

Satan's End-time Tricks and Lies



SABBATH—MAY 27

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON: Revelation 12:9; Revelation 16:13, 14; Ezekiel 8:16; Ezekiel 20:1–20; Romans 1:5.

MEMORY VERSE: “ ‘Use the truth to make them holy. Your word [the Bible] is truth’ ” (John 17:17, NIV).



The book of Revelation warns us that the people on this earth will drink a special drink named the wine of Babylon.

IT WAS A BEAUTIFUL SEPTEMBER MORNING in the city of Chicago in the United States of America. The sun's rays touched Lake Michigan while people drove to work and children went to school. That morning, a frightening story was reported on the news. The story made the people of Chicago feel afraid. The news report said that people were getting sick. Some of the sick people died a few hours later, after swallowing some Tylenol pills. Tylenol is a powerful pill for aches and pains, and you can buy this pill at drugstores. Scientists decided to do a test on the Tylenol to see what was wrong with it. When the tests were done, the scientists discovered what was causing everyone to get sick. The Tylenol pills had poison in them. Someone put poison in the pills. To this day, no one knows who did this crime.

As we've seen, the book of Revelation warns us that the people on this earth will drink a special drink named the wine of Babylon. This “wine” is false teachings that will lead to everlasting death. But God gives us “medicine” to cure us if we get sick from drinking Babylon's wine. The “cure” is the Three Angels' Messages of Revelation 14. This week, we will continue to look at Babylon's lies and false teachings. We also will look at Jesus' plans to save us from them.

GOING THE WRONG WAY (Revelation 12:9)

Jesus gave us this powerful warning about the end times: “ ‘Some will come who will say they are Christ [Jesus]. False preachers will come. These people will do special things for people to see. They will do surprising things, so that if it can be [possible], God’s people will be led to believe something wrong’ ” (Mark 13:22, NLV). Do you see what Jesus is saying? Satan’s tricks and lies will be so powerful in the end times that God’s own people will be in danger of believing these lies. That is a scary thought, right?

Who does Satan trick? Read Revelation 12:9 for the answer. What else does this verse mean?

For sure, God will have people who are obedient to Him in the end times. But even so, we see that Satan’s lies will trick many people.

Read Revelation 14:12. What powerful warning do we read in this verse?

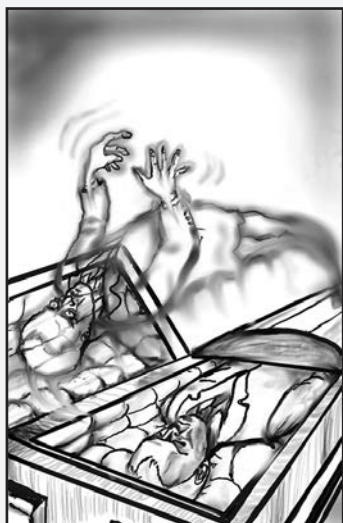
People often say that we should follow our own ideas about what we think is right or wrong and what we think is good or evil. Then we should try to live our lives by these rules. But there’s a big problem with this thinking. The Bible says that we are all sinners (Jeremiah 17:9; Romans 3:9–18). So, we can’t trust our own feelings. Sooner or later, our feelings will lead us in the wrong way. A lot of evil has been done by people who thought they were doing good. They did what they thought was best.

So, what is the answer to this problem? We must study God’s Word, the Bible. We must fill our hearts and minds with Bible truth. We must give our lives to the Holy Spirit. The Spirit will help us learn Bible truth. He will help us to see lies and evil for what they really are. Without the Holy Spirit’s help, we can believe Satan’s lies too easily.

Think about examples of people who did what they thought was good or right. They may have thought that they followed God’s plan. But they didn’t. They did evil. What can we learn from their terrible mistakes?



We must fill our hearts and minds with Bible truth. We must give our lives to the Holy Spirit.

THE OLD LIE THAT WE NEVER DIE (Revelation 16:13, 14)

Babylon teaches that the spirit lives forever and never dies.

