

Three Cosmic Messages

A City Called Confusion

Lesson #9 for May 27, 2023

Scriptures: Revelation 17:1-2,4-6,14-15; 18:1-4; Matthew 16:18; Jeremiah 50:33-38; Psalm 115:4-8; 2 Kings 17:15.

1. Throughout the Bible religious groups are represented by *women*. A pure woman dressed in white represents a true and faithful church. A false woman is represented as dressed in scarlet or purple with all sorts of gaudy makeup and jewelry.
2. The pure or true woman is faithful to her Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. The false woman has turned from Jesus Christ to follow human leadership.

Hosea 2:20: I will keep my promise and make you mine,

and you will acknowledge me as LORD.—American Bible Society. (1992). *The Holy Bible: The Good News Translation** (2nd ed., Hosea 2:20). New York: American Bible Society [abbreviated as *Good News Bible*].†‡

3. Ezekiel wept because the LORD said of “Jerusalem’s” religious “adultery”: “*You are an adulterous wife, who takes strangers instead of her husband.*” (Ezekiel 16:32, NKJV*§)
4. Even in the New Testament, James wrote:

James 4:4: Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.—*The New King James Version.**

5. For many years, Seventh-day Adventists memorized Revelation 12:17 where we are told:

Revelation 12:17: The dragon was furious with the woman and went off to fight against the rest of her descendants, all those who obey God’s commandments and are faithful to the truth revealed by Jesus.—*Good News Bible.*†*

Revelation 12:17: And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.—*The New King James Version.*†*

6. Obviously, Satan is very upset because the gospel is spreading all over the world. However, we know from the Bible what the final outcome will be.

Revelation 17:14: “They will fight against the Lamb; but **the Lamb, together with his called, chosen, and faithful followers,** will defeat them, because he is Lord of lords and King of kings.”—*Good News Bible.*†*

7. We know that God has always had at least a few faithful people. When Elijah thought he was the only one faithful to God, God said there were 7,000 in Israel who had not bowed to Baal. (1 Kings 19:18) They have often been referred to as *my people* or the *remnant*.
8. Satan is not asleep; he is anxious to destroy as many of God’s faithful people as he can.

Revelation 14:8: A second angel followed the first one, saying, “**She has fallen! Great Babylon has fallen! She made all peoples drink her wine—the strong wine of her immoral lust!**”—*Good News Bible.*†*

Revelation 17:1-2: ¹ Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came to me and said, “Come, and I will show you how the famous prostitute is to be punished, that great city that is built near many rivers. ²The kings of the earth practiced sexual immorality with her, and the people of the world became drunk from drinking the wine of her immorality.”—*Good News Bible*.*

9. Why was John talking about Babylon? He wrote the book of Revelation from the Isle of Patmos near the end of the 1st century A.D. At that time, the city of Babylon was nothing but a pile of rubble. Babylon was conquered by the Medes and Persians in 539 B.C. In John’s prophecies as written in the book of Revelation, there is presented a false religious system which was to have characteristics similar to Babylon of the Old Testament.

10. What are those characteristics? Continuing reading from Revelation 17:

Revelation 17:3-6: ³ The Spirit took control of me, and the angel carried me to a desert. There I saw a woman sitting on a red beast that had names insulting to God written all over it; the beast had seven heads and ten horns. ⁴The woman was dressed in purple and scarlet, and covered with gold ornaments, precious stones, and pearls. In her hand she held a gold cup full of obscene and filthy things, the result of her immorality. ⁵On her forehead was written a name that has a secret meaning: “**Great Babylon, the mother of all the prostitutes and perverts in the world.**” ⁶And I saw that the woman was drunk with the blood of God’s people and the blood of those who were killed because they had been loyal to Jesus. When I saw her, I was completely amazed.—*Good News Bible*.*†

11. ***And why was John so amazed? It is very important to recognize who this woman was and what beast it was that she was riding upon.***

Revelation 12:13-14: ¹³ When the dragon realized that he had been thrown down to the earth, he began to pursue the woman who had given birth to the boy. ¹⁴She was given the two wings of a large eagle in order to fly to her place in the desert, where she will be taken care of for three and a half years, safe from the dragon’s attack.—*Good News Bible*.*† [We believe that this woman represents the pure church.]‡

Revelation 12:3-4: ³ Another mysterious sight appeared in the sky. There was a huge red dragon with seven heads and ten horns and a crown on each of his heads. ⁴With his tail he dragged a third of the stars out of the sky and threw them down to the earth. He stood in front of the woman, in order to eat her child as soon as it was born.—*Good News Bible*.*†

12. Revelation 12:3-4 tells us that the red dragon is the Devil himself. Revelation 12:13-14 tells us that the woman who had given birth to the Child escaped to the desert, running from the dragon. Compare Revelation 12:7-12.

