

Managing for the Master—Till He Comes

Managing in Tough Times

Lesson #11 for March 18, 2023

Scriptures: 2 Chronicles 20:1-22; 1 Chronicles 21:1-14; 2 Peter 3:3-12; 1 John 2:15-17; Revelation 13:11-7; Psalm 50:14-15.

1. How can we deal with “managing” for our Master in difficult times?

[From the Bible study guide=BSG:] Sometimes our world seems to be spinning out of control: wars, bloodshed, crime, immorality, natural disasters, pandemics, economic uncertainty, political corruption, and more. There is a strong urge for individuals and families to think first of their own survival. Accordingly, much thought is given to seeking security in these uncertain times, which, of course, is understandable.

The toils of life do take a lot of our daily focus. With debts to pay, children to raise, property to maintain, it does take time and thought. And, of course, we do need clothes, food, and shelter. **In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus addressed these very basic needs and then stated, “ ‘Your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you’ ” (Matt. 6:32, 33, NKJV).**—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Sabbath Afternoon, March 11.^{†§}

2. How is God supposed to provide in our day? Does that mean that He will literally provide food? Clothing? And shelter? Or, will He provide the money to purchase these things in our society? Or, will He give us opportunities for work to provide money for these things?
3. What steps can we possibly take to alleviate these problems? Let us take a look at a time in Israelite history when things looked really bad.

2 Chronicles 20:1-22: ¹ Some time later the armies of Moab and Ammon, together with their allies, the Meunites, invaded Judah. ²Some messengers came and announced to King Jehoshaphat: “A large army from Edom has come from the other side of the Dead Sea to attack you. They have already captured Hazazon Tamar.” (This is another name for Engedi.) ³Jehoshaphat was frightened and prayed to the LORD for guidance. Then he gave orders for a fast to be observed throughout the country. ⁴From every city of Judah people hurried to Jerusalem to ask the LORD for guidance, ⁵and they and the people of Jerusalem gathered in the new courtyard of the Temple. King Jehoshaphat went and stood before them ⁶and prayed aloud, “O LORD God of our ancestors, you rule in heaven over all the nations of the world. You are powerful and mighty, and no one can oppose you. ⁷You are our God. When your people Israel moved into this land, you drove out the people who were living here and gave the land to the descendants of Abraham, your friend, to be theirs for ever [sic]. ⁸They have lived here and have built a temple to honour you, knowing ⁹that if any disaster struck them to punish them—a war, an epidemic, or a famine—then they could come and stand in front of this Temple where you are

worshipped. They could pray to you in their trouble, and you would hear them and rescue them.

¹⁰ “Now the people of Ammon, Moab, and Edom have attacked us. When our ancestors came out of Egypt, you did not allow them to enter those lands, so our ancestors went round them and did not destroy them. ¹¹This is how they repay us—they come to drive us out of the land that you gave us. ¹²You are our God! Punish them, for we are helpless in the face of this large army that is attacking us. We do not know what to do, but we look to you for help.”

¹³ All the men of Judah, with their wives and children, were standing there at the Temple. ¹⁴The Spirit of the LORD came upon a Levite who was present in the crowd. His name was Jahaziel son of Zechariah; he was a member of the clan of Asaph and was descended from Asaph through Mattaniah, Jeiel, and Benaiah. ¹⁵Jahaziel said, “Your Majesty and all you people of Judah and Jerusalem, the LORD says that you must not be discouraged or be afraid to face this large army. The battle depends on God, not on you. ¹⁶Attack them tomorrow as they come up the pass at Ziz. You will meet them at the end of the valley that leads to the wild country near Jeruel. ¹⁷You will not have to fight this battle. Just take up your positions and wait; you will see the LORD give you victory. People of Judah and Jerusalem, do not hesitate or be afraid. Go out to battle, and the LORD will be with you!” [Do we need a prophet to guide us today? Would we respond?]

¹⁸ Then King Jehoshaphat bowed low, with his face touching the ground, and all the people bowed with him and worshipped the LORD. ¹⁹The members of the Levite clans of Kohath and Korah stood up and with a loud shout praised the LORD, the God of Israel.

