

People From Every Country: Part 2



SABBATH—APRIL 26

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON: Genesis 2:9–17; Daniel 2:31–35; Daniel 7:1–3; Revelation 12:15, 16; Revelation 10:1–11.

MEMORY VERSE: “Be quiet and know that I am God. I will be honored among the nations [people groups]. I will be honored in [on] the earth” (Psalm 46:10, NLV).



God warned His people about the terrible things that would happen when they turned away from Him and chose kings.

FOR HUNDREDS OF YEARS, some people said that God's plan from the beginning included sin. These same people said that God needed humans to fall into sin and death. Then He could send Jesus to the cross to save them. What better way for God to show His love for humans than with His Son's dying on the cross? So, that's why these thinkers say that God needed the human family to sin.

This idea is awful. God never wanted Satan or humans to fall. Satan's sin and then Adam and Eve's sin was evil. Sin caused many terrible things to happen. If Adam and Eve didn't sin, our joy in the Lord would be perfect.

This week, we will continue to look at the problems that the Fall caused. We also will continue to look at the problems that happened when people wanted human leaders and not God to control their lives. We will look at the book of Daniel, which shows that God was correct. God warned His people about the terrible things that would happen when they turned away from Him and chose kings. The kings were sinners, the same as they were. So, Bible history shows us kings as sinners controlling other sinners. This plan is not a wise one.

THE FIRST COMMAND (Genesis 2:9–17)

The Garden of Eden was the same as a classroom. In it, God taught Adam and Eve more about His love. “Adam and Eve were God’s children. He was their caring Father. Adam and Eve also were students of the God who made them. God was very wise. He knows everything. He taught Adam and Eve many things. . . . Adam and Eve studied ‘the miracles of God, who knows everything’ (Job 37:16, ICB). These mysteries of nature taught Adam and Eve knowledge and gave them much joy.”—Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pages 50, 51, adapted.

Read Genesis 2:9–17. What was the first command that God gave humans? Why was this command so important?

The first command that God gave humans was in Genesis 2:16, 17. God commanded Adam and Eve not to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. How can some knowledge be forbidden? Isn’t it always useful to know more?

That’s not what the Bible says. God wanted to educate His people about good things. But some knowledge causes suffering. God didn’t want Adam and Eve to learn about that. When we refuse to let God control our lives, we will suffer terrible things.

Thousands of years after Adam and Eve, the Israelites asked for a king. The Lord told His people the evil things that would happen because they wanted a king. The Lord also told His people that their decision to reject His control would continue until the end of human history.

The kings of Israel grew more and more evil over time. God’s chosen people also became more and more the same as the people around them. The Israelites didn’t remember God’s plan for their lives. So, God gave Israel more of what they wanted: human government.

When we understand these ideas, we will understand the book of Daniel so much better. In the book of Daniel, we see the different kingdoms that will control the earth. The book of Daniel shows why Israel failed as a people group: they refused to follow God’s commandments. Just as the Garden of Eden was the first classroom for God’s people, Babylon also became their classroom. But God’s people were not free in Babylon; they were prisoners. But anyone who wanted to learn could see that God’s kingdom was different from the kingdoms on this earth.



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DANIEL 2 (Daniel 2:31–35)

During the time that the Jews were in Babylon, God showed the important relationship between His people and the kingdoms on this earth. At this time, God's people were prisoners. Now they would suffer for their choices. (Maybe they would learn from them, too?)

Read Daniel 2:31–35. These verses show us what will happen in human history until the end times. What important Bible truths can we learn from this amazing message?

At the end of the 1800s, many people were excited about the future. They hoped that science could solve the worst of our problems. When the 1900s started, many thinkers believed humans could become perfect and that new inventions in science and medicine would start a wonderful new time in human history.

Then World War I came and proved that these hopes were false. By the end of the 1900s, more than 200 million people died in war. Inventions of science may have made our lives easier and better in many ways. But science did not make us better people.