13. ***Revelation 17:3-6 tells us that the pure woman who had escaped to the desert has now become the scarlet woman sitting on the red beast (the Devil himself) and by that time was doing all sorts of obscene and immoral things. This is the story of the nominal Christian church/churches. What has happened to the church? And Christians?***

14. Christians must be fully prepared for Satan's final desperate onslaught. And how do we prepare ourselves?

Ephesians 6:10-17: ¹⁰ Finally, build up your strength in union with the Lord and by means of his mighty power. ¹¹**Put on all the armour [sic] that God gives you**, so that you will be able to stand up against the Devil's evil tricks. ¹²For we are not fighting against human beings but against the wicked spiritual forces in the heavenly world, the rulers, authorities, and cosmic powers of this dark age....

¹⁴ So stand ready, with truth as a belt tight round your waist, with righteousness as your breastplate, ¹⁵and as your shoes the readiness to announce the Good News of peace. ¹⁶At all times carry faith as a shield; for with it you will be able to put out all the burning arrows shot by the Evil One. ¹⁷And accept salvation as a helmet, and the word of God as the sword which the Spirit gives you.—*Good News Bible*.^{*†‡} [Are we doing these things?][‡]

15. So, how effective will Satan be in spreading his message to the world? And what kind of help does he get in doing that?

Revelation 13:3-4,7-8: ³One of the heads of the beast seemed to have been fatally wounded, but the wound had healed. The whole earth was amazed and followed the beast. ⁴**Everyone worshipped the dragon [the Devil] because he had given his authority to the beast. They worshipped the beast also**, saying, "Who is like the beast? Who can fight against it?"...

⁷It [the beast] was allowed to fight against God's people and to defeat them, and it was given authority over every tribe, nation, language, and race. ⁸**All people living on earth will worship it, except those whose names were written before the creation of the world in the book of the living** which belongs to the Lamb that was killed.—*Good News Bible*.^{*†‡}

16. It sounds like Satan is winning! However, God will have His faithful remnant. We are in the midst of the great controversy. Each side is fighting hard to promote its message.

Revelation 14:6: Then I saw another angel flying high in the air, with an eternal message of Good News to announce to the peoples of the earth, **to every race, tribe, language, and nation**.—*Good News Bible*.^{*†}

Revelation 17:2: "The kings of the earth practiced sexual immorality with her, and **the people of the world** became drunk from drinking the wine of her immorality."—*Good News Bible*.^{*†} [Is that following her false teachings?][‡]

17. *Sexual immorality* in a spiritual sense, sometimes called *fornication*, is an illicit union.

[From the Bible study guide=BSG:] **It is the fallen church system uniting with the state.** In the true church system, the church is united with Jesus Christ. The fallen church looks to the political leaders of the earth for power and authority. It seeks the state to enforce its decrees. Rather than drawing her strength from Jesus as her true Head, she looks to the state for support.—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*^{*} for Monday, May 22.^{†‡}

18. Just as we have two kinds of women representing two kinds of churches—the pure woman dressed in white as the pure church and the scarlet-dressed woman representing rebellion against God—we have two kinds of wine: (1) The *pure juice of the grape*

representing the blood of Jesus Christ and (2) the *corrupt wine*, representing the teachings of the church that has murdered Christians consistently down through the generations. How does the Bible describe this corrupt religion?

Matthew 15:9: “ ‘It is no use for them to worship me, because they teach human rules as though they were my laws!’ ”—*Good News Bible*.*

Isaiah 29:13: The Lord said.... “**Their religion is nothing but human rules and traditions, which they have simply memorized.**”—*Good News Bible*.*†
[Some of the Jews memorized the entire Old Testament in Hebrew!][‡]

19. As we have seen, Satan is determined to control the entire world. Even some of God’s faithful people will be swept up in his corrupt system. God calls them to come out of that corrupt system.

