

# ***Allusions, Images, and Symbols: How to Study Bible Prophecy***

## ***The Nations: Part 2***

Lesson #5 for May 3, 2025

Scriptures: Genesis 2:9-17; Daniel 2:31-35; 7:1-3; Isaiah 17:12-13; Romans 3:10-19; Revelation 10:1-11; 12:15-16; Psalm 46:10.

1. Did God “need” humans to “fail” and to sin? Was sin and the fall of man part of His ideal plan?

[From the Bible study guide=BSG:] Through the centuries, some people have argued that God wanted the Fall, that it was His intention for humans to descend into sin and death and thus lead Him—in the person of Jesus—to the cross. After all, how else could He have so powerfully and graphically displayed the depth of His love for humanity than by dying on the cross for them? **In short, the thinking goes, God needed humanity to fall.**

That is a horrible and wretched position to take. **It was never God’s intention for either Satan or humanity to fall.** The rebellion of Satan, and then of humanity, was a tragedy of immense consequence, and our joy in Him would have remained complete had our first parents not fallen.

[In this study,] ... we will continue looking at the problems caused by the Fall and the desire for human government as opposed to God’s governance. These truths are powerfully revealed in the book of Daniel, which shows that God was right when He warned His people about what would happen when they turned away from Him and chose earthly monarchs instead. This is exactly what they got: **earthly monarchs and sinners lording it over sinners—never a good combination.**—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide\** for Sabbath.†‡

### **The Garden of Eden and Beyond**

2. The Garden of Eden was to be a classroom for God’s people, a place where their interaction with the creation would endlessly teach them and their offspring more about the Creator.

[From the writings of Ellen G. White=EGW:] **The holy pair were not only children under the fatherly care of God but students receiving instruction from the all-wise Creator. They were visited by angels, and were granted communion with their Maker, with no obscuring veil between.** They were full of the vigor imparted by the tree of life, and **their intellectual power was but little less than that of the angels. The mysteries of the visible universe—“the wondrous works of Him which is perfect in knowledge” (Job 37:16)—afforded them an exhaustless source of instruction and delight.** The laws and operations of nature, which have engaged men’s study for six thousand years, were opened to their minds by the infinite Framer and Upholder of all. They held converse with leaf and flower and tree, gathering from each the secrets of its life. With every living creature, from the mighty leviathan that playeth among the waters to the insect mote that floats in the sunbeam, Adam was familiar. **He had given to each its name, and he was acquainted with the nature and habits of all.** [What did “had given to each its name” entail?] God’s glory in the heavens, the innumerable worlds in their orderly revolutions, “the balancings of the clouds,” the mysteries of light and sound, of day and night—all were open to the study of our first parents. On every leaf of the forest or stone of the mountains, in every shining star, in earth

and air and sky, God's name was written. The order and harmony of creation spoke to them of infinite wisdom and power. **They were ever discovering some attraction that filled their hearts with deeper love and called forth fresh expressions of gratitude.**—Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*\* 50.3-51.0.<sup>††</sup> [How exciting!]<sup>†</sup>

<https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p84.150&index=0><sup>†</sup>

3. **How much of this incredible education did they receive then? Were they daily studying the details of almost everything? Did Adam “name” everything that first day?**
4. When was the first “command” given? Were that command **and** the tree “protections”?

**Genesis 2:9-17:** <sup>9</sup> He made all kinds of beautiful trees grow there and produce good fruit. In the middle of the garden stood the tree that gives life and the tree that gives knowledge of what is good and what is bad.