Many people who study Daniel 2 notice that the metals in the statue move from high value to low value: from gold to silver to brass to iron, and finally, to iron and clay.

Many thinkers and scientists in the 1900s tried to convince us that humans can make their lives better. In some ways, our lives are better. But can we hope for a future filled with peace, safety, and plenty?

Jesus warned us about the things that will happen in the future: “ ‘You will hear about wars that are being fought. And you will hear stories about other wars beginning. But don’t be afraid. These things must happen before the end comes. Nations [people groups from different countries] will fight against other nations. Kingdoms will fight against other kingdoms. There will be times when there is no food for people to eat. And there will be earthquakes in different places’ ” (Matthew 24:6, 7, ERV). How does knowing what will happen in the future give us hope?



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DANIEL 7 (Daniel 7:1–3)

God first showed the dream in Daniel 2 to a Babylonian king. God showed the dream in Daniel 7 to Daniel, a Hebrew prophet. A prophet is a special messenger from God to His people. Daniel belonged to God's chosen people, the Jews.

In Daniel 7, God shows Daniel the same topic He showed to King Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel 2, but in a different form. Nebuchadnezzar saw a statue in his dream. Daniel sees a group of wild animals coming from the sea when the wind stirs the water. These nations, or people groups, always fought each other for control. Psalm 65:5–8; Isaiah 17:12, 13; and Jeremiah 46:7, 8 use the word pictures of floods and waves to talk about the fighting between the nations.

God wanted the Promised Land to be different from these countries. And for a time, it was. The Promised Land was the same as an island of peace and safety. Israel was a holy nation under the control of God's government and not under the control of the fighting nations around it.

Read Daniel 7:1–3. A lot of things happen in these verses. What lessons can we learn from the word pictures in these verses? (An example is the wild animal, or beast, coming up from the sea.)

Daniel stands on the beach and watches the non-Jewish countries fight. All of a sudden, the beasts start coming up on the land and into his territory! Now non-Jewish problems became his people's problem. Israel chose to live the same as the non-Jews. So now they would live with (and under the control of) non-Jews. When God's people were carried away into Babylon, they never again were completely free or in control of their own government for very long.

Today, Christians will not have full control over their lives until the close of time. At that time, Jesus finally becomes our King. In the New Testament, God's people continued to suffer under the Roman power. Later, God's people suffered when the little horn hurt them. The little horn took power and control from the Kingdom of Rome.

How does Romans 3:10–19 help explain so much of what is happening today? How does verse 19 show us why we need the Good News about Jesus in our lives?



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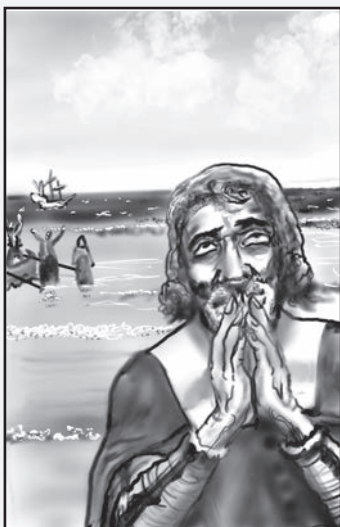
BETWEEN LAND AND SEA (Revelation 12:15, 16)

The Bible uses the “land” and “sea” as word pictures in special messages about the future. These word pictures can teach us important lessons about the end times.

“When the Bible talks about the ‘land’ and ‘sea’ together, the ‘land’ often shows us a place of peace or even a place of safety. But the sea shows us the non-Jewish people that hurt Israel in the same way that waves from the sea crash on the land.”—Beatrice S. Neall, “Sealed Saints and the Tribulation,” in *Symposium on Revelation, Book 1*, edited by Frank B. Holbrook (Silver Spring, MD: Biblical Research Institute, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1992), page 260, adapted.

So, in the Bible the “land” can be a word picture for a place of peace and safety that God started. On the other hand, the “sea” shows us the nations or people groups that are always fighting and are filled with pride.