Revelation 18:2-4: ²He cried out in a loud voice: “She has fallen! Great Babylon has fallen! She is now haunted by demons and unclean spirits; all kinds of filthy and hateful birds live in her. ³For all the nations have drunk her wine—the strong wine of her immoral lust. The kings of the earth practiced sexual immorality with her, and the merchants of the world grew rich from her unrestrained lust.”

⁴ Then I heard another voice from heaven, saying:

“Come out, my people! Come out from her!

You must not take part in her sins;

you must not share in her punishment!”—*Good News Bible*.*†

20. Remember what John wrote as a description of this corrupt woman. See Revelation 17:3-6 as in Item #10 above.

[BSG:] “In order to search for an understanding of the nature of Babylon, we need to go back to its first reference in the biblical record, in Genesis. It all began on the plain of the land of Shinar, a region in the southern part of Mesopotamia, today south Iraq, called Babylonia. It is there that the Tower of Babel was built, a symbol of human self-sufficiency, self-preservation, and independence from God ([Gen.] 11:1–4).”—Ángel Manuel Rodríguez, “The Closing of the Cosmic Conflict: Role of the Three Angels’ Messages,” unpublished manuscript, p. 43.—[as quoted in *Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Tuesday, May 23].^{‡Ω} [It was direct rebellion against God.][‡]

21. Remember that back in Genesis 11, they built the tower of Babel in direct defiance of God. As a result, God confused their languages and scattered them over the earth. Later, in the Hebrew language, *Babel* came to mean *mixed up*. However, in the ancient Babylonian language, *Babel* meant “gateway to the gods.”
22. Are we ever tempted to believe that “we have the truth” and, thus, to depend upon our own strength instead of depending upon Jesus Christ? The truth should have us! How many Christians believe that they “have the truth”? Does the truth have them?
23. So, in the midst of this great conflict between God and Satan, what is the role of those of us who claim to be on God’s side at this point in history?
24. Make no mistake: This is a life-and-death struggle for Satan and for God’s faithful people. However, we know what the result will be at the end!

Matthew 16:18: “And so I tell you, Peter: you are a rock, and on this rock foundation I will build my church, and **not even death will ever be able to overcome it.**”—*Good News Bible*.*†

Revelation 17:14: [Re-reading:] “They will fight against the Lamb; but **the Lamb, together with his called, chosen, and faithful followers,** will defeat them, because he is Lord of lords and King of kings.”—*Good News Bible*.*††

25. Thus, we can say that **any system that promotes human ideas and places them above the Word of God in importance is adopting a Babylonian system.** Notice this:

[BSG:] **In the last days of earth’s history, a church-state system will arise, spiritual Babylon, with a spiritual leader claiming to speak as God. His word will be declared to be the very word of God and his commands the commands of God. Throughout the centuries, the Roman pontiffs have declared that they stand in the place of God on earth. In his encyclical letter of June 20, 1894, Pope Leo XIII stated, “We hold upon this earth the place of Almighty God.” The *Ferraris Ecclesiastical Dictionary* adds, “The Pope is of so great dignity and so exalted that he is not a mere man, but as it were God and the vicar of God.”** The apostle Paul adds these words exposing this power “who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God” (*2 Thess. 2:4, NKJV*).—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Wednesday, May 24.††§ [Have people created a false human “god”?]‡

26. We now come to a serious but important point: **Many of those who have been deceived by the Devil’s systems are honest and true to what they know. So, we must be careful about talking about people in other religions. It is not the people in the religions that may be misguided; it is the systems themselves, misleading people.**

[From the writings of Ellen G. White=EGW:] It is true that we are commanded to “cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show My people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins.” [Isaiah 58:1.] **This message must be given; but we should be careful not to thrust and crowd and condemn those who have not the light that we have. We should not go out of our way to make hard thrusts at Catholics. Among the Catholics there are many who are most conscientious Christians, and who walk in all the light that shines upon them; and God will work in their behalf. Those who have had great privileges and opportunities, but who have failed to improve their physical, mental, and moral powers, and have lived to please themselves, refusing to bear their responsibility, are in greater danger and in greater condemnation before God, than those who are in error upon doctrinal points, yet who seek to live to do good to others.**—Ellen G. White, *Gospel Workers** [1915] 328.4.††Ω

27. We know that in ancient times, Babylon was represented in Daniel’s prophecy by the *head of gold* and later by the *lion*. Babylon fell to the Medes and Persians and, later, was totally destroyed. Babylon’s fall is described in Jeremiah 50 and 51.

