

The Great Controversy

The Central Issue: Love or Selfishness?

Lesson #2 for April 13, 2024

Scriptures: Luke 19:41-44; Matthew 23:37-38; Hebrews 11:35-38; Revelation 2:10; Acts 2:44-47; John 13:35; Isaiah 41:10.

1. For someone who is reading the biblical story for the first time, it might seem strange that God chose the children of Israel; and then, a long time later, Jesus wept on the Mount of Olives as He was talking about their destruction. Does that suggest that God did not foresee what was coming? What led to that disaster?
2. Try to imagine yourself as overlooking this history in all its details and trying to understand God's role in all of it. Think also about Satan's role in the whole mess!
3. Did the destruction of Jerusalem foreshadow what is in the future for the entire earth? That is what Jesus seemed to imply by what He said in Matthew 24, Mark 13, and Luke 21.
4. There is no question about the fact that Satan is determined to either destroy or deceive God's faithful people down through the generations.
5. This lesson is mostly based on the book by Ellen White, *The Great Controversy*, chapters 1&2, pages 17-48. (<https://m.egwwritings.org/en/book/132.69>)
6. Two major points of emphasis in this lesson are:
 1. [From the Bible study guide=BSG:] **As a result of its rejection of Christ, Judah officially, as a political entity, lost its favored-nation status as God's special people and suffered the horrific experience of the destruction of Jerusalem.**
 2. God established His people, the remnant of Israel, incorporated into it both Jews and Gentiles, and saved it from the cataclysms that befell Jerusalem in A.D. 70. God led His church in its mission to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ, **calling people of all nations to receive the good news and to join His new people.**—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 26.†‡
7. Read **Matthew 23:37-38** and **John 5:40**. What do these verses suggest to you about how Jesus felt, sitting on the Mount of Olives and looking over at the temple one week before His crucifixion?

Luke 19:41-44: ⁴¹ He came closer to the city, and when he saw it, he wept over it, ⁴²saying, "If you only knew today what is needed for peace! But now you cannot see it! ⁴³The time will come when your enemies will surround you with barricades, blockade you, and close in on you from every side. ⁴⁴They will completely destroy you and the people within your walls; not a single stone will they leave in its place, because you did not recognize the time when God came to save you!"—American Bible Society. (1992). *The Holy Bible: The Good News Translation** (2nd ed., Luke 19:41-44). New York: American Bible Society [abbreviated as *Good News Bible*].‡
8. How would you feel if you were watching your entire family about to destroy themselves?

[BSG:] **By their rebellion against His loving-kindness, they [the Israelites] forfeited His divine protection.** God does not always intervene to limit the

results of His people's choices. He allows the natural consequences of rebellion to develop. God did not cause the slaughter of innocent children in the destruction of Jerusalem; **the tragic death of the innocents was Satan's act, not God's.**

Satan delights in war because it stirs the worst passions of the human heart. **Down through the centuries, it has been his [Satan's] purpose to deceive and destroy and then blame his evil actions on God.**—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Sunday, April 7.[†]

Matthew 24:15-20: ¹⁵ “You will see ‘The Awful Horror’ of which the prophet Daniel spoke. It will be standing in the holy place.” (Note to the reader: be sure to understand what this means!) ¹⁶ “Then those who are in Judea must run away to the hills. ¹⁷Someone who is on the roof of his house must not take the time to go down and get his belongings from the house. ¹⁸Someone who is in the field must not go back to get his cloak. ¹⁹How terrible it will be in those days for women who are pregnant and for mothers with little babies! ²⁰Pray to God that you will not have to run away during the winter or on a Sabbath!”—*Good News Bible.**

9. **Some Facts About Jerusalem:**

[BSG:] The tragic fall of Jerusalem may be delineated, at least in part, by the following historical details:

