIS

The time of trouble will be a terrifying time for people who don't know God, but it will be a time of victory for God's people. God will protect His people from those terrible times. While we oftentimes tend to focus on the difficulty of the end-times, we forget to focus on the power of God to deliver us!

Being frightened about the world ending is very natural. In fact, even unbelievers are nervous looking at the signs around us. People are putting their faith in an ancient Mayan calendar to tell them when the world will end. They make up conspiracy theories to explain the signs in the world around us. They say that aliens will come and destroy the earth. . . . They say that we will destroy the earth with a nuclear holocaust. . . . They say that an asteroid will hit the earth and destroy life as we know it. Why is there such a focus on the world ending? Because God has put something into our hearts to warn us. When we look to God, we know that He will come to deliver us out of our misery and pain. When we don't look to God, we are filled with fear of the unknown, and a horrible sense of powerlessness and a lack of control.

God will protect us, and we will be delivered. That is what we need to remember! We are not alone, and we are truly safe with God.

II. TARGET

The students will:

- Understand that the end of the world is not a time for us to fear. *(Know)*
- Sense the trustworthiness of God and His Word *(Feel)*
- Choose to pursue a friendship with God in order to feel safe and secure. *(Respond)*

III. EXPLORE

Death and Resurrection, Seventh-day Adventist Fundamental Beliefs, No. 26

"The wages of sin is death. But God, who alone is immortal, will grant eternal life to His redeemed. Until that day death is an unconscious state for all people. When Christ, who is our life, appears, the resurrected righteous and the living righteous will be glorified and caught up to meet their Lord. The second resurrection, the resurrection of the unrighteous, will take place a thousand years later" (Job 19:25-27; Ps. 146:3, 4; Eccl. 9:5, 6, 10; Dan. 12:2, 13; Isa. 25:8; John 5:28, 29; 11:11-14; Rom. 6:23; 16; 1 Cor. 15:51-54; Col. 3:4; 1 Thess. 4:13-17; 1 Tim. 6:15; Rev. 20:1-10).

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 thoughts on the *What Do You Think?* section. Then have them look at these situations and decide if Jesus' coming is "soon" for each example:

1. Stephen in Acts is stoned as a young man and sees Jesus in a vision as he dies.
2. An old man dies of natural causes at 75 after waiting his whole life for Jesus to come.
3. A teenager who thought he had all the time in the world is hit by a bus and killed.
4. An angel appears to you and tells you that Jesus will come in the next 70 years. That is the longest you will have to get ready.

How "soon" is each person's experience of Jesus' coming?

Illustration

Share this illustration in your own words:

Charles Blondin (1824-1897) was a French tightrope walker. At the age of 5 he went to the École de Gymnase at Lyon. Six months later he had his first performance.

In June of 1859 he attempted to become the first tightrope walker to cross a tightrope stretched across Niagara Falls, over 1100 feet of tightrope, 160 feet above the water. A huge crowd had come to watch him. He did all sorts of amazing feats. He crossed the tightrope on stilts. He crossed the tightrope in a sack. He even crossed it with a stove and frying pan, sat down in the middle and cooked and ate an omelet! The crowd cheered their encouragement.

Finally, Charles took a wheelbarrow and crossed the tightrope blindfolded. When he came back to the thunderous applause of the crowd, he asked if they thought he could carry a person across in the wheelbarrow.

"Yes, yes, yes!" they shouted. He was the greatest tightrope walker of all time. They had no doubt that he could do it!

"Then do I have a volunteer?" he asked.

The crowd buzzed and looked around. They gasped and cheered and watched, but not one volunteered.

II. TEACHING THE STORY

Bridge to the Story

Share the following in your own words:

Sometimes we claim to believe in God and we say all the right things, but when it comes right down to it, we don't want to trust God where it counts. Like the people watching the great Blondin doing his tightrope walk across Niagara Falls, we shout "Yes, yes, yes!" when we are asked if we trust God, but we certainly don't step out and get into that wheelbarrow!