[BSG:] Jeremiah 50 and 51 predict Babylon's destruction by the Medes and Persians. **One of the reasons for Babylon's demise was its idolatry.** The Babylonians believed that these images were representations of their deities. In Babylonian religion, the ritual care and worship of the statues of deities was considered sacred; the gods lived simultaneously in their statues in temples and in the natural forces they embodied. The pillaging or destruction of idols was considered to be loss for the people of divine patronage. For example, the Chaldean prince Marduk-apla-iddina II fled into the southern marshes of Mesopotamia with the statues of Babylon's gods to save them from the armies of Sennacherib of Assyria (Jane R. McIntosh, *Ancient Mesopotamia: New Perspectives* [Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, Inc., 2005] p. 203).—[as quoted in *Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Thursday, May 25].^{†Ω§}

28. Look at what the ancient prophets said about Babylon.

Jeremiah 51:15-16,19: ¹⁵ The LORD made the earth by his power;
by his wisdom he created the world
and stretched out the heavens.

¹⁶ At his command the waters above the sky roar;
he brings clouds from the ends of the earth.
He makes lightning flash in the rain
and sends the wind from his storeroom....

¹⁹ The God of Jacob is not like them;
he is the one who made everything,
and he has chosen Israel to be his very own people.
The LORD Almighty is his name.—*Good News Bible*.^{*†}

29. Read Exodus 20:4; Psalm 115:4-8; and 2 Kings 17:15. What do they teach about idolatry?

Exodus 20:4: “Do not make for yourselves images of anything in heaven or on earth or in the water under the earth.”—*Good News Bible*.^{*†}

Psalm 115:4-8: ⁴ Their gods are made of silver and gold,
formed by human hands.

⁵ They have mouths, but cannot speak,
and eyes, but cannot see.

⁶ They have ears, but cannot hear,
and noses, but cannot smell.

⁷ They have hands, but cannot feel,
and feet, but cannot walk;
they cannot make a sound.

⁸ **May all who made them and who trust in them**
become like the idols they have made.—*Good News Bible*.^{*†}

2 Kings 17:15: They refused to obey his instructions, they did not keep the covenant he had made with their ancestors, and they disregarded his warnings. **They worshipped worthless idols and became worthless themselves,** and they followed the customs of the surrounding nations, disobeying the LORD's command not to imitate them.—*Good News Bible*.^{*†}

[BSG:] **Though the issues of the idolatry of spiritual Babylon go deeper than just bowing before images of wood and stone, spiritual Babylon does parallel ancient Babylon with the images introduced into its worship service.** The use of images as objects of worship, or so-called “veneration,” is a violation of the second commandment because it limits the ability of the Holy Spirit to impress upon our minds the things of eternity and reduces the majesty of God to a lifeless statue. These images were introduced into Christianity in the fourth century to make Christianity more acceptable to the pagan populace. **Unfortunately, these images are often given the sacredness and homage that belongs to God alone, which makes the whole thing spiritually degrading.**—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Thursday, May 25.[†]