1. Jerusalem was destroyed during the First Jewish War (A.D. 66—A.D. 73), its annihilation commencing toward the end of the reign of the emperor Nero (A.D. 54— A.D. 68) [*sic*]. **The war broke out when Gessius Florus, the freshly appointed Roman procurator to Judea, took a large amount of money from the temple treasury in Jerusalem.**
2. The two major Roman generals sent to quash the revolt were Vespasian and his son, Titus. Both later became emperors.
3. The siege of Jerusalem started in earnest in the year A.D. 70. For the most part, throughout the siege, the defenders of the city were splintered into factions and fought among themselves, uniting only to repulse the imminent attacks of the Romans.
4. Jerusalem was guarded by three walls. The first two walls fell to the Romans in April of A.D. 70, and the third was breached several months later, on August 30. The temple was burned on the same day.
5. According to Jewish historian Josephus, more than one million people died during the siege of Jerusalem, and an estimated 100,000 were taken captive. Jerusalem and the temple were destroyed. **The booty that the Romans took from Jerusalem funded the construction of the Colosseum, one of the most visited monuments in Rome.**
6. Bereft of its city, Jerusalem, and its temple, Judaism suffered profound changes. The center of the Jewish religion shifted from the temple, sacrifices, and priests to the law. The Sadducees, the sacerdotal class, lost most of their power, and Judaism became rabbinical.—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 26-27.[†]

10. In A.D. 70, just before Jerusalem was finally destroyed by the Roman armies, many of the Christians living in Jerusalem had remembered the warnings of Jesus and fled.
11. **God could have prevented the Roman invasion. So, why didn't He? Did any of the non-Christian Jews learn about Jesus's warning and flee with the Christians? Did they think the warning was just foolish? The Christians fled to a Gentile city named Pella just to the east of the Sea of Galilee.**
12. There are many promises in the Bible in both the Old Testament and New Testament, suggesting that God will protect His children, as far as possible. In the larger context, all those who remain faithful, finally, will have a home with Him in heavenly places. It is much easier to understand martyrdoms, etc. in this larger context.
13. So, what happened that made it possible for most of the Christians to flee from Jerusalem and, thus, avoid being killed?

[BSG:] God's mercy, grace, providence, and foreknowledge are clearly revealed in the events leading up to the destruction of Jerusalem. Cestius Gallus and the Roman armies surrounded the city. In an unexpected move, **when their attack seemed imminent, they withdrew.** The Jewish armies pursued them and won a great victory.

With the Romans fleeing and the Jews pursuing, **the Christians in Jerusalem fled to Pella in Perea, beyond the Jordan River.**—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Monday, April 8.^{††}

[From the writings of Ellen G. White=EGW:] The promised sign had been given to the waiting Christians, and now an opportunity was offered for all who would, to obey the Saviour's warning. **Events were so overruled that neither Jews nor Romans should hinder the flight of the Christians.**—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy** 30.2.^{††}

14. We often think of the great controversy as a spiritual warfare. However, a careful look at events down through history makes it clear that many, many Jews and, later, Christians were killed as a result of events connected to the great controversy.
15. **Why does God allow Christians to be martyred?**

Hebrews 11:35-38:³⁵ Through faith women received their dead relatives raised back to life.

Others, refusing to accept freedom, died under torture in order to be raised to a better life.³⁶ Some were mocked and whipped, and others were put in chains and taken off to prison.³⁷ They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were killed by the sword. They went round clothed in skins of sheep or goats—poor, persecuted, and ill-treated.³⁸ The world was not good enough for them! They wandered like refugees in the deserts and hills, living in caves and holes in the ground.—*Good News Bible.**

Revelation 2:10: "Don't be afraid of anything you are about to suffer. Listen! The Devil will put you to the test by having some of you thrown into prison, and your troubles will last ten days. Be faithful to me, even if it means death, and I will give you life as your prize of victory."—*Good News Bible.**

[EGW:] **In vain were Satan's efforts to destroy the church of Christ by violence.** The great controversy in which the disciples of Jesus yielded up their lives did not cease when these faithful standard-bearers fell at their post. By defeat they conquered. God's workmen were slain, but His work went steadily forward.—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy** 41.3.†

16. How do we explain the fact that many of those who suffered martyrdom were talking about the reality of God's love while still alive? Some sang as they burned to death!

