

Second Quarter 2023

EGW Notes - Lesson 9, 20 – 26 May

A City Called Confusion



Sabbath Afternoon, May 20

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.

—*The Great Controversy, p. 381.*

The solemn messages that have been given in their order in the Revelation are to occupy the first place in the minds of God’s people. Nothing else is to be allowed to engross our attention.

Precious time is rapidly passing, and there is danger that many will be robbed of the time which should be given to the proclamation of the messages that God has sent to a fallen world. Satan is pleased to see the diversion of minds that should be engaged in a study of the truths which have to do with eternal realities.

The testimony of Christ, a testimony of the most solemn character, is to be borne to the world. All through the book of Revelation there are the most precious, elevating promises, and there are also warnings of the most fearfully

solemn import. Will not those who profess to have a knowledge of the truth read the testimony given to John by Christ? Here is no guesswork, no scientific deception. Here are the truths that concern our present and future welfare. What is the chaff to the wheat?

—*Testimonies for the Church, vol. 8, pp. 301, 302.*

As we near the close of this world's history, the prophecies relating to the last days especially demand our study. The last book of the New Testament scriptures is full of truth that we need to understand. Satan has blinded the minds of many, so that they have been glad of any excuse for not making the Revelation their study. But Christ through His servant John has here declared what shall be in the last days, and He says, "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein." Revelation 1:3.

"This is life eternal," Christ said, "that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent." John 17:3. Why is it that we do not realize the value of this knowledge? Why are not these glorious truths glowing in our hearts, trembling upon our lips, and pervading our whole being?

—*Christ's Object Lessons, p. 133.*

We should keep ever before us the fact that time is short. Iniquity is increasing on every hand. The righteous are set as lights in the world. Through them the glory of God is to be revealed to the world. Keep ever before you the solemn events of the future—the great review of the judgment and the coming of Christ. You with your family are to prepare for that day.

—*This Day With God, p. 322.*

Sunday, May 21 Two Contrasting Systems

The Lord is about to punish the world for its iniquity. He is about to punish religious bodies for their rejection of the light and truth which has been given them. The great message, combining the first, second, and third angels' messages, is to be given to the world. This is to be the burden of our work. Those who truly believe in Christ will openly conform to the law of Jehovah. The Sabbath is the sign between God and His people; and we are to make visible our conformity to the law of God by observing the Sabbath. It is to be the mark of distinction between God's chosen people and the world.

—E. G. White Comments, in *The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 949.

The woman (Babylon) of Revelation 17 is described as “arrayed in purple and scarlet color, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness: . . . and upon her forehead was a name written, Mystery, Babylon the Great, the mother of harlots.” Revelation 17:4-6.

The power that for so many centuries maintained despotic sway over the monarchs of Christendom is Rome. The purple and scarlet color, the gold and precious stones and pearls, vividly picture the magnificence and more than kingly pomp affected by the haughty see of Rome. And no other power could be so truly declared “drunken with the blood of the saints” as that church which has so cruelly persecuted the followers of Christ. Babylon is also charged with the sin of unlawful connection with “the kings of the earth.” It was by departure from the Lord, and alliance with the heathen, that the Jewish church became a harlot; and Rome, corrupting herself in like manner by seeking the support of worldly powers, receives a like condemnation.

—*The Great Controversy*, p. 382.

Two great opposing powers are revealed in the last great battle. On one side stands the Creator of heaven and earth. All on His side bear His signet. They are obedient to His commands. On the other side stands the prince of darkness, with those who have chosen apostasy and rebellion.

The present is a solemn, fearful time for the church. The angels are already girded, awaiting the mandate of God to pour their vials of wrath upon the world. Destroying angels are taking up the work of vengeance; for the Spirit of God is gradually withdrawing from the world. Satan is also mustering his forces of evil, going forth “unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world,” to gather them under his banner, to be trained for “the battle of that great day of God Almighty.” Satan is to make most powerful efforts for the mastery in the last great conflict. Fundamental principles will be brought out, and decisions made in regard to them. Skepticism is prevailing everywhere. Ungodliness abounds. The faith of individual members of the church will be tested as though there were not another person in the world.