<sup>10</sup> A stream flowed in Eden and watered the garden; beyond Eden it divided into four rivers.... [Pishon, Gihon, Tigris, and Euphrates]

<sup>15</sup> Then the LORD God placed the man in the Garden of Eden to cultivate it and guard it. <sup>16</sup>**He said to him, “You may eat the fruit of any tree in the garden, <sup>17</sup>except the tree that gives knowledge of what is good and what is bad. You must not eat the fruit of that tree; if you do, you will die the same day.”**—American Bible Society. (1992). *The Holy Bible: The Good News Translation*\* (2nd ed., Genesis 2:9-17). New York: American Bible Society [abbreviated as *Good News Bible*].<sup>††</sup>

[EGW:] The angels warned them to be on their guard against the devices of Satan, for his efforts to ensnare them would be unwearied. **While they were obedient to God the evil one could not harm them; for, if need be, every angel in heaven would be sent to their help.** If they steadfastly repelled his first insinuations, they would be as secure as the heavenly messengers. **But should they once yield to temptation, their nature would become so depraved that in themselves they would have no power and no disposition to resist Satan.**

The tree of knowledge had been made a test of their obedience and their love to God. The Lord had seen fit to lay upon them but **one prohibition** as to the use of all that was in the garden; but if they should disregard His will in this particular, they would incur the guilt of transgression. **Satan was not to follow them with continual temptations; he could have access to them only at the forbidden tree.** Should they attempt to investigate its nature, they would be exposed to his wiles. They were admonished to give careful heed to the warning which God had sent them and to be content with the instruction which He had seen fit to impart.—Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*\* 53.2-3.<sup>††</sup>

<https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p84.161&index=0><sup>†</sup>

5. **How long do you think Adam and Eve lived in the Garden of Eden before they sinned?**
6. The only thing that Adam and Eve needed to do to stay safe was to stay away from that tree! **So, the tree was a protection—confinement for Satan!** Should God have warned them about the possibility of a talking “snake”?

[BSG:] The Genesis story of the Fall and the apocalyptic prophecies concerning the nations not only describe the stumbling and the failure of men when they

attempt to replace God; they also provide us with God's only solution to the human problem, namely, the kingdom of God.

According to the text of Genesis, the fall of Adam and Eve took place in connection with the first commandment that related life to the knowledge of good and evil. Significantly, the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil were both in the midst of the Garden, near to each other, suggesting the relation between them. **As soon as humans took fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, they no longer had access to the tree of life (Gen. 3:22–24).**—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide\** 67.†‡§

**Genesis 3:22-24:** <sup>22</sup> Then the LORD God said, “Now the man has become like one of us and has knowledge of what is good and what is bad. He must not be allowed to take fruit from the tree that gives life, eat it, and live for ever [sic-Br].” <sup>23</sup> So the LORD God sent him out of the Garden of Eden and made him cultivate the soil from which he had been formed. <sup>24</sup> Then at the east side of the garden he put living creatures and a flaming sword which turned in all directions. This was to keep anyone from coming near the tree that gives life.—*Good News Bible.*\*‡

7. We often get the idea that the more you know, the better you are. However, are there times when some kinds of knowledge should be forbidden? The Scripture says that not all knowledge is good. We certainly should never try street drugs like heroin or cocaine or even alcohol or tobacco. **Had Satan eaten of the tree of life before his fall? What about after he first had evil thoughts or plans?**

[BSG:] God was intent on educating His people thoroughly while sparing them from the long-term suffering that some knowledge would cause, such as what would later happen when people chose to rule themselves rather than to be ruled by the Lord Himself.—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide\** for Sunday, April 20.‡

8. Why do we as human beings seem to want to rule ourselves? Is it selfishness? Later in history, why did the children of Israel ask for a king? History proves that over the generations, almost all the kings of Israel and Judah became more and more wicked. Then, the children of Israel ended up experiencing centuries of subjugation to terrible foreign rulers.
9. It is interesting to notice that that first negative command given to Adam and Eve simply spelled out the truth: “Listen,” obey, and live; or, ignore, disobey, and die! This was not an arbitrary command. It was a statement of truth, a description of the way things were/are.
10. Surely, we recognize that God was the One who created all things. Therefore, we should recognize that He has the ability to describe the very best ways to live in accordance with His will and also to describe the consequences for not doing so.
11. As recorded in Genesis 3:1, Satan twisted the command of God as if God meant to forbid them from eating from *any* tree in the garden. Of course, the truth was that there was only one forbidden tree. God actually offered a fantastic array of fruits, grains, and nuts, readily available in that beautiful garden.