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.*

- *Circle* the verses that describe the time of trouble.
- *Underline* the verses that are promises for God to protect His people.
- Which verses apply to God's people, and which verses apply to those who have rejected God?

Use the following as more teachable passages that relate to today's story: Matthew 6:25-34; Matthew 25:31-46.

Sharing Context and Background

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

People have been speculating about the end of the world for a very long time—possibly since the Flood! That was the first time anyone ever imagined that the world could be wiped clean, and their fear that another flood could wipe away their society again drove them to build the Tower of Babel. The mistake they made, however, was forgetting to trust in God.

The year 2000 was a time when many people thought the world as we knew it might come to an end. Our reliance on technology had become absolute, and when the internal clocks in computers were not prepared to switch to the new millennium, many top scientists wondered if our technological infrastructure might crash, sending our ordered society into chaos. The predicted chaos and social meltdown never happened. January 1, 2000, dawned just like any other morning, and life continued as normal.

There is an entire "apocalyptic" genre of books and movies that focus on this idea that the world will end and only a few humans, if any, will survive the cataclysmic changes. Our society's preoccupation with the end of the world shows us that even nonbelievers have an internal sense that our planet's time is nearly up.

The Bible tells us that the world will end, but not because of alien attacks or flipped magnetic poles. The world will end because God decides that it is

Tips for Top-Notch Teaching

RABBI 101

Classroom Management

Managing a classroom means having reasonable classroom control at all times. The rules must be enforced fairly with reasonable consequences. Don't allow yourself to get angry or take unruly behavior personally. If the consequences for disrupting the class are too harsh, the students will lose respect for you. Keep your expectations for the teens' behavior reasonable. Expecting military discipline in the classroom is not realistic, and trying to enforce it will only put you, as the teacher, at a disadvantage. You don't have a military to back you up! One approach is to allow the students to create the rules for conduct.

time to end sin and Satan's reign on earth. This is not a time to be afraid; it's a time to celebrate! God will rescue His people, and sin will be gone forever.

Ellen White speaks of this time as follows: "Amid the reeling of the earth, the flash of lightning, and the roar of thunder, the voice of the Son of God calls forth the sleeping saints. He looks upon the graves of the righteous, then, raising His hands to heaven, He cries: 'Awake, awake, awake, ye that sleep in the dust, and arise!' Throughout the length and breadth of the earth the dead shall hear that voice, and they that hear shall live. And the whole earth shall ring with the tread of the exceeding great army of every nation, kindred, tongue, and people. From the prison house of death they come, clothed with immortal glory, crying: 'O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?' 1 Corinthians 15:55. And the living righteous and the risen saints unite their voices in a long, glad shout of victory."*

III. CLOSING

Activity

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

Go back to the students' discussion of "how soon is soon." Look at this list of "things to do before Jesus comes" and have the students put them in order of highest priority to lowest:

1. Read your Bible
2. Pray daily
3. Help the poor
4. Get baptized
5. Stop swearing
6. Get to know Jesus better
7. Keep God's law
8. Reconcile with your enemy
9. Get rich

cornerstoneconnections

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.*

Summary

Share the following thoughts in your own words:

Oftentimes we think about the time of trouble before Jesus comes with fear and trepidation. We think of enduring hardship and punishment. We are anxious about the misery we feel that God inflicts on us before He comes.

But that is not the case. God has promised to care for His people through the time of trouble. If we look at the promises through the Bible about how God will care for His people and not allow them to perish (see Psalm 91), and if we look at Ellen White's description of how God will protect His people and deliver them, we have nothing to worry about.

God's deliverance goes further than the time of trouble, however. He will take us out of this sinful world and give us a home with no more pain or death. We will be delivered from all discomfort, and our pain and fear will be forgotten.

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*Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy,* p. 644.



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 40.