—E. G. White, in *The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, pp. 982, 983.

Monday, May 22 The Wine of the Wrath

Our warfare is aggressive. Tremendous issues are before us, yea, and right upon us. Let our prayers ascend to God that the four angels may still hold the four winds, that they may not blow to injure or destroy until the last warning has been given to the world. Then let us work in harmony with our prayers. Let nothing lessen the force of the truth for this time. The present truth is to be our burden. The third angel’s message must do its work of separating from the churches a people who will take their stand on the platform of eternal truth.

Our message is a life-and-death message, and we must let it appear as it is, the great power of God. We are to present it in all its telling force. Then the Lord will make it effectual. It is our privilege to expect large things, even the

demonstration of the Spirit of God. This is the power that will convict and convert the soul.

— *Testimonies for the Church, vol. 6, p. 61.*

[Satan] is setting his trained agents at work, and moving them to intense activity. He is securing his army of human agents to engage in the last conflict against the Prince of life, to overthrow the law of God, which is the foundation of His throne. Satan will work with miraculous presentations to confirm men in the belief that he is what he claims to be,—the prince of this world, and that victory is his. He will turn his forces against those who are loyal to God, but though he may cause pain, distress, and human agony, he cannot defile the soul. He may cause affliction to the people of God as he did to Christ, but he cannot cause one of Christ's little ones to perish. The people of God in these last days must expect to enter into the thick of the conflict; for the prophetic Word says, "The dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ."

— *E. G. White Comments, in The SDA Bible Commentary, vol. 4, p. 1153.*

The season of distress before God's people will call for a faith that will not falter. His children must make it manifest that He is the only object of their worship, and that no consideration, not even that of life itself, can induce them to make the least concession to false worship. To the loyal heart the commands of sinful, finite men will sink into insignificance beside the word of the eternal God. Truth will be obeyed though the result be imprisonment or exile or death. . . .

Satan with all the hosts of evil cannot destroy the weakest of God's saints. Angels that excel in strength will protect them, and in their behalf Jehovah will

reveal Himself as a “God of gods,” able to save to the uttermost those who have put their trust in Him.

—*Prophets and Kings, pp. 512, 513.*

Tuesday, May 23 Mystery, Babylon the Great

No sooner was the earth repeopled than men resumed their hostility to God and heaven. They transmitted their enmity to their posterity, as though the art and device of misleading men, and causing them to continue the unnatural warfare, was a sacred legacy.

This confederacy was born of rebellion against God. The dwellers on the plain of Shinar established their kingdom for self-exaltation, not for the glory of God. Had they succeeded, a mighty power would have borne sway, banishing righteousness, and inaugurating a new religion. The world would have been demoralized. The mixture of religious ideas with erroneous theories would have resulted in closing the door to peace, happiness, and security. These suppositions, erroneous theories, carried out and perfected, would have directed minds from allegiance to the divine statutes, and the law of Jehovah would have been ignored and forgotten. Determined men, inspired and urged on by the first great rebel, would have resisted any interference with their plans or their evil course. In the place of the divine precepts they would have substituted laws framed in accordance with the desires of their selfish hearts, in order that they might carry out their purposes.

—*E. G. White, in The SDA Bible Commentary, vol. 1, pp. 1091, 1092.*

Those who are striving to be overcomers will be pursued by the temptations of the enemy. Satan will tempt them to corrupt the principles which all must maintain who would reach the high standard that God has set before them. Satan rejoices when he can lead souls to follow mistaken ideas, until their names are blotted out of the book of life and recorded among the names of the

unjust. We can overcome only in the way that Christ overcame—by wholehearted obedience to every commandment of God. True religion is obedience to all the commandments of God.