[BSG:] **The first response to God's commandment is, therefore, to receive God's grace and enjoy His gift.** The second response is to refrain from eating from the forbidden tree. Both promises of life and death are certain.... The

promise of the gift of life is as certain as the warning of death that is attached to disobedience. From the very beginning, the two ways are clearly outlined. **Either we receive God, and we enjoy life, or we reject Him, and we die. Both prospects are certain: “ ‘I have set before you today life and good, death and evil’ ”** (*Deut. 30:15, NKJV*).—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide\** 66.<sup>†§</sup> [Do those same instructions still apply to us?]<sup>‡</sup>

**Deuteronomy 30:15:** “Today I [the LORD] am giving you a choice between good and evil, between life and death.”—*Good News Bible.*<sup>\*‡</sup>

12. What was God’s answer to all this?

[BSG:] There are [at least] two lessons to be gleaned from this connection. First, **life is not a natural part of humanity. Humans are not immortal.** Even in the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve depended on an external source for life. And second, **life is not just a biological condition; it also has spiritual and moral dimensions.**—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide\** 67.<sup>†‡</sup>

### Daniel and His Prophecies

13. The story of Daniel is amazing! Think of a young teenager, captured and taken as a slave, and then, eventually, rising to the very highest levels of the Babylonian and, later, the Medo-Persian governments. With God’s help, he was able to interpret dreams.

[BSG:] **The book of Daniel is written in two languages.** When the prophet is concerned with the Gentile kingdoms, he writes in Aramaic, the lingua franca [*sic*] of that time. When the prophet is concerned with the spiritual destiny of his people, he writes in Hebrew, the language of God’s people at that time. **Daniel’s prophecies in chapters 2 and 7 are located in the Aramaic section** and are concerned, then, with the fate of the Gentile nations. Therefore, these are the prophecies that will command our attention.

**In Daniel 2**, the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar has a prophetic dream of a statue representing the succession of world empires related to the history of God’s people. The message to Nebuchadnezzar, the builder of Babylon, is that **his kingdom will not stand forever, but it will be followed by other kingdoms**, until the end of time when all the kingdoms will be destroyed and be replaced by the kingdom of God, which is the only kingdom that “ ‘shall never be destroyed’ ” and “ ‘shall stand forever’ ” (*Dan. 2:44, NKJV*). Nebuchadnezzar refuses to acknowledge this divinely appointed prophecy. In reaction to the prophecy, Nebuchadnezzar decides immediately to erect a statue of solid gold. This statue signifies his intention to counter and replace God’s plan for the nations. Instead of God’s kingdom replacing all the previous empires of the earth, Nebuchadnezzar’s plan is to gather all the nations under his rule (*Dan. 3:7*).—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide\** 66.<sup>†§</sup>

**Daniel 3:7:** And so, as soon as they heard the sound of the instruments, the people of all the nations, races, and languages bowed down and worshipped [*sic-Br*] the gold statue which King Nebuchadnezzar had set up.—*Good News Bible.*<sup>\*‡</sup>

14. **Daniel 2 and Daniel 7 make it very clear that God understood the whole course of human history from the days of Babylon all the way to the second coming of Christ.** As Daniel was called in front of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, he was expected to **reproduce and interpret** the dream as recorded in Daniel 2. It was a projection of what was

going to happen over hundreds of years in the future in the countries in the Middle East.