Read Revelation 12:15, 16 and Revelation 13:1, 11. Notice how the verses talk about the water and the earth. How are these two word pictures used in these verses? What can they teach us about how to understand the Bible’s messages about the end times?



For a long time, America was a land of religious freedom for millions of people who left their countries to escape being hurt for their faith.

Notice that the dragon uses “water” to hurt the woman (the church). As we saw already, in the Bible’s messages about the end times, water often is a word picture for leaders and governments on this earth who are always fighting for control and power. So, these word pictures show us how Satan used leaders and their people to hurt God’s people during much of church history.

Also, Seventh-day Adventists understand Revelation 12:16 to show Christians coming to the United States to escape these attacks. Is the United States “the earth,” in verse 16, in the same way that the “Promised Land” was a place of peace and safety that God made for His people? Is this why the land-beast or wild animal first looks the same as a lamb? For sure, the United States never was the “New Israel” that some people said it was. But for a long time, it was a land of religious freedom for millions of people who left their countries to escape being hurt for their faith.

Someday, the United States will behave the same as a dragon (Revelation 13:11). This change will happen when people choose to follow laws that don’t honor God or the Bible.

TELL WHAT WILL HAPPEN AGAIN (Revelation 10:1–11)

God's end-time church was born in the United States, the New World. People who wanted religious freedom escaped to the United States during the 1600s and 1700s.

Read Revelation 10:1–11. These verses talk about how God's end-time church was born. Look for some of the word pictures we already studied. Do you see how the verses talk about the land and the sea? What do these verses teach us about what happened in the past and what will happen in the future?

The angel cries with a loud voice, much the same as the three angels of Revelation 14 and the angel of Revelation 18 do. The angel cries at an important time in history when God sets up His end-time church to do special work on the earth to save many people (Revelation 10:11).

The angel holds a little book. We believe this book is the book of Daniel (read Daniel 12:4). The book is open for the first time in thousands of years. The angel stands with one foot on the sea and the other foot on the earth. This word picture may mean that the message must go everywhere on earth. Also, this word picture may mean that the angel's message is for all countries or people groups: for the people who live on the land and for the people who live on the "non-Jewish" sea.

Before Jesus comes back, God's glory will fill the whole earth with the light of Bible truth. Everyone on earth will hear the messages in Revelation 14. God gave to us the same command He gave to Israel in Bible times. We must preach "the Good News about God's kingdom . . . in all the world, to every nation. Then the end will come" (Matthew 24:14, ICB).

God is in charge of human history. He controls what will happen in the future. In the end, human kingdoms will fail. Jesus will be King forever. Read Daniel 2:34, 35, 44, 45. The Bible says that all of these kingdoms will end. Nothing will be left of them. They all will be replaced with God's everlasting kingdom. Sin, suffering, sickness, evil, and death will not happen again.

Look at how Daniel 2 and 7 happened exactly as the Bible said. Why should this information help us trust God's promise about His kingdom, which is final and everlasting?

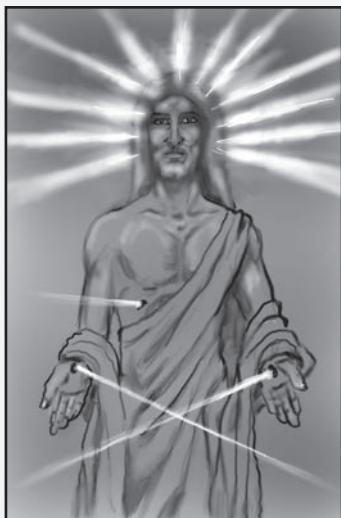


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ADDITIONAL THOUGHT: Read Ellen G. White, “The Tower of Babel,” pages 117–124, in *Patriarchs and Prophets*.

