A WOMAN IN THE WILDERNESS

1 Kings 3:16-28

THE STORY

A hush fell over the royal judgment hall, and all eyes were fixed on King Solomon. His servants wondered how the young monarch would resolve this perplexing case.

Two single mothers were sharing a room, and each gave birth to a baby boy at about the same time. During the night, one of the mothers had accidently turned over and smothered her son. When she awoke early and saw her child was cold and still, the distraught woman took her roommate’s sleeping baby to herself and laid it next to her dead baby. Later the other mother awoke, saw the dead baby, and began to wail with grief. But after examining the infant, she quickly realized that it was not her own child. Across the room, she could see her roommate tightly clutching her baby.

Now both women stood before the king, and all eyes were fixed on King Solomon. The soldier thought the king was jesting, but Solomon began to interject the truth. He quickly realized that it was not her own child. Across the room, she could see her roommate tightly clutching her baby.

NOTE: In Bible prophecy, God’s church is symbolized by a pure woman (Revelation 12:2). In Revelation 12, this woman is clothed with the sun, moon, and stars—the natural light of God’s creation. Jesus told the church, “You are the light of the world.” Matthew 5:14. The sun represents the light of Jesus (Psalm 84:11; Malachi 4:2). The moon under her feet represents the types and shadows of the Old Testament sacrificial system. As the moon reflects the light of the sun, so the sacrificial system was helpful because it reflected the light of the Messiah to come (Colossians 2:16, 17; Hebrews 10:1). The 12 stars above her head symbolize the leadership of the church—12 tribes in the Old Testament and 12 apostles in the New Testament. The one who is to rule all nations with a rod of iron is Jesus (Psalm 2:7-9; Revelation 19:13-16).

1. Who is the “great red dragon,” and what does he try to do?

Revelation 12:9 So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world.

Revelation 12:4 The dragon stood before the woman who was ready to give birth, to snatch her child as soon as it was born.

NOTE: The dragon is Satan, who at the time of Jesus’ birth was working through the pagan Roman Empire. Satan influenced Herod, a ruler under Rome, to try to murder baby Jesus by killing all the infants in Bethlehem (Matthew 2:16).

2. What happens after Satan fails to destroy Jesus?

Revelation 12:5 And her Child was _______________ to God and His throne.

NOTE: After His resurrection, Jesus ascended up to heaven and to God’s throne (Acts 1:9-11), where He was beyond the reach of Satan.

3. After Jesus was caught up to heaven, what did Satan do to the church?

Revelation 12:13 When the dragon saw that he had been cast to the earth, he went to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.

NOTE: God’s remnant church, into which He is calling all His people, will keep God’s Ten Commandments (including the Sabbath). It will also have the testimony of Jesus, who is the spirit, or gift, of prophecy (Revelation 19:10). God calls His end-time church “the remnant,” because it is identical in doctrine and characteristics to the apostolic church. A “remnant” is the last remaining portion of a bolt of cloth. It is exactly like the first piece from the same bolt.

4. Where did the woman go during this terrifying period of persecution? How long did it last?

Revelation 12:6 Then the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, that they should feed her there one thousand two hundred and sixty days.

NOTE: The woman (God’s church) fled into the wilderness (the remote places of earth) to hide from her enemies. It is a well-known historical fact that during the Dark Ages, God’s people fled to the caves and solitary places of earth, including the shores of America, to seek religious freedom and protection from papal persecution. The 1,260 days (also described in the Bible as 42 months or as three and a half years) refers to the terrible 1,260-year period of persecution during which millions died for their faith. During this time period, God’s church was alive but was not identifiable as an official, visible organization. (See the supplement entitled “Years of Persecution.”)

7. How did Jesus say that we demonstrate our love for Him?

John 14:15 If you love Me, _______________ My commandments.

1 John 5:3 For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments.

NOTE: In our opening story, Solomon was able to identify the true mother by her genuine display of love. In the same way, God’s true church will be recognized by its sacrificial love and its willingness to obey His commandments.