**Daniel 2:31-45:** <sup>31</sup> “Your Majesty, in your vision you saw standing before you a **giant statue**, bright and shining, and terrifying to look at. <sup>32</sup>Its head was made of the finest gold; its chest and arms were made of silver; its waist and hips of bronze; <sup>33</sup>its legs of iron, and its feet partly of iron and partly of clay. <sup>34</sup>While you were looking at it, a **great stone broke loose from a cliff without anyone touching it, struck the iron and clay feet of the statue, and shattered them.** <sup>35</sup>At once the iron, clay, bronze, silver, and gold crumbled and became like the dust on a threshing place in summer. The wind carried it all away, leaving not a trace. **But the stone grew to be a mountain that covered the whole earth....**

<sup>44</sup> “At the time of those rulers **the God of heaven will establish a kingdom that will never end.** It will never be conquered, but will completely destroy all those empires, and then last for ever [*sic-Br*]. <sup>45</sup>You saw how a stone broke loose from a cliff without anyone touching it and how it struck the statue made of iron, bronze, clay, silver, and gold. **The great God is telling Your Majesty what will happen in the future.** I have told you exactly what you dreamt [*sic-Br*], and have given you its true meaning.”—*Good News Bible*.\*†‡

15. Daniel not only knew and revealed the king’s dream; but also, he gave the interpretation.
16. One thing we see in the rise and fall of these nations is that one of the reasons for their failures is that they failed to cooperate and live together in peace, just as the people at the tower of Babel found themselves confused and scattered because of the change in language. (Genesis 11:4-9) One day, God will establish a kingdom where there will be peace forever.
17. What was to occur “after” the time of the statue?

[BSG:] In the vision of the statue [in Daniel 2], **the end is marked by the destruction of the kingdoms of the earth, followed by the establishment of the everlasting kingdom of God**, which “ ‘shall never be destroyed’ ” and “ ‘shall stand forever’ ” (*Dan. 2:44, NKJV*). In the dream of the animals [in Daniel 7], **the end is brought by the coming of the Son of Man, Jesus Christ Himself, in the clouds** (*Dan. 7:13, 14; compare with Mark 13:26, 27*).—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*\* 67.†‡§

[BSG:] At the end of the nineteenth century, many people were exuding a new confidence in human progress. The Paris Exposition (1900), for example, was a remarkable showcase of optimism about the future. Surely, with all of our technological and scientific advances, many of humanity’s worst problems would be at an end! As humanity entered the twentieth century, among many thinkers there was this great optimism that Enlightenment ideals—such as human perfectibility and the power of reason—would usher in a wonderful new era for humanity.

World War I, however, quickly shattered those dreams, and by the end of the twentieth century, we had lost more than 200 million people to warfare. We may have advanced in a technological sense, but certainly not in a moral one. To **paraphrase Martin Luther King Jr., “we have guided missiles but misguided men.** And *that’s* a very scary combination.”

Many students of prophecy have noticed that the metals in Daniel 2 move from

most valuable to least valuable: gold devalues to silver, silver devalues to brass, and brass to iron, until we end up with only iron and clay.

Charles Darwin, Karl Marx, and other nineteenth-century thinkers attempted to convince us that humanity is somehow tracking upward—that we are evolving biologically and socially. And though in some ways human existence has improved (at least at a physical level), who actually looks ahead to the future of this world, as it is now ruled and governed, with much optimism about peace, security, and prosperity?—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide\** for Monday, April 28.<sup>†‡§</sup>

18. What or who caused that change in attitude? Was it only because of two world wars? Or, even all the military buildup that has persisted?

19. There are currently stated to be 110 major or minor wars in progress in the world.

[From the Internet:] In July 2024, the following 10 countries hosted extreme levels of conflict: Palestine, Myanmar, Syria, Mexico, Nigeria, Colombia, Brazil, Sudan, Cameroon, and Pakistan. [What about Russia and Ukraine?]<sup>†</sup>

<https://acleddata.com/conflict-index/index-july-2024/#:~:text=In%20July%202024%2C%20the%20following,'high'%20levels%20of%20conflict.> [Retrieved on February 22, 2025.]<sup>†</sup>

