

Allusions, Images, and Symbols: How to Study Bible Prophecy Precursors

Lesson #12 for June 21, 2025

Scriptures: Daniel 2:31-45; 3:1-12,17-18; Revelation 13:11-17 Romans 1:18-25; Acts 12:1-17; Matthew 12:9-14; 2 Timothy 1:7.

1. What do *precursors* have to do with Bible prophecy? A precursor is a forerunner or a person or thing that goes before another of a similar type. Is that prophecy?
2. Does it scare you to think about the events coming as we approach the second coming of Jesus Christ? Or, does it make you want to rejoice? We know that just before Jesus comes again, Satan will do everything he can to destroy God's faithful people. However, God has promised to protect them. Yet, many of God's people have been killed in the past. Is it helpful to see that in the past, others who have been faithful have had their lives threatened? Think of the story of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Also think of the early church and what those people went through. Even Peter's life was threatened when he was imprisoned in preparation to be killed. Did those followers of Jesus want to give up in fear and trembling?
3. Jesus repeatedly said, "Do not fear," "Let not your hearts be troubled." Our trust must be in Him because He has promised that there will be a good result in the end.
4. We know that there will be difficult times coming. Satan will be determined to destroy every faithful Christian in this world so that he can have this world for his own kingdom. At the same time, God has promised that His faithful people will be preserved. The great controversy will be taking place with Satan doing his best in direct opposition to God.

[From the Bible study guide=BSG:] We must remember that the Bible is not just a book of beautiful stories written for our entertainment. Nor is the Bible simply a book of spiritual and moral edification. What makes the Bible unique is its message of hope: **God will save the world at the end of time.** [This is possible because only God can see the future.]

The message of hope, of course, is present in different forms throughout the Scriptures. But it is particularly the two apocalyptic books, **Daniel and Revelation**, that focus on the ultimate fate of the world. These two books are inter-related and therefore will be consulted in connection with each other. The lesson this week will first embrace the general line of the prophetic events, as revealed in Daniel's prophecy of the statue (*Dan. 2:31-45*). Then we will consider the last days of human history. We will see how Daniel's prophecy will disclose the power of evil and denounce its mentality, which was already displayed by the Babylonian kings (*Daniel 3*). The prophecy will then reach its fulfillment in the little horn of chapters 7 and 8, and in the beast of Revelation 13 and 14.—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 158.†§

5. Ellen White suggested that the books of Daniel and Revelation are key to our understanding.

[EGW:] **When the books of Daniel and Revelation are better understood, believers will have an entirely different religious experience. They will be given such glimpses of the open gates of heaven that heart and mind will be impressed with the character that all must develop in order to realize the blessedness which is to be the reward of the pure in heart....**

One thing will certainly be understood from the study of Revelation—that

the connection between God and His people is close and decided.—Ellen G. White, *Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers** 114.3-5.†‡

[\[https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p123.676&index=0\]](https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p123.676&index=0)‡

6. That “entirely different religious experience” is caused by an understanding of the great controversy which impacts virtually everything written in the Bible. It would be wonderful if each of us had the opportunity to carefully compare the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation with all the historical backgrounds documented outside of Scripture to see how the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation fit perfectly with the history of our world.

Daniel 2 & 3: Nebuchadnezzar’s Dream, the Statue, and the Consequences

[BSG:] One of the most powerful prophecies in all Scripture is Daniel 2. Writing more than five hundred years before Christ, the prophet set out world history, starting from his time in Babylon and then through Media-Persia, Greece, Rome, and the breakup of Rome into the nations of modern Europe as they exist today.

In fact, talking about these European nations, one text says that “ ‘they will mingle with the seed of men; but they will not adhere to one another, just as iron does not mix with clay’ ” (*Dan. 2:43, NKJV*). This prophecy has been amazingly fulfilled. That is, despite all sorts of intermarriage between the people (from princes to plebes) of these nations, they remain divided.—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Sunday, June 15.‡§

Daniel 2:43: “You also saw that the iron was mixed with the clay. This means that the rulers of that empire will try to unite their families by intermarriage, but they will not be able to, any more than iron can mix with clay.”—American Bible Society. (1992). *The Holy Bible: The Good News Translation** (2nd ed., Daniel 2:43). New York: American Bible Society [abbreviated as *Good News Bible*].‡