Every soul who is saved must surrender his own plans, and follow where Christ leads the way. The understanding must be yielded up to Christ for Him to cleanse and refine and purify. This will always be done when we receive aright the teachings of Christ. O, how much we need a more intimate acquaintance with Him! We need to enter into His purpose, and to carry out His will, saying with the whole heart, “Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?”

—*This Day With God, p. 322.*

We must put on every piece of the [heavenly] armor, and then stand firm. The Lord has honored us by choosing us as His soldiers. Let us fight bravely for Him, maintaining the right in every transaction. Rectitude in all things is essential to the welfare of the soul. . . . Put on as your breastplate that divinely protected righteousness which it is the privilege of all to wear. This will protect your spiritual life.

If we have on the heavenly armor, we shall find that the assaults of the enemy will not have power over us. Angels of God will be round about us to protect us.

—*E. G. White Comments, in The SDA Bible Commentary, vol. 6, p. 1119.*

Wednesday, May 24 A Call to Commitment

Human power and human might did not establish the church of God, and neither can they destroy it. Not on the rock of human strength, but on Christ Jesus, the Rock of Ages, was the church founded, “and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” Matthew 16:18. The presence of God gives stability to His cause. “Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man,” is the word

that comes to us. Psalm 146:3. “In quietness and in confidence shall be your strength.” Isaiah 30:15. God’s glorious work, founded on the eternal principles of right, will never come to nought. It will go on from strength to strength, “not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.” Zechariah 4:6.

—*Prophets and Kings, p. 595.*

In the darkest days of her long conflict with evil, the church of God has been given revelations of the eternal purpose of Jehovah. His people have been permitted to look beyond the trials of the present to the triumphs of the future, when, the warfare having been accomplished, the redeemed will enter into possession of the promised land. These visions of future glory, scenes pictured by the hand of God, should be dear to His church today, when the controversy of the ages is rapidly closing and the promised blessings are soon to be realized in all their fullness.

Many were the messages of comfort given the church by the prophets of old. “Comfort ye, comfort ye My people” (Isaiah 40:1), was Isaiah’s commission from God; and with the commission were given wonderful visions that have been the believers’ hope and joy through all the centuries that have followed. Despised of men, persecuted, forsaken, God’s children in every age have nevertheless been sustained by His sure promises. By faith they have looked forward to the time when He will fulfill to His church the assurance, “I will make thee an eternal excellency, a joy of many generations.” Isaiah 60:15.

—*Prophets and Kings, p. 722.*

Every soul must have a realization that Christ is his personal Saviour; then love and zeal and steadfastness will be manifest in the Christian life. . . .

Christ should never be out of the mind. The angels said concerning Him, “Thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins.”

Jesus, precious Saviour! Assurance, helpfulness, security, and peace are all in Him. He is the dispeller of all our doubts, the earnest of all our hopes. How precious is the thought that we may indeed become partakers of the divine nature, whereby we may overcome as Christ overcame! Jesus is the fullness of our expectation. He is the melody of our songs, the shadow of a great rock in a weary land. He is living water to the thirsty soul. He is our refuge in the storm. He is our righteousness, our sanctification, our redemption. When Christ is our personal Saviour, we shall show forth the praises of Him who hath called us out of darkness into His marvelous light.

—*Reflecting Christ, p. 21.*

Thursday, May 25 Babylon: The Center of Idolatry

Idolatry and all the sins that followed in its train were abhorrent to God, and He commanded His people not to mingle with other nations, to “do after their works“, and forget God. He forbade their marriage with idolaters, lest their hearts should be led away from Him. It was just as necessary then as it is now that God’s people should be pure, “unspotted from the world.” They must keep themselves free from its spirit, because it is opposed to truth and righteousness. But God did not intend that His people, in self-righteous exclusiveness, should shut themselves away from the world, so that they could have no influence upon it.

Like their Master, the followers of Christ in every age were to be the light of the world. The Saviour said, “A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house”—that is, in the world. And He adds, “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.” Matthew 5:14-16. This is just what Enoch, and Noah, Abraham, Joseph, and Moses did.