[EGW:] Babylon is said to be “the *mother* of harlots.” By her *daughters* must be symbolized churches that cling to her doctrines and traditions, and follow her example of sacrificing the truth and the approval of God, in order to form an unlawful alliance with the world. **The message of Revelation 14, announcing the *fall* of Babylon must apply to religious bodies that were once pure and have become corrupt. Since this message follows the warning of the judgment, it must be given in the last days; therefore it cannot refer to the Roman Church alone, for that church has been in a fallen condition for many centuries.** Furthermore, in the eighteenth chapter of the Revelation the people of God are called upon to come out of Babylon. **According to this scripture, many of God’s people must still be in Babylon. And in what religious bodies are the greater part of the followers of Christ now to be found? Without doubt, in the various churches professing the Protestant faith.** At the time of their rise these churches took a noble stand for God and the truth, and His blessing was with them. Even the unbelieving world was constrained to acknowledge the beneficent results that followed an acceptance of the principles of the gospel. In the words of the prophet to Israel: “Thy renown went forth among the heathen for thy beauty: for it was perfect through My comeliness, which I had put upon thee, saith the Lord God.” But they fell by the same desire which was the curse and ruin of Israel—the desire of imitating the practices and courting the friendship of the ungodly. “Thou didst trust in thine own beauty, and playedst the harlot because of thy renown.” Ezekiel 16:14, 15.—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy** 382.3-383.0.^{†§}

30. Just as Nebuchadnezzar threatened to destroy the three Hebrew worthies in Daniel 3 because they refused to bow down to his golden idol, so the second beast, one of the associates of the Devil himself in modern times, declares a death sentence on God’s faithful people in modern times.

Revelation 13:15: The second beast was allowed to breathe life into the image of the first beast, so that the image could talk and put to death all those who would not worship it.—*Good News Bible*.*

31. Revelation 12 and 13 speak of three different beasts: 1) The first red-or-scarlet-colored beast represents the Devil himself. 2) The second beast appears very similar to that beast, but is not red-colored and represents the Roman Catholic Church system. 3) The

third beast or image to the beast represents apostate Protestantism—those churches which are following the example of Roman Catholicism but are still claiming to be Protestant. Eventually, they will look to civil and military power to enforce their teachings.

32. What do we know about these extra beasts, especially the second beast, and its final outcome?

Revelation 14:9-11: ⁹ A third angel followed the first two, saying in a loud voice, “Whoever worships the beast and its image and receives the mark on their forehead or on their hand ¹⁰will themselves drink God’s wine, the wine of his fury, which he has poured at full strength into the cup of his anger! All who do this will be tormented in fire and sulphur [*sic*] before the holy angels and the Lamb. ¹¹The smoke of the fire that torments them goes up for ever [*sic*] and ever. There is no relief day or night for those who worship the beast and its image, for anyone who has the mark of its name.”—*Good News Bible*.*[‡] [Smoke consists of the dead remnants of what was living.][‡]

33. In Exodus 20 in the second commandment, we are told that we are not to make images of anything in heaven or on earth or in the waters under the earth.

34. Look what the angel’s explanation in Daniel 7:25 said about the future Babylon.

Daniel 7:25: “He will speak against the Supreme God and oppress God’s people. He will try to change their religious laws and festivals, and God’s people will be under his power for 3.5 years.”—*Good News Bible*.*

35. In Daniel’s day when Babylon was still a major world force, he was predicting that a future Babylon would try to change religious laws and festivals. As we know, the Roman Catholic Church openly proclaims that it has the authority to change God’s day of worship from the Sabbath to Sunday.

36. Does it seem almost unbelievable that we could be worshipping a Babylonian-type system in our day? The real question is: Will we do it our way, man’s way? Or, God’s way? Love versus selfishness. Creation versus evolution. Pope versus Christ. Notice this startling statement from Ellen White.

[EGW:] **Multitudes have a wrong conception of God and His attributes, and are as truly serving a false god as were the worshipers of Baal.**—
Ellen G. White, *Prophets and Kings** 177.1.^{†‡}

37. These two religious systems have some very important differences.

[BSG:] The first system is based on the Word of God, with Jesus Christ at its center. The second system is based on human reasoning, with human religious leaders at its center. The contrast is between truth and error, salvation by grace and salvation by works, obedience to God’s commands and submission to human decrees.—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 119.[‡]

38. For hundreds of years, Roman authorities refused to let people read the Bible for themselves. The church leaders were expected to read the Bible and interpret it, according to the church’s wishes and to teach the people that form.

39. So, to repeat the basic core issues in these two contrasting systems: God’s system is based on people’s understanding the Word of God which they have been able to read for

themselves and understand it correctly versus Babylon's dependence on human wisdom and on human leaders to ascertain divine truth. Is anyone doing that today?