[BSG:] Jesus warned, “ ‘And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. . . . For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, **pestilences**, and earthquakes in various places’ ” (*Matt. 24:6, 7, NKJV*). Despite these warnings, how can we draw comfort from knowing that we have been warned beforehand about them?—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide\** for Monday, April 28.<sup>†‡§</sup>

20. What is a pestilence: “a contagious or infectious epidemic disease that is virulent and devastating” “*especially*: bubonic plague.” “Something that is destructive or pernicious.” See <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/>

21. Later, Daniel was shown a vision where the same basic ideas of Daniel 2 were presented in Daniel 7.

22. We recognize that **floods and strife are representative of nations rising up out of the sea and fighting each other**. The idea that churning waters represent strife is well represented in Psalm 65:5-8; Isaiah 17:12-13; and Jeremiah 46:7-8.

23. Fortunately, **for a period of time, the Promised Land existed in relative peace while the Gentile kingdoms were represented by war and turbulence**.

**Daniel 7:1-3:** <sup>1</sup> In the first year that Belshazzar was king of Babylonia, I had a dream and saw a vision in the night. I wrote the dream down, and this is the record <sup>2</sup>of what I saw that night:

Winds were blowing from all directions and lashing the surface of the ocean.

<sup>3</sup>**Four huge beasts came up out of the ocean**, each one different from the others.—*Good News Bible*.<sup>\*†</sup>

[BSG:] Daniel watches the chaos of Gentile warfare from the shore, when **suddenly the beasts start coming up on the land—into his territory!** Gentile problems had now become his people’s problems. They [the Hebrews] had chosen to live *like* Gentiles, so now they would live with (and under)

Gentiles. Starting with Babylonian domination, God's covenant people never again enjoyed complete or long-lasting autonomy.

This loss of autonomy for God's people today will persist until the close of time, when Christ is finally restored to His rightful place as our King. In the New Testament, God's people continued to suffer under the thumb of the Roman Empire and then under the persecutions of the little horn, pagan Rome's successor.

Though, historically, some nations have been better than others, and some eras have been more peaceful than others, the vast majority of the history of nations, peoples, and empires has simply been going from one tragedy to another, from one oppressor to another. And often this is all done under rulers claiming only the best of intentions for their own people. **What a contrast to the rule that God had wanted for His people, if only they would have chosen it.**—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide\** for Tuesday, April 29.<sup>†‡</sup>

24. Later, Paul summarized the reasons for some of that chaos in Romans 3:19.

**Romans 3:19: Now we know that everything in the Law applies to those who live under the Law, in order to stop all human excuses and bring the whole world under God's judgement.**—*Good News Bible.\*†*

25. So, what should we learn from all this? Isaiah saw a vision of Lucifer/Satan trying to rise to the level of God! (Isaiah 14:12-15) The only possible ultimate solution to bring peace to this earth is the reestablishment of God's kingdom. That will be done without any human help.

#### On "Sea" and on "Land," Revelation, The Remnant Church, and the New World

26. So, we have seen that *land* seems to represent places of peace while the *oceans* and *seas* represent turbulence and wars.

[Neall quoted in BSG:] **"Symbolically, when earth and sea are juxtaposed, earth often represents the ordered world, or even the land of Israel, while sea refers to the Gentile nations that menace it as the sea menaces the land."**—Beatrice S. Neall, "Sealed Saints and the Tribulation," in *Symposium on Revelation*, book 1, ed. Frank B. Holbrook (Silver Spring, MD: Biblical Research Institute, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1992), p. 260.

**In this thinking, land is a place of stability, established on the government of God; sea represents the unstable turmoil of nations established on human pride.**

With the idea expressed above as the background, read Revelation 12:15, 16 and Revelation 13:1, 11. **Notice the juxtaposition between water and earth. How are they used, and what can they teach us about how to understand prophecy?**—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide\** for Wednesday.<sup>†‡§</sup>

**Revelation 12:15-16:** <sup>15</sup>And then from his mouth the dragon poured out a flood of water after the woman, so that it would carry her away. <sup>16</sup>But the earth helped the woman; it opened its mouth and swallowed the water that had come from the dragon's mouth.—*Good News Bible.\*†*

**Revelation 13:1,11:** <sup>1</sup> Then I saw a beast coming up out of the sea. It had ten horns and seven heads; on each of its horns there was a crown, and on each of its

heads there was a name that was insulting to God....