²⁰ Early the next morning the people went out to the wild country near Tekoa. As they were starting out, Jehoshaphat addressed them with these words: “**People of Judah and Jerusalem! Put your trust in the LORD your God, and you will stand firm. Believe what his prophets tell you, and you will succeed.**” ²¹After consulting with the people, the king ordered some musicians to put on the robes they wore on sacred occasions and to march ahead of the army, singing: “Praise the LORD! His love is eternal!” ²² When they began to sing, the LORD threw the invading armies into a panic.—American Bible Society. (1992). *The Holy Bible: The Good News Translation** (2nd ed., 2 Chronicles 20:1-22). New York: American Bible Society [abbreviated as *Good News Bible*].^{†‡} [How could one know that the “prophet” who spoke and gave the advice was following God’s guidance and not making it up as some earlier prophets did? (See 1 Kings 13.)][‡]

4. ***How might this story be applicable in our day?***

5. Judah was a small country surrounded by potential enemies. Three of those countries had come together to try to conquer Judah and put their own “puppet” in charge of that country. But, Jehoshaphat had God on his side! He was given specific instructions about what to do. Imagine going out to war by sending the choir, singing, ahead of the soldiers!

6. Don't we believe that same God is our God today? Jehoshaphat and the people of Judah depended upon the word of the prophet to save them. Are we able to do that in our day?
7. How would you compare the trust that Jehoshaphat and the people of Israel had in their day with the overall trust and faith that you see demonstrated by members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in our day? Don't we have even more evidence to trust God?

[BSG:] Jehoshaphat had riches and armies, but they were no match for the unexpected crisis that threatened him. This crisis was greater than anything he could prepare for. However, Jehoshaphat trusted in God and prophetic guidance, and his story became a testimony of great divine deliverance (2 Chron. 20:1–22). **This incredible story is a lesson for the Adventist Church to trust in God and in the prophetic guidance it has received** (2 Chron. 20:20, Eph. 4:11–13, Rev. 12:17, Rev. 19:10).—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 146.†§

8. After reading the story of Jehoshaphat and the children of Israel, shouldn't the final group of God's faithful people be able to trust God as much as Jehoshaphat did? Don't we have a prophet upon whom we should rely who has given us very clear and specific counsel for the final days?

Revelation 12:17: The dragon was furious with the woman and went off to fight against the rest of her descendants, all those who obey God's commandments and are faithful to the truth revealed by Jesus.—*Good News Bible*.* [Is that us?][‡]

Revelation 19:10: I fell down at his feet to worship him, but he said to me, "Don't do it! I am a servant together with you and with your fellow-believers, all those who hold to the truth that Jesus revealed. Worship God!"

For the truth that Jesus revealed is what inspires the prophets.—*Good News Bible*.* [Aren't we all to carry the message?][‡]

9. As a young man prior to being king, David was very close to God. God Himself described David as "a man after My own heart." (1 Samuel 13:14; Acts 13:22, NKJV*)
10. **First Samuel 14:1-23** describes a time when Jonathan, the son of King Saul and David's best friend, went out with his armor bearer and led a conquest that beat the Philistines. Surely, David understood the details of that story. But, what happened when David wanted to prepare his people to fight against his enemies?

1 Chronicles 21:1-14: ¹**Satan wanted to bring trouble on the people of Israel, so he made David decide to take a census.** ²David gave orders to Joab and the other officers, "Go through Israel, from one end of the country to the other, and count the people. I want to know how many [fighting men] there are."

³ Joab answered, "May the LORD make the people of Israel a hundred times more numerous than they are now! Your Majesty, they are all your servants. Why do you want to do this and make the whole nation guilty?"

⁴But the king made Joab obey the order. Joab went out, travelled through the whole country of Israel, and then returned to Jerusalem. ⁵He reported

to King David the total number of men capable of military service: 1,100,000 in Israel, and 470,000 in Judah. ⁶Because Joab disapproved of the king's command, he did not take any census of the tribes of Levi and Benjamin.

⁷ **God was displeased with what had been done, so he punished Israel.**

⁸David said to God, "I have committed a terrible sin in doing this! Please forgive me. I have acted foolishly."

⁹ Then the LORD said to Gad, David's prophet, ¹⁰ "Go and tell David that I am giving him three choices. I will do whichever he chooses."

¹¹ Gad went to David, told him what the LORD had said, and asked, "Which is it to be? ¹²Three years of famine? Or three months of running away from the armies of your enemies? Or three days during which the LORD attacks you with his sword and sends an epidemic on your land, using his angel to bring death throughout Israel? What answer shall I give the LORD?"