Read Revelation 16:13, 14 and Revelation 18:2, 23. What hints do you find in these verses about Satan’s lies? What do these verses show us about the false teaching that our spirits keep living after our bodies die?

Revelation 16:13, 14 and Revelation 18:2, 23 use special words to show us the work Satan will do: “spirits of demons” (Revelation 16:14, ICB); “home for demons” (Revelation 18:2, ERV); “city for every evil spirit” (Revelation 18:2, ICB); “magic” (Revelation 18:23, ERV); and “witchcraft” (Revelation 18:23, NLV). No wonder God warns us that one of Satan’s two big lies in the end times will be the false teaching that “the spirit continues to live after the body dies.”—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, page 588, adapted.

Of course, we can see how many people today believe this lie. Sad to say, many Christians believe it. They think that the saved go straight to heaven when they die. These Christians believe that the lost go to hell right away when they die, too. How often did we hear that said about Billy Graham? Billy Graham was a famous Baptist preacher from America. After Graham died, people said that he was safe and alive in heaven with Jesus. People tell this lie all the time in churches, classrooms, and at funerals.

What teachings did God give His people about life after death? Where do we find our hope? Read Ecclesiastes 9:5; Job 19:25–27; 1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17; and Revelation 14:13 for the answers.

One of the false teachings from Babylon is the lie about death. Babylon teaches that the spirit lives forever and never dies. This false teaching helps people to accept the idea that our dead loved ones can talk to us. If you believe that the dead can communicate with us, how can you be safe from Satan’s many tricks and lies? If the ghost of your dead mother or child comes and talks to you, you may be tricked by what you see. Satan tricked many people this way in the past. He continues to do it now. For sure, in these end times, Satan will trick people this way in the future. So what is our only hope? Bible truth is the only thing that protects us.

BABYLON: THE CENTER FOR SUN WORSHIP (Ezekiel 8:16)

Many people worshiped the sun in Egypt, Assyria, Persia, and Babylon during Bible times. One Bible thinker writes: “In old-time Babylon, people worshiped the sun from the beginning of time.”—James G. Frazer, *The Worship of Nature* (London: Macmillan and Company, 1926), volume 1, page 529, adapted. At times, God’s people made sun worship a part of their worship of God in Old Testament times.

Read Ezekiel 8:16 and 2 Kings 23:5, 11. What does the Bible say about sun worship in Israel and Judah? (Also read Romans 1:25.)

Ezekiel was a prophet. A prophet is a special messenger from God to His people. Ezekiel lived at the same time as Daniel during Bible times. Ezekiel showed us a picture of God’s people. The people turned their backs to God’s temple and worshiped the sun. The Israelites worshiped the sun and not the One who made the sun.

In Revelation 17, John warned about a time when Babylon’s teachings would be taught in the Christian church. When did this happen? Three hundred years after Jesus died on the cross, a Roman king, Constantine, became a Christian. Christians in the kingdom of Rome were so happy when Constantine joined the church. Constantine had been a sun worshiper. Edward Gibbon, a famous history writer, says: “People in Constantine’s time believed that the sun was a powerful god. These people believed that the sun protected and guided Constantine.”—*The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (London: J. O. Robinson & Company, 1830), page 12, adapted. In A.D. 321, Constantine also passed the first “Sunday law.” This law said: “On the respected day of the Sun, let the leaders and the people in the cities rest. Let all workshops be closed.”—Edict of Constantine, A.D. 321. This law didn’t force anyone to worship on Sunday. But the law helped Roman citizens to start to think that honoring Sunday was important. Many years later, other kings and religious leaders made laws that forced people to keep Sunday.

Many churches today keep Sunday holy. How did Satan convince Christians to honor Sunday?



The Israelites worshiped the sun and not the One who made the sun.

BE LOYAL TO JESUS (Ezekiel 20:1–20)

In Revelation 17, we see a woman. This woman is a word picture for spiritual Babylon.