[Continuing from BSG:] For example, the British monarchy is called the House of Windsor, a nice English name. However, that name is a relatively recent development—1917, actually. Before then, the family was called Saxe-Coburg-Gotha, a distinctly German name, because many of the British royalty—through mingling “with the seed of men”—were blood relatives with the Germans. However, those blood ties were not enough to keep them from war, and so, during World War I, wanting to dissociate themselves from their hated enemies, they changed the name to the House of Windsor.—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Sunday, June 15.‡

7. While in Babylonian captivity, Daniel was called to recount and interpret the king’s dream.

[BSG:] In Daniel 2, ... **Nebuchadnezzar had indeed the same mentality as the builders of the tower of Babel. As Nebuchadnezzar brought the articles of the temple to his own temple, he in fact demonstrated the same intention to take God’s place. From the very beginning, Daniel discloses, then, the key to the dream. This dream concerns first the king’s “Babel” mentality.** Later on, in Daniel 3, Nebuchadnezzar’s behavior will confirm this judgment (see below). In fact, this denunciation constitutes the main thread that weaves throughout the whole prophecy of the kingdoms of the earth.

In his first line, Daniel points out Nebuchadnezzar’s pride and usurpation [taking power]: on one hand, Daniel calls the king by his regular title, “king of

kings,” as if he were the one who ruled over other kings. On the other hand, Daniel clearly identifies “ ‘the God of heaven’ ” as the only One to whom the king owes his power (*Dan. 2:37, NKJV*). **Daniel describes the king as if he were the Creator Himself (at least, along the lines of Nebuchadnezzar’s thinking); at the same time, Daniel reminds the king that it is the God of heaven who gave him all that he has (*Dan. 2:38*).**

Then, Daniel announces that the following world kingdoms will be inferior to Nebuchadnezzar’s kingdom, implying, again, that they were just as human and transitory as he and his kingdom are. Significantly, the end of the kingdoms is characteristic of the same mentality that defined Babel: the leaders of the kingdoms will attempt to unite their realms and consolidate their power, just as the builders of the tower of Babel did (*Gen. 11:4*).—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide 159.††§**

8. Review Daniel’s interpretation of the king’s dream as recorded in Daniel 2.

Daniel 2:31-45: ³¹ “Your Majesty, in your vision you saw standing before you a **giant statue, bright and shining, and terrifying to look at.** ³²Its head was made of the finest gold; its chest and arms were made of silver; its waist and hips of bronze; ³³its legs of iron, and its feet partly of iron and partly of clay. ³⁴While 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. ³⁵At 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.**

³⁶ “This was the dream. Now I will tell Your Majesty what it means. ³⁷**Your Majesty, you are the greatest of all kings. The God of heaven has made you emperor and given you power, might, and honour** [*sic-Br*]. ³⁸He has made you ruler of all the inhabited earth and ruler over all the animals and birds. **You are the head of gold.** ³⁹After you there will be another empire, not as great as yours, and after that a third, an empire of bronze, which will rule the whole earth. ⁴⁰And then there will be a fourth empire, as strong as iron, which shatters and breaks everything. And just as iron shatters everything, it will shatter and crush all the earlier empires. ⁴¹You also saw that the feet and the toes were partly clay and partly iron. This means that it will be a divided empire. It will have something of the strength of iron, because there was iron mixed with the clay. ⁴²The toes — partly iron and partly clay — mean that part of the empire will be strong and part of it weak. ⁴³You also saw that the iron was mixed with the clay. **This means that the rulers of that empire will try to unite their families by intermarriage, but they will not be able to, any more than iron can mix with clay.** ⁴⁴At 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*]. ⁴⁵You 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*.*††

9. It is important to recognize that:

[BSG:] **The apocalyptic prophecies in Daniel all follow the foundation set in Daniel 2.** That is, the rest of these prophecies, like Daniel 2, follow the sequence of one world empire after another until God establishes His eternal kingdom (see *Dan. 2:44; Dan. 7:13, 14*). **In other words, the prophecies go through history in an unbroken sequence of empires, starting in antiquity and ending in the future, even to our time. This is the historicist approach to interpreting prophecy and is what the texts demand. This use of the historicist approach is crucial for understanding last-day events, particularly as they are depicted in the book of Revelation.**—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Sunday, June 15.^{†‡§}

10. Many Christians reject the historicist interpretation because **they think it is impossible for even God to predict the future, especially without destroying our freedom of choice.**
11. There are important parallel pieces of additional information in Daniel 7 & 8 that help to fill in portions of the prophecy of Daniel 2.
12. As you consider the prophecy of Daniel 2, what does it say to you about God's ability to predict the future? Certainly, we would have to agree that when the great controversy is concluded, once again, God will rule every part of the universe forever.