¹³ David replied to Gad, "I am in a desperate situation! But I don't want to be punished by people. Let the LORD himself be the one to punish me, because he is merciful."

¹⁴ So the LORD sent an epidemic on the people of Israel, and 70,000 of them died.—*Good News Bible*.^{*†‡} [So, David's count was no longer valid!][‡]

11. **Note that it was Satan's idea to count the soldiers, but David commanded it to be done. But, what about the conflicting passage found in 2 Samuel 24:1?**

2 Samuel 24:1: The LORD was angry with Israel once more, and he made David bring trouble on them. The LORD said to him, "Go and count the people of Israel and Judah."—*Good News Bible*.^{*†} [Who did it? God? Or, Satan?][‡]

[BSG:] No one ever trusted God in vain. Whenever you do battle for the Lord, prepare yourself. And prepare well too. There's a quote, attributed to a British ruler, Oliver Cromwell (1599–1658), who, before a battle, said to his army, "**Put your trust in God, my boys, and keep your powder dry!**" **(The powder was gunpowder.) In other words, do all that you can to succeed, but, in the end, realize that only God can give you victory.**—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*^{*} for Monday, March 13.^{†‡} [Do whatever you can to prepare, but only God can give the victory.][‡]

12. The story of David's failure when trying to count his potential soldiers ended relatively well despite his sins! Notice these words:

1 Chronicles 21:26: He built an altar to the LORD there and offered burnt offerings and fellowship offerings. **He prayed, and the LORD answered him by sending fire from heaven to burn the sacrifices on the altar** [asking God to stop the epidemic].—*Good News Bible*.^{*†‡}

13. How would it affect your faith if you saw God send fire from the sky and consume an offering presented to Him? Could Satan do that?
14. How often are we tempted to trust in government, our personal finances, or our friends when faced with difficult times?

15. Are we honestly preparing for the difficult times we believe are soon to come? How can we properly balance in our minds the challenges of providing for the necessities of the present time with some financial security, and yet, at the same time, trust God for everything? Is there any reason why preparing the best way for any crisis that might develop should prevent us from trusting in the Lord?
16. Some Adventists who have studied the time of trouble in detail have said: “The time of trouble will be a great time to be alive!” Our days are not a time for us to “hunker down” and try to hide; this is a time for using our resources to spread the gospel to the ends of the world. Remember that whatever is left over will be burned up!

2 Peter 3:7-12: ⁷But the heavens and the earth that now exist are being preserved by the same command of God, in order to be destroyed by fire. They are being kept for the day when godless people will be judged and destroyed.

⁸ But do not forget one thing, my dear friends! There is no difference in the Lord’s sight between one day and a thousand years; to him the two are the same. **⁹The Lord is not slow to do what he has promised, as some think. Instead, he is patient with you, because he does not want anyone to be destroyed, but wants all to turn away from their sins.**

¹⁰ But the Day of the Lord will come like a thief. On that Day the heavens will disappear with a shrill noise, the heavenly bodies will burn up and be destroyed, and the earth with everything in it will vanish. ¹¹Since all these things will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people should you be? Your lives should be holy and dedicated to God, ¹²as you wait for the Day of God and do your best to make it come soon—the Day when the heavens will burn up and be destroyed, and the heavenly bodies will be melted by the heat.—*Good News Bible*.^{*†} [What kind of heat is that? Nuclear!][‡]

[From the writings of Ellen G. White=EGW:] We ought now to be heeding the injunction of our Saviour: “Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not.” **It is now that our brethren should be cutting down their possessions instead of increasing them.** We are about to move to a better country, even a heavenly. Then let us not be dwellers upon the earth, but be getting things into as compact a compass as possible.—Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*,^{*} vol. 5, 152.1. [1882].^{†‡} Compare *Counsels on Stewardship* 59.2. [When do we do that?][‡]

17. We may have good genes and live a healthy life and live to be 100; however, none of us knows for sure when our last moments of life will occur. And once we close our eyes in death, the next instant when we awaken, we will see Jesus. Remember that whatever we accumulate on this earth is only transitory and fleeting. The only things that have eternal value are those which are stored up in heaven. What if you had some idea about when Jesus would come? Maybe 10 years from now? Maybe 20?

[EGW:] We are not to know the definite time either for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit or for the coming of Christ....