The Second Angel's Message is: " 'She is destroyed! The great [mighty] city of Babylon is destroyed!' " (Revelation 14:8, ERV). In Revelation 17, we see a woman. This woman is a word picture for spiritual Babylon. She is wearing purple and red clothes. She rides on a red wild animal. The woman passes around her wine cup. She gets the people on this earth drunk with her false teachings. She is a sign that shows us how church and government will join in the end times and work together. People everywhere believe Babylon's lies. Demons will work their miracles to trick people. This picture is what will happen in the end times.

At the same time, God's people are attacked and hurt. But they stay strong in Jesus. Nothing can cause them to break God's commandments. God's people are loyal to Him. They say, "God is our protection and our strength. He always helps in times of trouble" (Psalm 46:1, ICB). Today, God asks His people to be obedient to Bible truth. Jesus prayed to the Father, " 'Use the truth to make them holy. Your word is truth' " (John 17:17, NIV). Bible truth will keep us safe in this important time in earth's history.

A Baptist pastor wrote some surprising words about Sunday. The pastor was named Dr. Edward T. Hiscox. He wrote the *Standard Manual for Baptist Churches*. In 1893, Dr. Hiscox preached to a group of hundreds of Baptist pastors. Dr. Hiscox explained to them how Sunday came into the Christian church. Hiscox said, "Sunday comes from the religion of sun worship. Christians adopted this day of worship into their religion after the Catholic Church replaced the true Sabbath with this false day!"—Edward Hiscox, in front of a New York ministers' meeting, November 13, 1893, adapted.

Read Ezekiel 20:1–20. What is Ezekiel's message in these verses? Why is it important to keep the Sabbath? How does our keeping the Sabbath show that we are loyal to God?

In Ezekiel 20, the Lord tells Israel to worship Him and not their false gods. In the Three Angels' Messages, God asks us to do the same thing. The Sabbath has a big part in all these happenings in the end times, as we know.

What lessons do you learn for yourself from Ezekiel 20:1–20?

“TO BELIEVE AND OBEY”
(Romans 1:5, ERV; Revelation 18:4, 5)

The woman wearing red and purple clothes rides on a red wild animal. As we saw, the woman is a symbol for spiritual Babylon. The woman passes around her wine cup. She gets the people on the earth drunk with her “wine.” Ellen G. White says: “What is Babylon’s wine? Her false teachings. Babylon replaces the true Sabbath with a false one. Babylon also teaches the lie that Satan first told Eve in Eden. What is that lie? It is that the spirit lives forever after the body dies.”—*Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, December 6, 1892, adapted. These false teachings have tricked millions of people. So, God gives His people a final end-time message to help them accept Bible truth.

What does God say to His people who are part of Babylon? They are part of religions that teach false ideas. Read Revelation 18:4, 5 for the answer.

As we saw, many of God’s people belong to churches and religions that don’t always teach Bible truth. God loves these people so much. So, God says to them: “ ‘Come out of that city [Babylon; churches that teach lies], my people, so that you will not share in [be judged guilty for] her sins. Then you will not suffer any of the terrible punishment she will get’ ” (Revelation 18:4, ERV).

What does the Bible say sin is? Read 1 John 3:4 and Romans 14:23 for the answer. Compare these two verses. How do these two verses agree with each other?

Sin means breaking God’s law. The only way anyone can keep the law is with Jesus’ help. Jesus must live in our hearts first. Then we can obey Him. We are sinners. We are weak. We make mistakes. But when we accept Jesus by faith, He forgives us in His mercy for our past. His mercy gives us strength to live right now. God gives us faith “to believe and obey” (Romans 1:5, ERV). Today, God has a message for His people in churches that don’t respect and obey His law. God asks them to have faith to leave these false teachings behind. God asks Adventists to stop being selfish and to live by faith in Jesus. We can’t save ourselves by our own good behavior. So, we must have faith in God’s mercy to save us from sin. We can be powerful examples to other people to help lead them out of Babylon.