Daniel 2:46-48: ⁴⁶ Then King Nebuchadnezzar bowed to the ground and gave orders for sacrifices and offerings to be made to Daniel. ⁴⁷The king said, "Your God is the greatest of all gods, the Lord over kings, and the one who reveals mysteries. I know this because you have been able to explain this mystery." ⁴⁸Then he gave Daniel a high position, presented him with many splendid gifts, put him in charge of the province of Babylon, and **made him the head of all the royal advisers.**—*Good News Bible.*^{*†}

13. Nebuchadnezzar's initial response to Daniel's revelations was remarkable. However, it was not long before Nebuchadnezzar tried to change the whole story. **Read Daniel 3:1-12.** The all-gold statue was made in defiance of God's message through the dream and Daniel.

[BSG:] The king underscored his defiance of God's message by constructing a statue made *entirely* of gold. The message? Babylon will never fall, and Nebuchadnezzar will always be king. And anybody who dared to challenge that idea would be put to death. It serves as a powerful reminder that our human desire for self-determination can quickly blind us to the truth about how the great controversy will most certainly play out.—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Monday, June 16.^{‡§}

[BSG:] **The Usurping [Taking by Force] Power.** In Daniel 3, Nebuchadnezzar immediately (ironically) discredits the judgment just learned from his dream. **He will indeed work hard to take the place of the God of heaven.** The dream clearly indicates that " **'the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed'** " (*Dan. 2:44, NKJV, emphasis supplied*); in contradistinction to God's will, Nebuchadnezzar endeavors to "set up" an image of gold that will represent himself, the " 'head of gold' " (*Dan. 2:38, NKJV*). **Except that Nebuchadnezzar is not just content to be the head of gold, as the dream indicated; he now styles himself as an eternal king,** whose empire will last forever, indicated by his erecting a statue of solid gold. In essence, Nebuchadnezzar "set up" his image to replace the everlasting

kingdom of God. Note the use of the same verb “set up.” The story does not stop there with Nebuchadnezzar’s usurpation.—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 159-160.†‡§

14. We know that when it was reported to the king that those three young men had not bowed down, he was furious.

[BSG:] According to the report of their resistance, these three Hebrews did not waver in their conviction to stand true to God. The two camps of worshipers, the camp of Babel and the camp of the three Hebrews, were thus clearly delineated and contrasted.... The camp of Babel is present-oriented: “When all the people heard . . . all the people . . . worshiped” (*Dan. 3:7, NKJV*). The camp of God is future-oriented: “ ‘God . . . is able to deliver us’ ” (*Dan. 3:17, NKJV*). **The people of the camp of Babel are legalistic and obey out of fear and self-interest. The people of the camp of God serve God by grace, even if He should choose not to deliver them (*Dan. 3:18*).**—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 160.†‡§

15. Does this information about Nebuchadnezzar remind you of Lucifer in heaven?

[BSG:] **The Mentality of Babel.... This specific reference [to *Shinar*] reveals, from the beginning of the book, the intention of the biblical author to associate Nebuchadnezzar’s move to bring the articles of the temple of Jerusalem to his place, Babylon (*Shinar*), with the builders of the tower of Babel.**—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 158.†‡§

16. So, what should we learn from the experience of those three young men when faced by the most powerful man on earth at that time?

Daniel 3:17-18: ¹⁷ “If the God whom we serve is able to save us from the blazing furnace and from your power, then he will. ¹⁸But even if he doesn’t, Your Majesty may be sure that we will not worship your god, and we will not bow down to the gold statue that you have set up.”—*Good News Bible.**

17. Do you think the three young men were tempted to think up some excuse why they should bow down even though they did not want to worship the image? Were they tempted to reach down to pick something up off the ground? Or, fix their shoes?

Revelation 13 and Daniel 3, 7, & 8: The Little Horn and the Beast

18. Careful Bible students will recognize almost immediately a parallel between the story of Daniel 3 and what we read in Revelation 13. Will we be brave enough to stand tall in favor of God’s commands and not bow to the evil Satan and his beasts?

[BSG:] **The Little Horn and the Beast.** The characters of usurpation and persecution are more vivid and explicit. The little horn claims to be divine, and its arrogance and usurpation are very pronounced (*Dan. 7:25, NKJV*). The same connection between usurpation and persecution is also present (*Dan. 8:24, 25*).