You will not be able to say that he will come in one, two, or five years, neither are you to put off his coming by stating that it may not be for ten or twenty years.—Ellen G. White, *Review and Herald*,* March 22, 1892, par. 7,10.†‡ Compare *Evangelism* 221.1.

18. Are we willing to accept the very clear words of Scripture and Ellen White that we cannot straddle the fence? It is not possible to serve God and money. We have to make a clear choice. **Are we committing the largest portion of our worldly goods to God's cause?**

Matthew 6:24: "No one can be a slave of two masters; he will hate one and love the other; he will be loyal to one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money."—*Good News Bible*.*

[BSG:] **Notice, Jesus didn't say that it was hard to serve God and money, or that you needed to be careful in how you served both. He said, instead, that it *couldn't be done*. Period.** This thought should put a bit of fear and trembling in our souls (*Phil. 2:12*).—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Wednesday, March 15.†§

19. What things are making it hard for us to look to God as our only Source of hope?

1 John 2:15-17: ¹⁵Do not love the world or anything that belongs to the world. If you love the world, you do not love the Father. ¹⁶Everything that belongs to the world—what the sinful self desires, what people see and want, and everything in this world that people are so proud of—none of this comes from the Father; it all comes from the world. ¹⁷The world and everything in it that people desire is passing away; but those who do the will of God live for ever [*sic*].—*Good News Bible*.*† [Can you see this coming?]*‡

20. That is not easy! The things of the world are all around us; Satan is determined to make them as attractive as possible. Yet, God has given us clear instructions.

Colossians 3:2: Keep your minds fixed on things there, not on things here on earth.—*Good News Bible*.* [Could we survive doing this?]*‡

21. Revelation 12-14 are the central and most important chapters in the book of Revelation. They are the message that Seventh-day Adventists are supposed to be taking to the world. What do they tell us? First of all, we will be faced by the fury of three huge forces: 1) Satan himself (Revelation 12:7-9); 2) The first beast (Revelation 13:1); and 3) The second beast (Revelation 13:11-13).

22. Seventh-day Adventists have been taught that the first beast represents Roman Catholic and Orthodox Christianity while the second beast represents apostate Protestantism. In other words, there will be an enormous force against those who remain faithful to God by following His instructions. How bad could things get? Are these future times going to be worse than the world wars? Worse than the Holocaust? Worse than the black plague? Worse than any pandemic?

23. Satan will absolutely be doing everything he possibly can to destroy or at least discourage God's faithful people. The book of Revelation is about a war between God and Satan.

Daniel 12:1: The angel wearing linen clothes said, "At that time the great angel Michael, who guards your people, will appear. **Then there will be a time of troubles, the worst since nations first came into existence.** When that

time comes, all the people of your nation whose names are written in God's book will be saved."—*Good News Bible*.*†

24. Let us understand very clearly that the Devil and all those who will be on his side are determined to destroy/kill to make it impossible for God's faithful people to live.
25. Will we have the courage and the faith to stand firm? The more of this world's goods or material wealth that we have in our possession at that time, the harder it may be for us to turn away from those things and remain faithful to God. Many verses in Scripture teach us that we are to "fear" the Lord.
26. In the Bible, the word translated, *fear*, can mean anything from abject terror to respect, worship, or honor. The correct translation must be determined by the context.

[BSG:] Though nothing in the Bible warns against wealth, nothing in the Bible talks about wealth as increasing one's spiritual commitment either. In fact, the opposite danger is true.—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Friday, March 17.‡

[EGW:] **Whatever shall draw away the heart from God must be given up.** Mammon is the idol of many. **The love of money, the desire for wealth, is the golden chain that binds them [people] to Satan.** Reputation and worldly honor are worshiped by another class. The life of selfish ease and freedom from responsibility is the idol of others. But these slavish bands must be broken. We cannot be half the Lord's and half the world's. **We are not God's children unless we are such entirely.**—Ellen G. White, *Steps to Christ** 44.1.†‡