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Spiritualism is the false teaching that the dead communicate with us and that the spirit continues to live after the body dies.

ADDITIONAL THOUGHT: “In the Book of Revelation, ‘the Great [Mighty] Babylon’ [Revelation 17:5, ERV] is a word picture that shows us the false religions that join together as one group at the end times. . . . ‘Babylon the Great’ is God’s name for this big end-time religious group. This group is made up of three powers: (1) the Catholic church, (2) Protestant churches that teach false ideas, and (3) spiritualism. Spiritualism is the false teaching that the dead communicate with us and that the spirit continues to live after the body dies. The name ‘Babylon’ shows us all these false ideas, religions, and leaders but not really the members who belong to these groups. The members are shown as ‘many waters’ [Revelation 17:1, 15] in the Bible.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary*, volume 7, pages 851, 852, adapted.

“Satan will bring the people under his control. How? By teaching two big lies. The first lie is that our spirits don’t die when our bodies die. The second lie is that Sunday is holy. The first lie helps people accept the teaching that the dead can communicate with us. The second lie helps people to accept more easily the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church.”—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, page 588, adapted.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- ① Why is it so important for us to understand Bible truth about what happens when we die? What does the Bible teach about this topic? Why does the Bible truth about death give us so much hope?
- ② Some of the devil's tricks and lies are easy to see and avoid. But not all of them. Some of his tricks and lies are hard to see. How can we avoid being fooled by both his tricks and his lies?
- ③ In class, talk about the question at the end of Sunday’s study. You will remember that this question was about people who believed they were following God’s plan. But they were not. They were tricked. How do we know that they were tricked? How can Bible truth keep us from being tricked, the same as these people were?

BIBLE AND BIKE, PART 2

My wife and I saved money for many months to buy a bike for Hussein. Hussein is the guard for the building where my wife and I live in the Middle East. We are Bible workers. God answered our prayers and helped us buy a bike. My wife and I wondered, "What if we give Hussein a Bible with the bike?"

We wrote a card and wrapped the Bible we had bought many months earlier. We prayed for the best time to give Hussein the gifts. I carefully planned what to say. I knew Hussein would love the bike. I also hoped he would like the Bible, too. I wanted to share Jesus and Bible truth with Hussein so much.

Hussein was so touched when we came to his house with the bike. The bike really did look nice! I never expected to see so much joy in Hussein's face as he held the Bible. He carefully turned the pages. He was filled with excitement. We had been friends for two years. Now I was finally giving my friend and brother a Bible. I can't find words to explain my own happiness.

A few days later, Hussein invited me to his home for tea. When I arrived, I found Hussein reading the book of Genesis. He was so happy. He told me that he never read the story about how God made the sky and the earth. I knew we had much to talk about. I prayed for the Holy Spirit to give me the words to say.

That evening, Hussein and I talked about death and heaven. I showed Hussein some beautiful verses in his new Bible. While we talked, Hussein kept turning the pages of his Bible. He looked as if he loved it so much. I felt God wanted me to invite Hussein to study the Bible. I offered, "Would you like to study the Bible together?" I was so surprised and happy when Hussein said yes. He was so excited, too.

That week, we started our Bible studies. God continues to work in my friend's life. Hussein and I are both growing closer to God and to each other.

My heart is filled with thanksgiving to God. I am filled with joy at the thought of sharing God with Hussein. I am thankful to my wife for her love, support, and the example of her faith. I am thankful to my family back home who prayed for Hussein. I am thankful for believing friends who prayed for us during this experience. I thank God for sending my wife and me the money to buy the bike. I also thank my friends for helping us to have the courage to share God's Bible truth with someone who is excited to learn about Jesus for the first time.

Thank you for your offerings that help share the Good News about Jesus in the Middle East and elsewhere.

INSIDE *Story*

by M.B., as told to KATHIE
LICHTENWALTER



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