The book of Revelation repeats the same apocalyptic scenario, yet with different symbolism. Right after the same four animals that we first saw in Daniel 7, the apocalyptic revelation identifies a power of usurpation, which is identified as a beast. Like the little horn of Daniel 7 and 8, this beast claims to be divine (*Rev. 13:4*) and persecutes God’s people (*Rev. 13:5, 7*). This rapid

survey of the prophecy is necessary for us to understand the prophetic word of warning and to encourage God's people (2 Tim. 1:7).—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 160.†§

19. Compare the commands in Daniel 3:15 and Revelation 13:15.

Daniel 3:15: “Now then, as soon as you hear the sound of the trumpets, oboes, lyres, zithers, harps, and all the other instruments, **bow down and worship the statue**. If you do not, you will immediately be thrown into a blazing furnace. Do you think there is any god who can save you?”—*Good News Bible*.*†

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*.*†

20. Is it clear that this is a case of God's commands being directly contradicted by commands from humans?

Revelation 13:11-18: ¹¹ 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.... 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.** ¹⁶The beast forced all the people, small and great, rich and poor, slave and free, **to have a mark placed on their right hands or on their foreheads.** ¹⁷No one could buy or sell without having this mark, that is, the beast's name or the number that stands for the name.

¹⁸ This calls for wisdom. Whoever is intelligent can work out the meaning of the number of the beast, because the number stands for a human name. Its number is 666.—*Good News Bible*.*††

God's “Wrath” or “Anger”

21. We know that Revelation 14 is God's response to Satan's accusations and claims recorded in Revelation 13. So, **how does God respond to the mark of the beast?**

Revelation 14:9-12: 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-Br*] before the holy angels and the Lamb. ¹¹The smoke of the fire that torments them goes up for ever [*sic-Br*] 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.”

¹² This calls for endurance on the part of God's people, those who obey God's commandments and are faithful to Jesus.—*Good News Bible*.*††

22. What else do we know about those who receive the mark of the beast? See Revelation 16:2; Revelation 19:20; and Revelation 20:4.

23. So, what is this *lake of fire*? Could it be God's glory? It is very clear in these several chapters in Revelation that there is a direct contradiction between God's command for us to worship Him as the Creator and the Devil's command to worship the beast.

24. In Revelation 14:9-12 we read about the *wrath* or *anger of God*. Compare Romans 1?

Romans 1:18-32: ¹⁸ **God's anger is revealed from heaven against all the sin and evil of the people whose evil ways prevent the truth from being known.**

¹⁹God punishes them, because what can be known about God is plain to them, for God himself made it plain. ²⁰Ever since God created the world, his invisible qualities, both his eternal power and his divine nature, have been clearly seen; they are perceived in the things that God has made. So those people have no excuse at all! ²¹They know God, but they do not give him the honour [*sic-Br*] that belongs to him, nor do they thank him. Instead, their thoughts have become complete nonsense, and their empty minds are filled with darkness. ²²They say they are wise, but they are fools; ²³instead of worshipping [*sic-Br*] the immortal God, they worship images made to look like mortal human beings or birds or animals or reptiles.

²⁴ And **so God has given those people over** to do the filthy things their hearts desire, and they do shameful things with each other. ²⁵They exchange the truth about God for a lie; they worship and serve what God has created instead of the Creator himself, who is to be praised for ever [*sic-Br*]! Amen.

²⁶ Because they do this, **God has given them over** to shameful passions. Even the women pervert the natural use of their sex by unnatural acts. ²⁷In the same way the men give up natural sexual relations with women and burn with passion for each other. Men do shameful things with each other, and as a result they bring upon themselves the punishment they deserve for their wrongdoing.

²⁸ Because those people refuse to keep in mind the true **knowledge about God, he has given them over** to corrupted minds, so that they do the things that they should not do. ²⁹They are filled with all kinds of wickedness, evil, greed, and vice; they are full of jealousy, murder, fighting, deceit, and malice. They gossip ³⁰and speak evil of one another; they are hateful to God, insolent, proud, and boastful; they think of more ways to do evil; they disobey their parents; ³¹they have no conscience; they do not keep their promises, and they show no kindness or pity for others. ³²They know that God's law says that people who live in this way deserve death. Yet, not only do they continue to do these very things, but they even approve of others who do them.—*Good News Bible*.*††

25. **What is God's wrath? God's wrath is simply His turning away in loving disappointment from those who do not want Him anyway, thus leaving them to the inevitable and awful consequences of their own destructive choices. For more information see:**

https://www.theox.org/images/uploads/bbk/KHart_BTGG_PDF_Gnrl_Gods_Wrath_or_Anger_16.pdf