—*Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 369.*

He who searches the heart, desires to win His people from every species of idolatry. Let the Word of God, the blessed book of life, occupy the tables now filled with useless ornaments. Spend your money in buying books that will be the means of enlightening the mind in regard to present truth. . . . Grasp the Word of the Lord as the treasure of infinite wisdom and love; this is the Guidebook that points out the path to heaven. It points us to the sin-pardoning Saviour, saying, “Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world” (John 1:29).

O that you would search the Scriptures with prayerful hearts, and a spirit of surrender to God! O that you would search your hearts as with a lighted candle, and discover and break the finest thread that binds you to worldly habits, which divert the mind from God! Plead with God to show you every practice that draws your thoughts and affections from Him. God has given His holy law to man as His measure of character. By this law you may see and overcome every defect in your character. You may sever yourself from every idol, and link yourself to the throne of God by the golden chain of grace and truth.

—***Selected Messages, book 2, p. 318.***

The men of [Noah’s] generation were not all, in the fullest acceptance of the term, idolaters. Many professed to be worshipers of God. They claimed that their idols were representations of the Deity and that through them the people could obtain a clearer conception of the divine Being. This class were foremost in rejecting the preaching of Noah. As they endeavored to represent God by material objects, their minds were blinded to His majesty and power; they ceased to realize the holiness of His character, or the sacred, unchanging nature of His requirements.

Man will rise no higher than his conceptions of truth, purity, and holiness. If the mind is never exalted above the level of humanity, if it is not uplifted by

faith to contemplate infinite wisdom and love, the man will be constantly sinking lower and lower. The worshipers of false gods clothed their deities with human attributes and passions, and thus their standard of character was degraded to the likeness of sinful humanity.

—***Conflict and Courage, p. 50.***

Friday, May 26 For Further Reading

The Upward Look, “Laborers Needed for the Harvest,” p. 58;

Selected Messages, “Every Human Being Will Be Either in Christ’s Army or Satan’s Army,” book 3, p. 423.

Laborers Needed for the Harvest, February 13

The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise.
Proverbs 11:30. {UL 58.1}

Let those who have been trained for service now take their places quickly in the Lord’s work. House-to-house laborers are needed. The Lord calls for decided efforts to be put forth in places where the people know nothing of the truth. Singing and prayer and Bible readings are needed in the homes of the people. Now, just now, is the time to obey the commission, “Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you” (Matthew 28:20). Those who do this work must have a ready knowledge of the Scriptures. “It is written” is to be their weapon of defense/ {UL 58.2}

God has given us light on His Word that we may give it to our fellow men. The truth spoken by Christ will reach hearts. A “Thus saith the Lord” will fall upon the ear with power, and fruit will appear wherever honest service is done.
{UL 58.3}

The Lord calls for action.... Should we neglect to take advantage of this time, we should miss a great opportunity for letting light from God's Word shine forth. The trumpet is to give a certain sound. {UL 58.4}

Say to the people: "Know for yourselves of the doctrine." Let not your lips utter a sentence of doubt. Do not come before the people with an uncertain sound. Know what is truth and proclaim truth. Christ's teaching was always positive in its nature. Never, never utter sentiments of doubt. Bear with a certain voice an affirmative message. Lift Him up, the Man of Calvary, higher and still higher. There is power in the exaltation of the cross of Christ. {UL 58.5}

Christ's divinity is to be steadfastly maintained. When the Saviour asked His disciples the question, "Whom say ye that I am?" Peter answered, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matthew 16:15, 16). Said Christ, "Upon this rock," not on Peter, but on the Son of God, "I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Verse 18). {UL 58.6}

Great is the mystery of godliness. There are mysteries in the life of Christ that are to be believed, even though they cannot be explained.—Letter 65, February 13, 1905, to A. T. Jones, a prominent minister. {UL 58.7}