CORNERSTONECONNECTIONS

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STUDENT LESSON

Scripture Story: Daniel 12:1, 2; Revelation 1:7; Revelation 7:14-17; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18; John 14:1-4.
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Photo by A Truman

flashlight

"The compensation for this sacrifice is the joy of peopling the earth with ransomed beings, holy, happy, and immortal. The result of the Savior's conflict with the powers of darkness is joy to the redeemed, redounding to the glory of God throughout eternity. And such is the value of the soul that the Father is satisfied with the price paid; and Christ Himself, beholding the fruits of His great sacrifice, is satisfied" (*The Great Controversy,* p. 652).

keytext

"At that time Michael, the great prince who protects your people, will arise. . . . Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt."

(Daniel 12:1, 2, NIV)

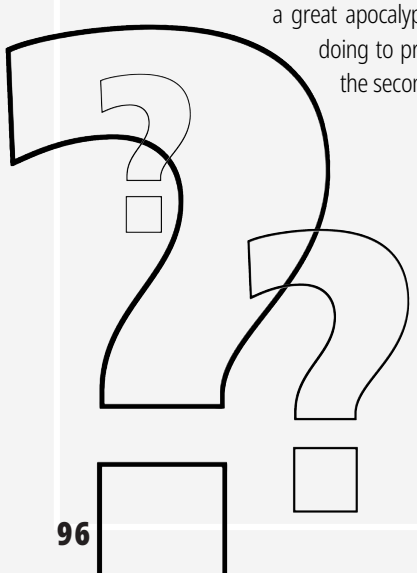
what do you think?

What does "soon" mean to you? We always hear that Jesus is coming "soon." Do you think that it matters if Jesus comes tomorrow, 10 years from now, or 100 years from now? How does it affect your life today?

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did you know?

Some people suggested that a meteor would hit our planet and flip the magnetic poles, causing mass destruction. Others wondered if we might not destroy ourselves with our own nuclear capability. Regardless, a great many people believed that the "end of the world" was coming and tried to prepare themselves for a great apocalypse. What are we doing to prepare each day for the second coming of Jesus?



INTO THE STORY

"At that time Michael, the great prince who protects your people, will arise. There will be a time of distress such as has not happened from the beginning of nations until then. But at that time your people—everyone whose name is found written in the book—will be delivered. Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt."

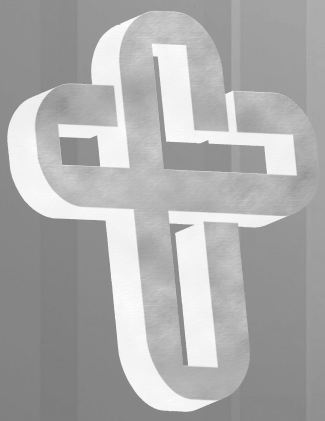
"'Look, he is coming with the clouds,' and 'every eye will see him, even those who pierced him'; and all peoples on earth 'will mourn because of him.' So shall it be! Amen."

"I answered, 'Sir, you know.' And he said, 'These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore, they are before the throne of God and serve him day and night in his temple; and he who sits on the throne will shelter them with his presence. "Never again will they hunger; never again will they thirst. The sun will not beat down on them," nor any scorching heat. For the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd; "he will lead them to springs of living water." "And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."'"

"For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. Therefore encourage one another with these words."

"'Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. My Father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. You know the way to the place where I am going.'"

(Daniel 12:1, 2; Revelation 1:7; Revelation 7:14-17; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18; John 14:1-4, NIV)



OUT OF THE STORY

From these passages, what kind of mental pictures do you get about Jesus' coming? Look specifically at 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18 and Daniel 12:1, 2.

Look at 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18 and John 14:1-4. What specific comforts are there in these passages?

What do these verses tell you about what happens when people die?

How would you explain to someone from these verses that the righteous dead do not go immediately to heaven upon death?

In Revelation 7:14-17, there is a description of the people who have come out of "the great tribulation." The description is very symbolic. What kind of reward do these symbols show us?

What do you think it means to be faithful to God? What does God expect of us? (Micah 7:8; John 15:9-11 are a couple of examples.)