<sup>11</sup> Then I saw another beast, which **came up out of the earth**. It had two horns like a lamb's horns, and it spoke like a dragon.—*Good News Bible*.<sup>\*†</sup>

[BSG:] **Notice that the dragon uses water to persecute the woman (the church)**. As we have seen, in prophecy **water often symbolizes worldly governments** and the **turmoil and chaos** that often attends them. [Revelation 17:15] Hence, we can see how Satan was able to use the masses, prodded by their leaders, to persecute God's people through much of church history.

**Also, Seventh-day Adventists have understood Revelation 12:16** [see just above] **to refer to the migration of persecuted believers to the New World**. [One large group was the Huguenots, Protestants in France and adjacent mountain areas.] **If our understanding of land and sea is correct, what does this say about the founding of the American republic?**

Could we consider it to be **“the earth”** in the same way that the “Promised Land” was—a place set aside for God's people? Could this be why the land beast first appears to be lamblike?...

Unfortunately, this lamblike beast will one day speak “like a dragon” (*Rev. 13:11, NKJV*) [See just above]. **The United States, so long a beacon of religious freedom for the persecuted, will become the dominant religious persecutor! This is another example of what happened when humanity chose to rule itself instead of being ruled by God.**—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*<sup>\* for Wednesday, April 30.</sup><sup>†‡§</sup>

27. What was on sea and on land? What does the New World have to do with the remnant church?

[BSG:] **The remnant church was born in the New World**, precisely where those seeking religious liberty had fled during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*<sup>\* for Thursday.</sup><sup>†‡</sup>

28. John saw a vision that gives us a hint of what that would be like.

**Revelation 10:1-11:** <sup>1</sup> Then I saw another mighty angel coming down out of heaven....

<sup>2</sup>He had a small scroll open in his hand. He put his right foot on the **sea** and his left foot on the **land**, <sup>3</sup>and called out in a loud voice that sounded like the roar of lions....

<sup>5</sup> Then the angel that I saw standing **on the sea and on the land** raised his right-hand to heaven <sup>6</sup>and took a vow in the name of God, who lives for ever [sic-Br] and ever, who created heaven, earth, and the sea, and everything in them. The angel said, “There will be no more delay! <sup>7</sup>But when the seventh angel blows his trumpet, then God will accomplish his secret plan, as he announced to his servants, the prophets.”

<sup>8</sup> Then the voice that I had heard speaking from heaven spoke to me again, saying, “Go and take the open scroll which is in the hand of the angel standing on the sea and on the land.”...

<sup>10</sup> I took the little scroll from his hand and ate it, and it tasted sweet as honey in my mouth. But after I swallowed it, it turned sour in my stomach. <sup>11</sup>Then I was told, “Once again you must proclaim God's message about **many nations**,



**racess, languages, and kings.**”—*Good News Bible*.\*†‡

[BSG:] The angel cries with a loud voice, much as the three angels of Revelation 14 and the angel of Revelation 18 do. This is an urgent moment in history when the work of the remnant church is established for the sake of “ ‘many peoples, nations, tongues, and kings’ ” (*Rev. 10:11, NKJV*).

The angel holds a “little book”—likely the book of Daniel (*see Dan. 12:4*)—which is open for the first time in many generations. **He has one foot on the sea and another on the earth.** This might be in reference to the idea that the message covers the globe, both the Old World and the New. It might also be a reference to the idea that this **message is for all nations**: those who live on the land and those who live in the “Gentile” sea.—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide\** for Thursday, May 1.†‡§

29. But, the day is coming when the whole world will be lighted up with the glory of God.

**Matthew 24:14:** “And this Good News about the Kingdom will be preached through all the world for a witness to all nations; and then the end will come.”—*Good News Bible*.\*

30. **Read Revelation 22:2. Since everyone eats of the tree, is there more than one tree?**

[EGW:] “I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away.” Revelation 21:1. The fire that consumes the wicked purifies the earth. Every trace of the curse is swept away. No eternally burning hell will keep before the ransomed the fearful consequences of sin.