8. What three angelic messages will God’s end-time church be preaching?

A. Revelation 14:6 Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come, and _______________.

B. Revelation 14:7 The earth and the sea gave up their dead, and _______________ of Jerusalem has come; and _______________.

C. Revelation 14:8 And another angel followed, saying, “_____________ is _______________, is fallen, that great city, because she has made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.”

NOTE: These three angelic statements represent the three urgent messages that God’s church will preach before Jesus returns.
9. To whom will God’s church preach these messages?

Revelation 14:6 Having the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth—to ____________, ____________, tribe, tongue, and people.

NOTE: God’s end-time church will preach this great three-point message to every nation on earth.

10. What specifications has God given in His Word to help us positively identify His end-time church?

A. It will appear and do its visible work after it emerges from the wilderness in 1798 (Revelation 12:6, 13-17).
B. It will teach the same truths the apostles taught, and all of its teachings will agree with the Bible (Revelation 12:17).
C. It will keep the Ten Commandments, including the Bible Sabbath (Revelation 12:17).
D. It will have the spirit of prophecy (Revelation 12:17, 19-10).
E. It will proclaim God’s three end-time messages with a loud voice (Revelation 14:6-14).
F. It will be a worldwide movement (Revelation 14:6).
G. It will teach the everlasting gospel, which is salvation through Jesus Christ alone (Revelation 14:6).

NOTE: Many lovely Christians are members of churches that do not meet the above seven specifications. However, no such church can be God’s remnant into which He is calling all His sincere children, because His end-time church must meet all seven specifications.

11. Jesus gives you these seven prophetic identification points and then says, “Go and find My church.” What does He promise regarding your search?

Luke 11:9 Seek, and you will ____________

12. How many church organizations in the world will fit these seven points?

Ephesians 4:5 One Lord, ____________, one baptism.

NOTE: Only one church in the entire world fits all of these specifications—the Seventh-day Adventist Church, which is bringing you these seminar messages.

13. Many denominations call themselves Christian. Does that make them God’s true church?

Isaiah 4:1 And in that day seven women shall take hold of one man, saying, “We will eat our own ____________, and wear our own ____________; let us be called by ____________ to take away our reproach.”

NOTE: Bread is a symbol of the Word of God (John 6:35, 51, 52, 63), and apparel is a symbol of righteousness (Revelation 19:8). The seven women in this prophecy have their own bread (concept of truth) and want to keep their own clothing (righteousness). They do not want the spotless robes of Christ’s righteousness. All they want is to take the name of Jesus, probably because the Bible says, “There is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.” Acts 4:12.

14. Once a person discovers God’s true end-time church, is it necessary to become a member?

Acts 2:47 And the Lord ____________ to the ____________, daily those who were being saved.

NOTE: Yes, membership in God’s end-time church is imperative. Notice how clearly God answers this question about membership:

• “We are all called into one body” (Colossians 3:15).
• That body is the church (Colossians 1:18).
• We enter that body by baptism (1 Corinthians 12:13).
It is just as imperative to enter God’s church today as it was to enter the ark in Noah’s day. The Lord says, “Come into the ark, you and all your household.” Genesis 7:1.

15. How many ways of escape were there in Noah’s day?

Hebrews 11:7 By faith Noah, ___ prepared an ____________ for the saving of his household.

NOTE: Jesus says that the time just before His second coming will be like Noah’s day (Luke 17:26). There will be only one way of escape, just as there was only one ark in Noah’s day.

16. Since there are many faithful Christians in other churches and since God has only one true remnant, what will happen to these sincere Christians?

John 10:16 And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must ____________, and they will ____________, My voice; and there will be ____________, flock and one shepherd.

Revelation 18:2, 4 Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, ____________ of her, my ____________, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues.

NOTE: Jesus will call all of His faithful, honest followers to come out of Babylon. They will hear His voice, respond, and enter His one true, end-time church.