

God's Love and Justice

God's Love of Justice

Lesson #6 for February 8, 2025

Scriptures: Psalm 33:5; 85:10; Deuteronomy 32:4; James 1:17; Titus 1:2; Exodus 32:14; Matthew 5:43-48.

1. Is your God fickle? Is He unpredictable? Is He immoral? Does He require child sacrifices?

[From the Bible study guide=BSG:] In the ancient Near East, the “gods” of the nations were not only fickle, immoral, and unpredictable, but they also commanded atrocities, such as child sacrifice. And even then, the pagan masses could not count on their favor, and so they dared not cross their tribal “deities.”

According to Deuteronomy 32:17, behind such “gods” were demons (*see also 1 Cor. 10:20, 21*). And their forms of worship were ripe for exploitation, leaving the people in great spiritual and moral darkness.

The God of the Bible could not be more different from these demonic forces. Yahweh [*sic*] is perfectly good and His character changeless. And it is only because of God's constant goodness that we can have any hope, now and for eternity.—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Sabbath Afternoon, February 1.[§]

1 Corinthians 10:20-21: ²⁰ No! What I am saying is that what is sacrificed on pagan altars is offered to demons, not to God. And I do not want you to be partners with demons.

²¹You cannot drink from the Lord's cup and also from the cup of demons; you cannot eat at the Lord's table and also at the table of demons.—American Bible Society. (1992). *The Holy Bible: The Good News Translation** (2nd ed., 1 Corinthians 10:20-21). New York: American Bible Society [abbreviated as *Good News Bible*].[‡] [See 2 Kings 17:5-23].[‡]

[BSG:] In stark contrast to the false gods of the ancient world, and even to the modern “gods” of today, as well, Yahweh [*sic*] is deeply concerned about evil, suffering, injustice, and oppression—all of which He constantly and unequivocally condemns. And, most important, He will one day eradicate them all, as well.—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Sabbath Afternoon, February 1.[‡]

2. **Do we worship false gods? Or, have false gods?**

[From the writings of Ellen G. White=EGW:] **Multitudes have a wrong conception of God and His attributes, and are as truly serving a false god as were the worshipers of Baal.** Many even of those who claim to be Christians have allied themselves with influences that are unalterably opposed to God and His truth. Thus they are led to turn away from the divine and to exalt the human.—Ellen G. White, *Prophets and Kings** 177.1.^{††}

<https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p88.768&index=0>[‡]

3. This lesson focuses on three major points:

[BSG:] 1.) **Love and justice belong together.** Although we are not used to thinking about love and justice together, throughout Scripture, true love requires justice, and true justice is driven by love. Conversely, a pretense of love without justice is lenience toward evil; and justice without love consists of cold legalism.

Therefore, genuine love and justice describe God's perfect character. He loves justice and intends to see justice practiced in the world.

2.) **Loving justice requires constancy. Justice is the foundation of God's government.** His actions are grounded on **the constancy of the divine moral character, not on random decisions and unjust deeds.** God's justice emanates from His regularity, as He never lies, and His promises are unbreakable. While Scripture affirms God's moral immutability, it also indicates that His actions may relationally change in response to human decisions.

3.) **Loving justice takes repentance into account.** We find statements in Scripture about **God not relenting, meaning that He does not lie.** Also, passages of the Old Testament indicate that God repents, in the sense of His not bringing the expected judgment announced by Him due to human wrongdoing. **God's relenting does not mean that He lied about His judgment but that He relationally changes His actions toward people if they repent and decide to live a life of fellowship with Him.**—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 80.††

4. **God's love and His justice belong together.**

[BSG:] Throughout Scripture, love and justice go together. True love requires justice, and true justice can be governed by and meted out only in love. We are not used to thinking of these two concepts together, but that is only because both love and justice have been greatly perverted by humanity.—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Sunday, February 2.‡

Jeremiah 9:24: "If anyone wants to boast,
he should boast that he knows and understands me [the LORD],
because **my love is constant,**
and I do what is just and right.

These are the things that please me."—*Good News Bible*.*††

5. **Throughout Scripture, God has decried unfairness and injustice such as unfair scales as well as anything else that is not righteous and just.**

[BSG:] Throughout Scripture, those faithful to God greatly anticipate divine judgment as a very good thing because it brings punishment against evildoers and oppressors, and it brings justice and deliverance for the victims of injustice and oppression.—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Sunday, February 2.‡

6. It should be clear that righteousness and justice are the foundations of God's government.

Micah 6:8: No, the LORD has told us what is good. What he requires of us is this: to do what is just, to show constant love, and to live in humble fellowship with our God.—*Good News Bible*.* [What if the whole world were doing that?][‡]

7. **Do love and justice seem to be contradictory? Why? Does love always seem to be soft, conforming, and accepting while justice seems to be hard, stern, and even harsh?**

[BSG:] Many people think that love and justice are mutually exclusive. According to this perspective, one cannot be just and loving at the same time. In this view, love is lenient and precludes, or at least blurs, the due application of justice.