26. Why does "the entire world" worship the Devil? What does *worship* mean in that setting?

[BSG:] Worship doesn't necessarily mean bowing and offering incense, though it can. **We worship whatever holds our ultimate allegiance.** When you consider who God is, our Creator and—after what He has done for us in Jesus—our Redeemer as well, then of course He alone should be worshiped. Anything else is idolatry. Perhaps this helps explain Jesus' hard words here: " 'He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters abroad' " (*Matt. 12:30, NKJV*). **Final events are simply going to be a dramatic manifestation of this truth.**—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Tuesday, June 17.††§

Persecution in New Testament Times and Beyond

27. It was not just in the Old Testament where people's lives were threatened and taken because they refused to bow down to anything except God.

[EGW:] The history of the early church testified to the fulfillment of the Saviour's [sic-Br] words. **The powers of earth and hell arrayed themselves against Christ in the person of His followers. Paganism foresaw that should the gospel triumph, her temples and altars would be swept away; therefore she summoned her forces to destroy Christianity. The fires of persecution were kindled.** Christians were stripped of their possessions and driven from their homes. They "endured a great fight of afflictions." Hebrews 10:32. They "had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment." Hebrews 11:36. **Great numbers sealed their testimony with their blood.** Noble and slave, rich and poor, learned and ignorant, were alike slain without mercy.—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy** 39.2.††

[\[https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p132.162&index=0\]](https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p132.162&index=0)†

28. Think of the story of Peter when he was arrested in Jerusalem and about to be killed.

Acts 12:1-17: ¹ About this time **King Herod began to persecute some members of the church.** ²**He had James, the brother of John, put to death by the sword.** ³When he saw that this pleased the Jews, he went on to arrest Peter. (This happened during the time of the Festival of Unleavened Bread.) ⁴**After his arrest Peter was put in jail, where he was handed over to be guarded by four groups of four soldiers each.** Herod planned to put him on trial in public after Passover. ⁵So Peter was kept in jail, but the people of the church were praying earnestly to God for him.

⁶ The night before Herod was going to bring him out to the people, Peter was sleeping between two guards. He was tied with two chains, and there were guards on duty at the prison gate. ⁷Suddenly an angel of the Lord stood there, and a light shone in the cell. **The angel shook Peter by the shoulder, woke him up, and said, "Hurry! Get up!"** At once the chains fell off Peter's hands. ⁸Then the angel said, "Fasten your belt and put on your sandals." Peter did so, and the angel said, "Put your cloak round you and come with me." ⁹Peter followed him out of the prison, not knowing, however, if what the angel was doing was real; **he thought he was seeing a vision.** ¹⁰They passed by the first guard post and then the second, and came at last to the iron gate leading into the city. The gate opened for them by itself, and they went out. They walked down a street, and **suddenly the angel left Peter.**

¹¹ Then Peter realized what had happened to him, and said, "Now I know that it is really true! The Lord sent his angel to rescue me from Herod's power and from everything the Jewish people expected to happen."

¹²Aware of his situation, he went to the home of Mary, the mother of John Mark, where many people had gathered and were praying. ¹³Peter knocked at the outside door, and a servant named Rhoda came to answer it. ¹⁴She recognized Peter's voice and was **so happy that she ran back in without opening the door,** and announced that Peter was standing outside. ¹⁵ "You are mad!" they told her. But she insisted that it was true. So they answered, "It is his angel."

¹⁶ Meanwhile Peter kept on knocking. At last they opened the door, and when they saw him, they were amazed. ¹⁷He motioned with his hand for them to be quiet, and he explained to them how the Lord had brought him out of prison. “Tell this to James and the rest of the believers,” he said; then he left and went somewhere else.—*Good News Bible*.*†‡

29. Peter knew Jesus, and he knew what Jesus had said to him about his future. Despite all that, he managed to be sleeping when the angel came and tapped him on the shoulder and essentially said: “Wake up; we are getting out of here!”
30. It seems that every one of the disciples except John died the death of a martyr. Some other Christians were spared for reasons we do not fully understand.

The “Mark of the Beast”

31. Could events result in death and threats of death to God’s people in our day?

[BSG:] As the years have passed and final events—such as the death decree and the enforcement of the mark of the beast—have not yet happened, some have expressed doubt, even skepticism, about our interpretation of final events, including how Sabbath and Sunday could be central to the final conflict.