17. Look at some of the verses that talk about the troubles that the early church faced.

[BSG:] Throughout the early centuries of Christianity, the Christian church grew rapidly, despite imprisonment, torture, and persecution. Faithful believers, totally committed to Christ, filled with the Holy Spirit, proclaimed His Word with power; lives were changed, and tens of thousands were converted.—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Tuesday, April 9.‡

18. **Threats:**

Acts 4:17: "But to keep this matter from spreading any further among the people, let us warn these men never again to speak to anyone in the name of Jesus."—*Good News Bible*.*

19. **Imprisonment:**

Acts 5:17-18: ¹⁷ Then the High Priest and all his companions, members of the local party of the Sadducees, became extremely jealous of the apostles; so they decided to take action. ¹⁸**They arrested the apostles and put them in the public jail.**—*Good News Bible*.*†

20. **Persecution:**

Acts 8:1: And Saul approved of his murder.

That very day the church in Jerusalem began to suffer cruel persecution. All the believers, except the apostles, were scattered throughout the provinces of Judea and Samaria.—*Good News Bible*.*†

21. **Death:**

Acts 7:59-60: ⁵⁹ They kept on stoning Stephen as he called out to the Lord, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!" ⁶⁰He knelt down and cried out in a loud voice, "Lord! Do not remember this sin against them!" He said this and died.—*Good News Bible*.*

Acts 12:2: He [King Herod] had James, the brother of John, put to death by the sword.—*Good News Bible*.*†

22. **Churches multiplied throughout Judea, Galilee, and Samaria:**

Acts 9:31: And so it was that the church throughout Judea, Galilee, and Samaria had a time of peace. Through the help of the Holy Spirit it was strengthened and grew in numbers, as it lived in reverence for the Lord.—*Good News Bible*.*

[BSG:] The bastions of hell were shaken. The shackles of Satan were broken. Pagan superstition crumbled before the power of the resurrected Christ. The gospel triumphed in the face of overwhelming odds. **The disciples no longer**

cowered in the upper room. Fear danced away like a fading shadow.—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Tuesday, April 9.^{†‡}

23. ***What do you think caused the early Christians to be ready to face death without flinching?***

24. They had been given a challenge, and they had help!

Mark 16:15: He [Jesus] said to them, “Go throughout the whole world and preach the gospel to the whole human race.”—*Good News Bible.*†*

Acts 1:8: [Jesus said:] “**But when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, you will be filled with power, and you will be witnesses for me in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.**”—*Good News Bible.*†‡*

25. ***Has the Holy Spirit come upon the Seventh-day Adventist Church in recent times? If not, why not? If so, when? And what happened?***

[BSG:] The gospel penetrated the remotest corners of the earth (*Col. 1:23*). Although the last of the disciples, John, died at the end of the first century, others picked up the torch of truth and proclaimed the living Christ. Pliny the Younger, governor of the Roman province of Bithynia on the north coast of modern Turkey, wrote to Emperor Trajan around A.D. 110. Pliny’s statement is significant because it was nearly eighty years after the Crucifixion. Pliny described the official trials he was conducting to find and execute Christians. He [Pliny the Younger] stated, “**For many persons of all ages, and classes and of both sexes are being put in peril by accusation, and this will go on. The contagion of this superstition [Christianity] has spread not only in the cities, but in the villages and rural districts as well.**”—Henry Bettenson, *Documents of the Christian Church* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 4.—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Tuesday, April 9.^{†‡Ω§}

Colossians 1:23: You must, of course, continue faithful on a firm and sure foundation, and must not allow yourselves to be shaken from the hope you gained when you heard the gospel. It is of this gospel that I, Paul, became a servant—this gospel which has been preached to everybody in the world.—*Good News Bible.**

26. Is there something we can learn from this experience of the early church that might impact us in our day? We tend to be so caught up in our profession, our hobbies, families, etc. that committing our lives to spreading the gospel as they did seems impossible! Could that change? This will not be done by the organized church! The early Christian church grew, not only because its members preached the gospel but also because they lived the gospel. We do not know to what extent the church was supporting the early Christian disciples and apostles; but, they apparently dedicated their lives completely to spreading the gospel.

27. ***Do you think that the time will come when God will, once again, pour out His Holy Spirit and empower Christians to work miracles in the spreading of the gospel?***

28. God’s plan, ultimately, is to restore physical, mental, social, and spiritual wholeness to all of His faithful children. That restoration, of course, will happen at the second coming.

29. What was it that made the Christians’ experiences stand out from all those around them and attract the attention of others?