Every Human Being Will Be Either in Christ's Army or Satan's Army

We are nearing the close of this earth's history, when two parties alone can exist, and every man, woman, and child will be in one of these armies. Jesus will be the General of one army; of the opposing army, Satan will be the leader. All who are breaking, and teaching others to break, the law of God, the foundation of His government in heaven and in earth, are marshaled under one superior chief, who directs them in opposition to the government of God. And "the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation" (Jude 6) are rebels against the law of God, and enemies to all who love and

obey His commandments. These subjects, with Satan their leader, will gather others into their ranks through every possible means, to strengthen his forces and urge his claims. {3SM 422.5}

Through his deception and delusion, Satan would, if possible, deceive the very elect. His is no minor deception. He will seek to annoy, to harass, to falsify, to accuse, and misrepresent all whom he cannot compel to give him honor and help him in his work. His great success lies in keeping men's minds confused, and ignorant of his devices, for then he can lead the unwary as it were, blindfolded.... {3SM 423.1}

The Sabbath Is the Issue in the Final Conflict—The Sabbath is the great test question. It is the line of demarkation between the loyal and true and the disloyal and transgressor. This Sabbath God has enjoined, and those who claim to be commandment keepers, who believe that they are now under the proclamation of the third angel's message, will see the important part the Sabbath of the fourth commandment holds in that message. It is the seal of the living God. They will not lessen the claims of the Sabbath to suit their business of convenience.—Manuscript 34, 1897. {3SM 423.2}

John in the Revelation writes of the unity of those living on the earth to make void the law of God. “These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast. These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful” ([Revelation 17:13, 14](#)). “And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet” (chap. 16:13). {3SM 423.3}

All who will exalt and worship the idol Sabbath, a day that God has not blessed, help the devil and his angels with all the power of their God-given ability, which they have perverted to a wrong use. Inspired by another spirit,

which blinds their discernment, they cannot see that the exaltation of Sunday is entirely the institution of the Catholic Church.... {3SM 423.4}

Sabbath Is the Issue That Divides the World—The Lord of heaven permits the world to choose whom they will have as ruler. Let all read carefully the thirteenth chapter of Revelation, for it concerns every human agent, great and small. Every human being must take sides, either for the true and living God, who has given to the world the memorial of Creation in the seventh-day Sabbath, or for a false sabbath, instituted by men who have exalted themselves above all that is called God or that is worshiped, who have taken upon themselves the attributes of Satan, in oppressing the loyal and true who keep the commandments of God. This persecuting power will compel the worship of the beast by insisting on the observance of the sabbath he has instituted. Thus he blasphemes God, sitting “in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God” (2 Thessalonians 2:4). {3SM 424.1}

The 144,000 Without Guile—One of the marked features in the representation of the 144,000 is that in their mouth there was found no guile. The Lord has said, “Blessed is the man ... in whose spirit there is no guile.” They profess to be children of God, and are represented as following the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. They are prefigured before us as standing on Mount Zion, girt for holy service, clothed in white linen, which is the righteousness of the saints. But all who follow the Lamb in heaven will first have followed Him on earth, in trustful, loving, willing obedience, followed Him not fretfully and capriciously, but confidently, truthfully, as the flock follows the shepherd.... {3SM 424.2}

Satan Making his Last Effort for the Mastery—The world is in copartnership with the professed Christian churches in making void the law of Jehovah. God’s law is set aside, it is trampled underfoot; and from all the loyal people of God, the prayer will ascend to heaven, “It is time, for thee, Lord, to work: for they have made void thy law” (Psalm 119:126). Satan is making his

last and most powerful effort for the mastery, his last conflict against the principles of God's law. A defiant infidelity abounds. {3SM 424.3}

After John's description in Revelation 16 of that miracle-working power which was to gather the world to the last great conflict, the symbols are dropped, and the trumpet voice once more gives a certain sound. "Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame" (Revelation 16:15).—Manuscript 7a, 1896. {3SM 425.1}