The book of Revelation is clear: we either worship the Creator or the beast and its image. And because the seventh-day Sabbath is the foundational sign—going back to Eden itself (see *Gen. 2:1–3*)—of God as Creator, it should not be surprising that, in an issue about worshiping the Creator, the Sabbath would be central. Also, **it is no coincidence that the beast power is the same power that claims to have changed the Sabbath commandment from the biblical day to Sunday, which has no sanction in the Bible.** With this background in mind, **the idea of Sabbath and Sunday being involved in the issue of worship—again, either the Creator (see *Rev. 14:6, 7*) or the beast—makes good sense.** And we have in the New Testament a precursor to the issue of the seventh-day Sabbath versus human law.—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Thursday, June 19.†‡§

32. We know that Jesus died of separation from His Father while He was nailed to the cross. But, His life had been threatened several times earlier.
33. Read **Matthew 12:9-14** and **John 5:1-16**. Why do you think the healing of ill or disabled people on the Sabbath was so threatening to the scribes and Pharisees?

[BSG:] In Matthew 12, **after Jesus healed on the Sabbath the man with a withered hand** (*Matt. 12:9–13*), how did the religious leaders respond? “But the Pharisees went out and **plotted how they might kill Jesus**” (*Matt. 12:14, NIV*). **Death because of the seventh-day Sabbath?** In John 5:1–16, after another miraculous healing on the seventh day, the leaders “persecuted Jesus, and sought to kill Him, because He had done these things on the Sabbath” (*John 5:16, NKJV*).

Death because of human tradition (nothing in the Bible forbade healing on Sabbath, just as nothing in the Bible has put Sunday in place of Sabbath) versus the seventh-day Sabbath? Though the specific issue here with Jesus isn’t the same as in final events, it’s close enough: **human law versus God’s, and, in both, the contested law centers on the biblical Sabbath.**

Dying over one of the commandments of God? How could one easily seek to rationalize one's way out of that?—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Thursday, June 19.†‡§

34. Have angels really appeared on this earth as humans? When? How?

[EGW:] In all ages, God has wrought through holy angels for the succor [assistance or support in times of hardship] and deliverance of His people. **Celestial beings have taken an active part in the affairs of men.** They have appeared clothed in garments that shone as the lightning; they have come as men in the garb of wayfarers. **Angels have appeared in human form to men of God.** They have rested, as if weary, under the oaks at noon. They have accepted the hospitalities of human homes. They have acted as guides to benighted travelers. They have, with their own hands, kindled the fires at the altar. They have opened prison doors and set free the servants of the Lord. Clothed with the panoply of heaven, they came to roll away the stone from the Saviour's [*sic-Br*] tomb.

In the form of men, angels are often in the assemblies of the righteous; and they visit the assemblies of the wicked, as they went to Sodom, to make a record of their deeds, to determine whether they have passed the boundary of God's forbearance. **The Lord delights in mercy; and for the sake of a few who really serve Him, He restrains calamities and prolongs the tranquillity** [*sic-Br*] **of multitudes. Little do sinners against God realize that they are indebted for their own lives to the faithful few whom they delight to ridicule and oppress.**—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy** 631.2-632.0.†‡ [<https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p132.2852&index=0>]‡

35. Will Saturday versus Sunday worship really be the issue at the end of the great controversy?

[BSG:] **Though right now it might be hard to see how Sabbath and Sunday could become front and center in final events, look at how quickly the world can change.**

Think about Daniel 2 (and even 7). All the empires came and went exactly as predicted. Today, looking back over history, we can see that they did, as predicted. From our perspective today, only one more kingdom is to come. Which one is that, and why can we be assured that it will, indeed, come as predicted?—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Friday.‡

36. ***Are we preparing to be a part of God's permanent kingdom?***

[BSG:] While the little horn and the beast represent a clear historical entity, the Catholic Church, how should we respond to this identification? How should we relate to Catholic people? Identify the mentality of Babel in history (in the Catholic Church, but also in totalitarian regimes). Analyze the potential mechanism of Babel in your church and in your personal character; in your relationship with other people; in the context of your family or in the context of your work; and in the way you treat your employees, your spouse, and your children. How do we shift from a Babel mentality to a biblical mindset?—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 161.‡

©2025, Kenneth Hart, MD, MA, MPH. Permission is hereby granted for any noncommercial use of these materials. *Electronic version. †Bold type is added. ‡Brackets and content in brackets are added. §Italic type is in the source. [*sic-Br*]=This is correct as quoted; it is the British spelling. Last Modified: April 7, 2025 Email: Info@theox.org