John 13:34-35: ³⁴ “And now I [Jesus] give you a new commandment: love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. ³⁵**If you have love for one another, then everyone will know that you are my disciples.**”—*Good News Bible*. *†† [If this is true, what does it say about the rest of the people living on this earth?][‡]

[BSG:] Love was the norm of Christian communities in the first few centuries. Tertullian, an early Christian theologian, claimed: “It is mainly the deeds of a love so noble that lead many to put a brand upon us. *See, they say, how they love one another.*”—“Chapter 39,” in *Apology*, trans. S. Thelwall, <https://www.logoslibrary.org/tertullian/apology/39.html> (accessed October 10, 2022 [and March 8, 2024]).

One of the greatest revelations of God’s love was demonstrated when **two devastating pandemics** plagued the early centuries **around A.D. 160 and A.D. 260**. Christians stepped forward and ministered to the sick and dying. These plagues killed tens of thousands and left entire villages and towns with scarcely an inhabitant. The unselfish, sacrificial, caring, loving ministry of Christians made a huge impact on the population. Over time, thousands, and eventually hundreds of thousands, and then millions in the Roman Empire became believers in Jesus during these two epidemics. Love, outgoing concern, and organized, selfless care of the sick and dying created an admiration for these believers and the Christ they represented.—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Thursday, April 11.^{†‡§}

30. While we do not have much in the way of information about the pandemics that hit those times, educated guesses suggest bubonic plague, smallpox, measles, or filoviruses similar to Ebola.

31. Notice these words quoted by Rodney Stark in his book, *The Rise of Christianity*.

[BSG:] [Dionysius:] “Most of our brother Christians showed unbounded love and loyalty, never sparing themselves and thinking only of one another. Heedless of danger, they took charge of the sick, attending to their every need and ministering to them in Christ, and with them departed this life serenely happy; for they were infected by others with the disease, drawing on themselves the sickness of their neighbors and cheerfully accepting their pains.”—*The Rise of Christianity* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996), p. 82.—[as quoted in *Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Thursday, April 11].^{†§}

32. ***Could Christians do something like that in 2024? Would Seventh-day Adventists be ready to do it? Would it be possible in countries like the USA or Australia? Or, in Western Europe in our day?***

[EGW:] The gospel continued to spread and the number of its adherents to increase. It penetrated into regions that were inaccessible even to the eagles of Rome. Said a Christian, expostulating with the heathen rulers who were urging forward the persecution: You may “kill us, torture us, condemn us.... Your injustice is the proof that we are innocent [*sic*] Nor does your cruelty ... avail you.” It was but a stronger invitation to bring others to their persuasion. “**The**

oftener we are mown down by you, the more in number we grow; the blood of Christians is seed.”—Tertullian, *Apology*, paragraph 50.—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy** 41.3-42.0.^{†§}

[EGW:] The mysterious providence which permits the righteous to suffer persecution at the hand of the wicked has been a cause of great perplexity to many who are weak in faith. Some are even ready to cast away their confidence in God because He suffers the basest of men to prosper, while the best and purest are afflicted and tormented by their cruel power. How, it is asked, can One who is just and merciful, and who is also infinite in power, tolerate such injustice and oppression? This is a question with which we have nothing to do. **God has given us sufficient evidence of His love, and we are not to doubt His goodness because we cannot understand the workings of His providence.**—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy** 47.1.[†]

33. Consider these questions posed in the Bible study guide:

1. [BSG:] **What value does persecution serve? Why do you think God allows His people to suffer at times? And though in some cases, such as in the early church, good was able to come of it, what about times when it appears that nothing good has come from it? Why in situations like this is the personal experience of God’s love so important in order to maintain faith?** [There is plenty of evidence that persecution will sift out the nominal Christians. Would that be enough to bring the Holy Spirit on those who remain?]
2. **How would you respond if a friend asked you these questions: “Where is God in my suffering? If He loves me, why am I going through such a difficult time?”** [If you are faithful, God has a rich reward for you in the future. But, **Satan is determined to destroy as many of God’s faithful people as he can while he has a chance to do so!**]
3. **How can your local church become a caring community to impact the world? Discuss practical ways to apply this week’s study.**—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Friday, April 12.^{†§}

34. **Why did Jesus co-mingle events connected with the destruction of Jerusalem and the final events of this earth’s history? Why are prophecies of the first, second, and third comings of Jesus co-mingled in the Bible?**

35. Ellen White took a cue from Matthew 24 and started her book on the great controversy by reviewing what happened to Jerusalem.