One reminder alone remains: Our Redeemer will ever bear the marks of His crucifixion. Upon His wounded head, upon His side, His hands and feet, are the only traces of the cruel work that sin has wrought.... That pierced side whence flowed the crimson stream that reconciled man to God—there is the Saviour’s [*sic-Br*] glory, there “the hiding of His power.” “Mighty to save,” through the sacrifice of redemption, He was therefore strong to execute justice upon them that despised God’s mercy. And the tokens of His humiliation are His highest honor; through the eternal ages the wounds of Calvary will show forth His praise and declare His power.—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy\** 674.1-2.‡

[\[https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p132.3041&index=0\]](https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p132.3041&index=0)‡

## Summary

[BSG:] In the end, all earthly accomplishments, no matter how grand, no matter how great, no matter how awe-inspiring and glorious, will be turned to dust, to ashes, and ultimately vanquished forever. That includes whatever great and glorious earthly things you might have accomplished or are accomplishing now. Why is it always important to keep this perspective in mind? How should this perspective help you keep your priorities straight?

Have a careful look at the **sea beast of Revelation 13:1–10**. In what ways is this beast the natural consequence of the mindset of Babel? It is clearly the sum total of all human “nations,” from Babylon through to the little horn power. What characteristics of each empire have you noticed that have persisted throughout time? In what ways does the world still reflect the values of Babylon or Rome, for example?—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide\** for Friday.†‡

31. So, what should we learn from all of this? There are some very important lessons.

[BSG:] **Lesson on Leadership.** When Nebuchadnezzar learned that his rule would be limited to the head of gold on the statue, he erected a statue made entirely of gold. **What lessons can we learn from Nebuchadnezzar's example about the need for humility in leadership? How does his story teach us that we are not the only ones capable of doing, and available to do, the job right?** Also, what do the personal narratives of both Nebuchadnezzar and Daniel teach us about faith (trust in God), even when we are no longer in charge?

**Lesson on Politics.** **At the end of time, human rulers will unite together to replace the kingdom of God, just as the builders of the tower of Babel did.** How should you respond to the temptation to scheme and plot to acquire support for your views? Read Daniel 3:8 and Daniel 6:4–13. [Daniel's accusers ended up in the stomachs of the lions in the pit or den!] **What can we learn from the mistake of the Chaldeans who plotted against Daniel in order to take his place?** How can we successfully resist permitting political maneuvers and personal ambitions and interests to prevail over truth and justice?

**Lesson on Perspective.** The problem with the earthly kings in the prophecies of Daniel is that they were "present oriented." Eternity, the future kingdom of God, was not part of their reality. This consideration applies to all aspects of life.—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*\* 68.††

32. Ellen G. White warned:

[EGW:] "What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" Mark 8:36, 37.

This is a question that demands consideration by every parent, every teacher, every student—by every human being, young or old. **No scheme of business or plan of life can be sound or complete that embraces only the brief years of this present life and makes no provision for the unending future. Let the youth be taught to take eternity into their reckoning....**

All who do this are making the best possible preparation for life in this world. No man can lay up treasure in heaven without finding his life on earth thereby enriched and ennobled.

"Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." 1 Timothy 4:8.—Ellen G. White, *Education*\* 145.1-4.†† [<https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p29.723&index=0>]‡

**1 Timothy 4:8:** Physical exercise has some value, but spiritual exercise is valuable in every way, because it promises life both for the present and for the future.—*Good News Bible*.\*

33. How can we avoid making the same mistake that the earthly kings in the prophecies made?

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