[BSG:] In fact, since the founding of Christianity, no church has ever partaken of such wealth and creature comforts as the church in many countries of the world enjoys today. The question is: At what cost? Such affluence surely influences our spirituality—and not for the good either. How could it? Since when have wealth and material abundance fostered the Christian virtues of self-denial and self-sacrifice? Can coming home to refrigerators stuffed with more food than we can eat, and owning one or two cars, and taking yearly vacations, and shopping online, and having the latest in home computers and smartphones make it easier to love not the world nor the things in the world? Though many members of our church don't have these luxuries, many do—and they do so at the peril of their own souls. We are not talking about the "rich" now, as in millionaires and beyond. They at least know that they're rich, and they can heed (if they choose) the biblical cautions given them. We're talking, instead, about many even of the middle-class people, who—amid smartphones, iMacs, air-conditioning, and SUVs—are fooled enough to think that because they are just "middle class," they are not in danger of being spiritually pickled by their own prosperity. That's why tithing can be, if nothing else, a powerful spiritual antidote to the dangers of wealth, even for those who are not particularly "wealthy."—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Friday, March 17.‡

27. What would happen to you and your family if these bad conditions we have talked about happened suddenly and earthly comforts disappeared beginning tomorrow?

28. With the United States Government getting ready to eliminate cash because it is the main currency used by drug dealers and other criminals, our current government is trying to force everyone to use credit cards and other electronic credit transfer devices so that every transaction can be traced. It is not hard to see how anyone that the government wants to shut down will be at their mercy. See Revelation 13:15-17.

29. Is it clear from what we have stated already that putting our trust in God will be the only means of salvation when things get tough?

30. How many of us are looking to this world's riches as a way of displaying our wealth? Are we willing to live lives as modest, temperate people, without ostentation? (1 Timothy 2:9) Having wealth and wanting wealth is a great reason for anxiety.

1 Timothy 6:10: For the love of money is a source of all kinds of evil. Some have been so eager to have it that they have wandered away from the faith and have broken their hearts with many sorrows.—*Good News Bible*.*†

31. Today, we have the opportunity to invest in God's cause. We can "store money in the treasure house of heaven." What other investments could possibly compare?

32. Many examples could be given from the Bible to suggest that those who are faithful, even in small things, are regarded as God's friends and will be helped by Him.

Luke 16:10: "Whoever is faithful in small matters will be faithful in large ones; whoever is dishonest in small matters will be dishonest in large ones."—*Good News Bible*.*

33. What are the challenges of worldly wealth?

[BSG:] Sometimes money issues deprive us of sleep (*Eccles. 5:12*), attract thieves (*Matt. 6:19*), bring false friends (*Prov. 14:20, Prov. 19:4*), give rise to greed (*Eccles. 4:8, Eccles. 5:10*), and may lead to self-conceit (*Prov. 28:11*) or indifference toward others (*Prov. 18:23*). We cannot set our heart on riches (*Psa. 62:10*). Additionally, bankruptcy (*Prov. 5:14, Prov. 27:24*) may sometimes be unavoidable and painful. So it always is wise to remember that it is better to have little in the Lord than much with trouble (*Prov. 15:16*).—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 146.†§

34. We believe that, ultimately, God is responsible for everything that happens. **He either does/did it; or, He allows/allowed it.**

[BSG:] **In the Hebrew mindset, God is ultimately in control of everything** (*Dan. 4:35, Isa. 46:10*). Not even a sparrow perishes without the Father knowing (*Matt. 10:29*). Everything happens only by divine permission or will, which, at the same time, respects individual choice and responsibility (*2 Sam. 24:11, 12; Deut. 30:19*).—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 146.†§

35. Think about times when God's people down through the generations have been in special trouble. One example was clearly the time in Egypt when Pharaoh was determined to keep them as his slaves. Read the following passages and see what we can learn about how God relates to stubborn people.

[BSG:] When Pharaoh hardened his own heart (*Exod. 8:15, 19, 32*), the

Bible at times ascribed this action to God (*Exod. 10:20, 27; Exod. 11:10*), showing that God permitted Pharaoh to make his own choices. **God restricts evil, but, ultimately, the individual makes the decision and bears the responsibility for his or her choices.**—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 146.†§

Exodus 9:34-10:1: ³⁴When Pharaoh saw that the rain and hail and thunder had stopped, he sinned again: **He and his officials hardened their hearts.**

³⁵**So Pharaoh's heart was hard** and he would not let the Israelites go, just as the LORD had said through Moses.