40. God's system tells us that we must worship Him directly, in person. The Babylonian system places idolatry at the center of its worship.

41. We must never forget what Jesus said.

John 14:6: Jesus answered him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no one goes to the Father except by me."—*Good News Bible*.*

[BSG:] Revelation 12:17, one of the principal passages in our study ..., speaks of "the remnant" (*KJV*) or "the rest of her offspring" (*NKJV*). The concept of the remnant is found throughout Scripture. It is drawn especially from the Old Testament. There are three Hebrew words that are used for the "remnant." Each of these words has its own shade of meaning. They can be literally translated as "what escapes," "those who escape," "what remains," "the remnant," "to be left over," or "to remain."—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 119.†§

Revelation 12:17: The dragon was furious with the woman and went off to fight against **the rest of her descendants**, all those who obey God's commandments and are faithful to the truth revealed by Jesus.—*Good News Bible*.*† [Who in this world is still loyal to God?][‡]

42. Who are the "rest of her descendants"? How many times has God had to start over from Adam to Noah to the tower of Babel to Abraham to taking Israel out of Egypt to the Jews to Babylonian captivity the return to Jerusalem to the disciples to the Reformation to Adventism?

[From the *SDA Bible Commentary*:] The "remnant" of OT times is thus composed of successive generations of Israelites—God's chosen people. Again and again the majority apostatized, but each time there was a **faithful "remnant" that became exclusive heirs to the sacred promises, privileges, and responsibilities of the covenant originally made with Abraham and confirmed at Sinai**. This "remnant" was the formally appointed group to which God purposed to send the Messiah and through which He proposed to evangelize the heathen; **it did not consist of scattered individuals as such, however faithful they might be, but was a corporate entity, God's visible, divinely commissioned organization on earth**.—"Additional Note on Chapter 12," *The SDA Bible Commentary*,* vol. 7, 814.3.†‡

43. As we draw closer to the end of time, Satan recruits two major religious forces to help him accomplish his goals. Revelation 13 talks about them. God's response in Revelation 14 clarifies what will happen.

[EGW:] In Revelation 14 the first angel is followed by a second proclaiming: "Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication." Revelation 14:8. **The term "Babylon" is derived from "Babel," and signifies confusion. It is employed in Scripture to designate the various forms of false or apostate religion.** In Revelation 17, Babylon is represented as a woman—

a figure which is used in the Bible as the symbol of a church, a virtuous woman representing a pure church, a vile woman an apostate church.—
Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy** 381.1.†‡

44. **Jesus wins and Satan loses. So, let us conclude:**

[BSG:] **A Contrast Between Revelation's Two Women**

- The pure woman, in Revelation 12, is clothed with the sun. She is adorned with the glory of Christ's righteousness.
The impure woman, in Revelation 17, is dressed in purple and scarlet garments. She is adorned with human falsehood and tradition.
- The pure woman has a garland of stars on her head. She is guided by the teachings of the apostles in her mission.
The impure woman is adorned with gold, precious stones, and pearls. She depends on her lavish wealth and outward adorning to impress and attract her followers.
- The pure woman stands on the moon. She derives her power from the prophetic Word.
The impure woman sits on a scarlet beast [the Devil himself]. She derives her power from the state, or the political powers of the earth.—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 121.‡

45. **King Nebuchadnezzar felt that he was appointed by the gods to speak on their behalf.**

46. **So, what do you think? Are we prepared to faithfully follow a divine leader? Or, do we want a human leader? Ellen White had some words on that issue.**

[EGW:] **So closely will the counterfeit resemble the true that it will be impossible to distinguish between them except by the Holy Scriptures.** By their testimony every statement and every miracle must be tested.

Those who endeavor to obey all the commandments of God will be opposed and derided. They can stand only in God. In order to endure the trial before them, they must understand the will of God as revealed in His word; they can honor Him only as they have a right conception of His character, government, and purposes, and act in accordance with them. None but those who have fortified the mind with the truths of the Bible will stand through the last great conflict. To every soul will come the searching test: Shall I obey God rather than men? The decisive hour is even now at hand.—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy** 593.1-594.0.†‡

47. **Are we filling our minds every day with the truth as discovered in the Bible? Are we praying faithfully to God and witnessing when we have opportunity?**

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