Revelation 7:14 says that the saved are those who "have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." What does this symbol mean? How will we be ultimately saved and go to heaven?

punch lines

"But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only. But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be" **(Matthew 24:36-39, NKJV).**

"He has also set eternity in the human heart; yet no one can fathom what God has done from beginning to end. I know that there is nothing better for people than to be happy and to do good while they live" **(Ecclesiastes 3:11, 12, NIV).**

"This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you" **(John 15:12, NKJV).**

"He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God" **(Micah 6:8, NIV).**

further insight

"To His faithful followers Christ has been a daily companion and familiar friend. They have lived in close contact, in constant communion with God. . . . In them the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ has been reflected. . . . They are prepared for the communion of heaven; for they have heaven in their hearts."

—Ellen G. White, *Christ's Object Lessons,* p. 421

Sabbath

Read 2 Peter 3:9.

Complete the *What Do You Think?* activity. The word "soon" can mean different things to different people. One person might think it means this afternoon. Another thinks it means tomorrow. And another might think it's a ploy by their parents to put off their requests: "Mom, when can I get that new dress?" "Soon, dear, soon. . . ."

In light of the fact that when we die we all sleep in the grave, what do you think Jesus' coming "soon" will mean to us? Does that thought have any bearing on how you live your life?

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Sunday

Read Psalm 51.

Look at the passages from *Into the Story*. Put aside your preconceptions and just look at those passages. What kind of descriptions do you see? If God were saying these things directly to you, how do you think He would be saying them? Would He be reassuring or comforting?

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It's interesting how we can "wash our robes" in *red* blood and have them come out *white!* Of course, we know this to be symbolic of the cleansing that Jesus' blood has on us.

How can you be cleansed by the blood of Jesus? What difference will this cleansing make in your relationship with God? with others? wIth yourself?

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Monday

Read Daniel 12:1, 2.

In the *Key Text* this week Michael (or Jesus) is described as "the great prince who protects your people." By choosing Jesus, we become one of His. We put ourselves under His protection. Someone once said that the safest place to be is in the middle of God's will, and that is very true.

Even when we die, when we no longer have any control over anything—even our thoughts—we are being held safely by God until it is time for us to wake up. God keeps that unique personality, all of your memories, everything that is *you* safely sleeping while your body turns back to dust. In what other ways are we safe with God? Write a list of all the ways that God protects us and provides for us. See how long that list can get!

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Tuesday

Read John 3:16, 17.

Ellen White gives us a very unique glimpse of God after sin has been destroyed. In the *Flashlight* section she says that after all Jesus endured on earth, after all the misery of sin and the battle that has been fought between good and evil, God will think that the battle was worth it! Jesus' torture and death was worth it! Why? Because fighting that battle brought *you* home! If you think about that kind of love, does it make it easier to trust God to take care of you?

When have you done something very difficult for someone you love? Was it worth it? Explain.

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Wednesday

Read Matthew 22:36-40.

The end of the world doesn't need to be frightening if we belong to God. We know that God will protect us and that we will have eternal life, never having to experience pain, death, or sin again. But how do we know if we are *OK* with God? Look at the passages in the *Punch Lines* section. What do we need to do in order to be connected to God? First of all, a relationship with God is the most important thing. We need to know God. We need to talk to Him. We need to listen when He talks back! It isn't about the rules; it's about getting closer to God, and then letting Him love others through us.

Read through the list of the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22, 23. Choose one and explain how God is working in your life to grow that "fruit" so that you can love others on behalf of Christ.

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Thursday

Read 1 John 2:3.

What can you do to make sure that you are ready for Jesus' coming? How can you get to know Jesus on a personal level so that when He comes, you'll be confident that you are meeting a Friend, not a Judge?

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Friday

Read 2 Peter 3:18.

Do you really know God well enough to be ready for Him to come? If so, what has helped you *know* God? If not, what can you do to prepare a place for Him in your heart and life?

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this week's reading*

The Great Controversy (or *Love Under Fire*), chapter 40.

**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.