[BSG:] From the vantage point of secular history, Jerusalem and the second temple were destroyed because the Jews rebelled against the superpower of the time, the Roman Empire, and were mercilessly crushed by its might, both in an act of vengeance and as a deterrent to other potential rebels. In the centuries that have lapsed since the fall of Jerusalem, **believing Jews have generally interpreted the destruction of Jerusalem as a disciplinary measure that God allowed.** Some scholars of Judaism have said that the Jews sinned by transgressing God’s law, becoming immoral; others believe that

the Jews were too fractious and divided, never having learned the lesson of unity. Whatever the case, God preserved a remnant to carry on His purposes. However, the Bible, especially the New Testament, offers a different explanation for the destruction of the temple. Yes, rebellion, iniquity, moral and social corruption, and internal strife and division were certainly major factors that led to the downfall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the temple. But the situation that caused that tragedy was more profound than these factors alone. To help us understand what caused the temple's destruction, several important points, from both the Old and New Testaments, need to be highlighted. Taken together, these points help us to understand **the main reason for the temple's demise: Israel's leadership rejection of Christ and of God's covenant.**—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 27.[†]

36. The great controversy began in heaven; but, it continues on this earth. Review history, and consider how it might have related to the history of the Hebrews and, finally, of the Christians.

37. **The Original Temple (Solomon's Temple):**

[BSG:] **First**, the original temple of Israel, built by Solomon, was destroyed by the Babylonians, in 586 B.C., some 20 years after Judah was conquered by Nebuchadnezzar (*Dan. 1:1, 2*). The destruction happened approximately one hundred years after the Northern Israelites fell into apostasy and were conquered by the Assyrians. However, these two events—Israel's demise and the destruction of Solomon's temple by Babylonian forces—did not transpire simply because the Jewish nation failed to learn how to unite or because of its moral declension. **Northern Israel disappeared as a nation because they rejected God's covenant and went after other gods (1 Kings 12:26–33, 2 Kings 17:7–23).** Like Israel, Judah had wicked kings and corrupt elites bent on idolatry. Over time, Judah's periods of idolatry also increased in frequency and intensity. **However, unlike Northern Israel, Judah did not have a permanent official national policy of replacing God's religion with paganism. For this reason, God permitted the destruction of Judah's temple and its capital city, in 586 B.C., and the temporary exile of its people, as a strategy for national renewal.**—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 27-28.^{†§}

38. **The Second Temple (after the return from exile):**

[BSG:] **Second**, the second temple was destroyed in the year A.D. 70 by the Romans, some 35 years after Jesus foretold the following three events: (1) God would take the kingdom from Judah and give it to another nation (*Matt. 21:43*); (2) Judah's house (the temple) would be "left desolate" (*Matt. 23:38*); and (3) the temple would be completely destroyed (*Matt. 24:1, 2*). **The reason for this triple judgment? Judah's leadership not only failed to bring forth the fruit of the kingdom of God (*Matt. 21:43*) but, as did Northern Israel of old, consciously refused to remain under the jurisdiction and shelter of God's wings (*Matt. 23:37*).** In A.D. 31, the leaders made an official, conscious, and deliberate decision to reject God's covenant, His salvation, and His Messiah (*Matt. 26:1–3, 14–16, 57–68; 27:15–25; John 19:1–15*). As a result,

God allowed the earthly temple to be destroyed.—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 28.†§

39. God's Grace:

[BSG:] **Third, God gave Israel and Judah all the grace necessary for redemption and restoration before He permitted them to suffer the penalty for breaking His covenant. From the time of Moses to the destruction of the second temple in A.D. 70, a span of more than 1,500 years, Judah experienced God's unremitting love.** Despite their failures, God was willing to work with them as long as they were willing to remain in His covenant and be transformed by His grace and power. Even when the Jewish leaders eventually decided to reject God, which was followed by Jesus' pronouncement of doom against them, God gave them more than 35 years before He executed that verdict. **During this probationary period, Christians, such as Peter (Acts 2–4), Stephen (Acts 7), and Paul (Romans 9–11), pleaded with them to accept Jesus as the Messiah and to participate in God's new covenant.** Sad to say, instead of heeding these calls, the leaders sealed their decision to reject Christ with a heavy-handed persecution of Christians that culminated in the murder of Stephen, in A.D. 34. **However, even in the decision to reject Judah as His representative nation, God continued to call individual Jews to enter His new covenant and to be saved in His kingdom.**—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 28.†§