^{10:1} Then the LORD said to Moses, "Go to Pharaoh, for I **have hardened his heart and the hearts of his officials** so that I may perform these signs of mine among them."—*New International Version.*†* [Compare **Exodus 8:15,19,32; 10:20,27; 11:10.**] [Who hardened those hearts?][‡]

36. Have you had personal experiences in which you felt it was necessary to turn to God for deliverance? What did you learn from those experiences?

37. It is not only monetary wealth that can be a problem for us but also fame and power.

[BSG:] Knowledge, power, fame, physical beauty, and positions of influence, without the fear of the Lord, may lead to negative consequences similar to those resulting from acquiring riches without the blessing or help of God. Therefore, we need to appreciate divine wisdom more than any material gift (*Prov. 2:1–6, Prov. 4:7, Prov. 8:11*).—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 147.†§

38. It is not only the wealthy who have problems but also the rest of us. The Devil is more than happy to cause problems to every group of people.

[BSG:] An excessive lack of money also causes harm, given that it has the opposite effect of riches. The poor are persecuted (*Ps. 10:2*), despised (*Prov. 14:20, Prov. 19:7*), and exploited (*Deut. 24:14*). That is why those who are wise pray for balance (*Prov. 30:8*).

God is Lord of the rich and the poor (*Prov. 22:2*). He doesn't despise the poor for being poor, because His own Son came as a poor Man among the poor (*2 Cor. 8:9*). Neither does God favor the rich because they are rich, for all riches are His (*Hag. 2:8*). Instead, God requires all His children to be faithful stewards of His means (*1 Cor. 4:2, Rev. 2:10*).—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 147.†§

39. Learning to trust God is a lifelong educational process. In the Old Testament, the children of Israel were repeatedly told to trust in God and to learn about Him and teach their children as well.

Deuteronomy 4:9-10: ⁹ "Tell your children and you grandchildren ¹⁰about the day you stood in the presence of the LORD your God at Mount Sinai, when he said to me, 'Assemble the people. I want them to hear what I have to say, so that they will learn to obey me as long as they live and so that they will teach their children to do the same.'"—*Good News Bible.**

Deuteronomy 11:19: “Teach them [God’s commands] to your children. Talk about them when you are at home and when you are away, when you are resting and when you are working.”—*Good News Bible*.*†

40. God had told the Israelites that He was always to be their King. However, He knew what was coming. So, He gave them some strong advice about having a king.

Deuteronomy 17:18-19: ¹⁸ “When he becomes king, he is to have a copy of the book of God’s laws and teachings made from the original copy kept by the levitical priests. ¹⁹**He is to keep this book near him and read from it all his life, so that he will learn to honour the LORD and to obey faithfully everything that is commanded in it.**”—*Good News Bible*.*†

41. Are we experiencing a living relationship with God every day which helps us to grow our faith? Are we returning our tithes and offerings in proportion to our wealth?

[BSG:] In the last days, people will be lovers of money. We must shun their influence (2 Tim. 3:1–5) because **covetousness is idolatry** (Eph. 5:5). John warns us that idolators will be left out of the Holy City (Rev. 22:14, 15). Additionally, legal measures one day will prevent God’s people from buying and selling (Rev. 13:11–17), and all that was withheld from the Lord, together with the treasures of Babylon (Rev. 18:10–16), will perish in the fire (2 Pet. 3:3–10).—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 148.†‡§

42. Are we prepared to face a time when being faithful to God could lead to a death sentence?

43. We know that death can come suddenly. We also know that to the one who dies, the next moment will bring him/her face-to-face with Jesus! Without becoming terror struck, are we preparing faithfully for that situation?

[EGW:] The work of God is to become more extensive, and if His people follow His counsel, there will not be much means in their possession to be consumed in the final conflagration. All will have laid up their treasure where moth and rust cannot corrupt; and the heart will not have a cord to bind it to earth.—Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*,* vol 1, 196.3 [1864]; *Counsels on Stewardship** 60.3.‡

44. But, one day soon, Jesus Himself will appear in the clouds.

[EGW:] When the Light of the world passes by, privilege will be discerned in hardship, order in confusion, success in apparent failure. In calamities will be recognized disguised blessings; in woes, mercies.—Ellen G. White, *General Conference Bulletin*,* July 1, 1902, par. 19.‡ Compare *Education* 270.2. [What could those words mean in real terms in our lives?][‡]

45. Can you think of experiences that you have gone through that have been very troubling but which have led you to greater trust in the Lord?

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