“ ‘Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth. The first heaven and the first earth had disappeared. Now there was no sea.’ Revelation 21:1 [ERV]. Fire destroys the people who rejected God. This same fire cleans the earth. Nothing is left of sin. There is no hell with everlasting fire to burn forever. The saved people always will remember that sin is very terrible.

“One thing will be left to help God’s people remember: our Savior’s body always will have the marks from His suffering for our sins. His head, His side, His hands, and His feet are the only things left that show that sin is very evil. God’s special messenger, Habakkuk, saw Jesus in His glory and said, ‘He is as bright as the sun. He has light shining from His hand, where His power is hidden.’ Habakkuk 3:4 [NLV]. The Savior’s side that was stabbed shows His glory. Blood came out of His side. This blood made sinners accepted with God. Jesus offered Himself to save us. He is mighty to save us. So, He also can judge the people who rejected God’s mercy. Jesus’ cuts caused Him shame in this life. Now these same scars give Him glory and honor. The cuts Jesus got on Calvary will cause everyone to praise Him. These same cuts will announce Jesus’ power.”—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, page 674, adapted.



“The Savior’s side that was stabbed shows His glory. Blood came out of His side. This blood made sinners accepted with God.”

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- ① Everything we do in this life, now or in the past, will be destroyed forever when Jesus comes. Why do we need to remember this idea? How can this thought help us remember the most important things in life?
- ② Look again at the sea beast or wild animal in Revelation 13:1–10. In what ways does this beast behave the same as all human nations or people groups from Babylon to the little horn power? How do the governments on the earth show the ideas and thoughts of Babylon or Rome?
- ③ How must we as Adventists follow the Lord and, at the same time, obey the laws of the land we live in? What happens when our obedience to God causes us not to follow the laws of the land?

A GIRL'S RELIGION: PART 1

When Diana was 12, she started to drink alcohol, smoke, and listen to hard rock music. Diana went to many parties. But she started to think about God.

As a child, Diana didn't learn much about God. Her father spent a lot of time overseas in the Navy. Diana's family moved every two or three years, as many military families did. A few times, Diana's mother took her and her sisters to church on Sundays when they were young and lived in Florida.

When Diana was 10, her family lived in Norfolk, Virginia. She went to Vacation Bible School. A bus came to her neighborhood from the Baptist church and picked her and her older sister up. Diana learned John 3:16 and the names of the books of the Bible. Diana learned about Bible workers and respecting the Bible because God's Word didn't change. Diana chose to be baptized. The church helped Diana to be a spiritual person. But outside of church, life was hard. Someone was hurting Diana in secret and using her for sex. This pain would cause Diana to suffer for years.

Then the family moved again when she was 12, this time to Albuquerque, New Mexico. Many of the neighborhood children drank alcohol and smoked. Diana joined them.

At 14, Diana moved with her family to Monte Vista, Colorado. When Diana was smoking with her new friends, she sometimes talked about God. When Diana was 16, many of her friends started to take religion classes. Diana joined them. During one class, the priest or spiritual leader announced that his church had more power and control over people's lives than the Bible did. In the past, the leaders of his church changed God's day of worship from the seventh-day, Saturday, to the first day, Sunday.

Diana was surprised and upset. She remembered learning in Vacation Bible School that the Bible couldn't be changed. Diana wondered, "Why do people worship on the first day when the Bible clearly says the seventh day is God's Sabbath?" Diana decided to finish the religion classes but not to go to the church. She kept on drinking, smoking, and listening to hard rock music. Over time, these things became her life and her religion.

This story offers us a look into how God worked a miracle in the life of Diana Fish. Diana is the growth manager for the Holbrook Seventh-day Adventist Indian School, in the United States, which got the 13th Sabbath Offering in 2021. This quarter's 13th Sabbath Offering, on June 28, will help us share the Good News about Jesus worldwide. Read more about Diana next week.

INSIDE
Story

by ANDREW MCCHESENEY



A bus came to her neighborhood from the Baptist Church and picked Diana and her older sister up.



Diana Fish