40. The Plan of Salvation:

[BSG:] **Fourth, despite the setbacks caused by the covenant betrayal, God continued His plan of salvation and His actions to resolve the great controversy. God promised that Jesus, who was the Seed of Eve (Gen. 3:15), of Abraham (Gen. 12:2, 3, 7; Gal. 3:16, 29), and of David (2 Sam. 7:12–15, Mark 12:35–37), would bring salvation to humanity, liberating them from the dominion of the devil, and would restore God's reign on earth. At the same time, God promised that Jesus, the true Lamb of God and the fulfiller of the earthly sanctuary types (John 1:29, 2:19–22), would save humanity from the guilt and the power of sin. Though the history of humanity may seem directionless, at times, and left to the whims and devices of the devil and of human nature, the Scriptures show a clear progress of God's purposeful and intentional implementation of His plan and promise of salvation. When His own people failed Him, God worked relentlessly to bring them back to Him and to rescue humanity from the mire of sin. Abraham, Moses, and Judah are all examples of the rescued and redeemed. Nothing can stop God from keeping His promises and implementing His plans.**—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 29.†§

41. Types and Antitypes:

[BSG:] **Fifth, the earthly sanctuary and the sacrificial system were only antitypes of the coming sacrifice and ministry of Jesus. When the first temple was destroyed and Judah lamented for its past glory, God told them that the real glory was yet future** and that it depended not on materials and

architecture but **on the One to whom the sanctuary pointed** (*Ezra 3:12, Hag. 2:9, Matt. 23:16–22*). For this reason, when the second temple was destroyed, in A.D. 70, Christians did not lose hope. On the contrary, they understood that the earthly sanctuary fulfilled its mission of pointing to Jesus, to His sacrifice, and to His ministry of salvation in the real heavenly sanctuary above. Type met antitype; symbol met reality. **After Jesus' incarnation, ministry, death, resurrection, and ascension, the great controversy now was focused on the heavenly sanctuary.** The Epistle to the Hebrews discusses extensively the meaning of these changes. Thus, Matthew 24 and the destruction of the second temple, the Epistle to the Hebrews and its focus on the heavenly sanctuary are extremely important to the Adventist understanding of the great controversy and to the entirety of Adventist theology in general.

It was precisely this complex understanding of the destruction of the temple that inspired the apostolic and post-apostolic Christians during the first several centuries, and the writings of Ellen White in the nineteenth century, with an understanding of the church's identity and mission. **Having survived the destruction of the temple, the apostolic Christians shifted their focus from the temple to the heavenly sanctuary.** They overcame the fear of persecution and death because they experienced the forgiveness of sins in Christ's sacrifice on the cross and looked in faith to Christ's ministry at the right hand of God in heaven. They knew they were God's people, the New Israel, called by God to proclaim His wonderful news of salvation to all humanity gripped by the power of the devil, sin, and death. They shared their love by helping the people around them with the means they had available. And they directed the attention of others to the end of the great controversy, to the end of suffering and death, when the Lord Jesus Christ shall return to the earth and forever defeat the devil and sin.—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 29-30.^{†§}

42. This lesson will be read around the world. Think about the following questions in that light.

1. [BSG:] What do the people in your culture think about love and righteousness? Do they still have hope that there will come a time when human society, in its entirety, will be characterized by love and righteousness? Why, or why not? How might you explain to them that there cannot be true and enduring love and righteousness apart from Jesus? Or that there can be no love or righteousness apart from His revelation of these divine qualities as seen in His sacrifice? Or that love and righteousness cannot exist without the Holy Spirit's bestowal of these qualities upon humans or His help to grow them in us?
2. Examine your personal evangelistic activities. How clearly do you understand what Jesus' words "the gospel of the kingdom" mean? How can you live out this gospel in your own life? How can you and your church share this gospel with smaller and/or larger audiences around you?—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 30.[‡]

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