Conversely, it is argued that justice has to be objective and dispassionate. Thus, it necessarily excludes any form of mercy and love.

However, this view is not the only (nor the best) way of thinking about the distinction of love and justice. In fact, love and justice do not form a dichotomy in the Bible but are, rather, coherently combined in the description of God's perfect character. In the biblical wholistic account of love and justice, one cannot be properly thought of without the other. A pretense of love without justice is actually unfairness/partisanship, whereas the idea of justice without love is really cold legalism. In fact, the Bible goes even a step further in the description of God's character. God does not merely combine love and justice; He actually loves justice (*Ps. 33:5, Isa. 61:8*).—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 80-81.†§

Isaiah 61:8: The LORD says,

“I love justice and I hate oppression and crime.

I will faithfully reward my people

And make an eternal covenant with them.”—*Good News Bible*.*†

[BSG:] The Hebrew term for justice, in Psalm 33:5 and Isaiah 61:8, is *mišpāṭ*, which conveys the idea of correct government. According to Robert Culver, while modern conceptions of democratic government separate legislative, judicial, and executive functions, *mišpāṭ* is not “restricted to judicial processes only” but actually refers to “all functions of government.” From this perspective, if there is no separation of functions, government in biblical times centered primarily on the figure of the ruler rather than on law codes. Also, the ruler/judge had executive and “judicial powers.” In other words, the ruler/judge not only made judicial decisions but also executed or caused them to be executed. As an example, when David appealed to God as judge in his contention with Saul, David was not only thinking in terms of a juridical decision but also assumed a judicial execution of deliverance and vindication: “let the LORD be judge, and judge between you and me, and see and plead my case, and deliver me out of your hand” (*1 Sam. 24:15, NKJV*).—Robert D. Culver, “2443 מִשְׁפָּט,” in *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, ed. R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer Jr., and Bruce K. Waltke (Chicago: Moody Press, 1980), p. 948.

If we take this broad understanding of justice into account, to say that God loves justice seems to imply at least two important points for our study of God. **First**, God's justice is not merely related to law codes, but it fundamentally concerns His heart and character. **Second**, He loves not only the deliberation of justice but also its execution.—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 81.†§

8. Would you agree that God is “entirely good and righteous”?

[BSG:] God does not simply claim to love justice and call people **to love and do justice**, but **God Himself perfectly and unwaveringly exemplifies these traits**. Scripture teaches that God is entirely holy, faithful, righteous, and loving. God only and always does what is loving, righteous, and just. He never does any wrong.—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Monday, February 3.†§

9. Even in difficult times when Jerusalem was being attacked by the Babylonians, this was written:

Zephaniah 3:5: But the LORD is still in the city; **he does what is right** and never what is wrong. **Every morning without fail, he brings justice to his people.** And yet the

unrighteous people there keep on doing wrong and are not ashamed.—*Good News Bible*.*†

[BSG:] **God knows what is best for everyone, wants what is best for everyone, and continually works to bring about the best outcome for all involved.**—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Monday, February 3.†‡

10. See Psalm 9:7-8; and Psalm 145:9-17. Review also Psalm 7:11; 5:4; 1 John 1:5; James 1:13; Habakkuk 1:13.

[BSG:] In all this, God's goodness and glory are inextricably connected. While many idolize power, God is all-powerful, but He exercises His power only in ways that are just and loving. It is no coincidence that when Moses asked God, " 'Show me Your glory,' " God responded by saying, " 'I will make all My goodness pass before you' " (*Exod. 33:18, 19, NKJV*).—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Monday, February 3.†§ [What does *glory* mean to you? Is that goodness?]‡

11. We believe that God is a good God. **So, why does He allow so much evil to multiply in this world?** Remember that **God is even keeping the Devil alive until the great controversy over God's character and government has come to an end!** The history of evil as is playing out on this earth in the great controversy will be preserved in the heavenly records, and there will never be any reason to repeat it!
12. Another aspect of God's love is His "constancy" or changeless character. How do you understand this passage?

Malachi 3:6-7: ⁶ "I am the LORD, and I do not change. And so you, the descendants of Jacob, are not yet completely lost. ⁷You, like your ancestors before you, have turned away from my laws and have not kept them. Turn back to me, and I will turn to you. But you ask, 'What must we do to turn back to you?'"—*Good News Bible*.*†

[BSG:] In Malachi 3:6, God declares, " 'I am the LORD, I do not change' " (*NKJV*). While some read this part of the verse and take it to mean that God does not change in any way whatsoever, **the rest of the verse and its immediate context shows that the changelessness of God affirmed here is God's moral changelessness.** The rest of the verse indicates that **God may change relationally**, for God says: " 'Therefore you are not consumed, O sons of Jacob.' " And in the very next verse, God proclaims to His people, " 'Return to Me, and I will return to you' " (*Mal. 3:7, NKJV*).—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Tuesday, February 4.†‡§

[BSG:] God does enter into back-and-forth relationships with His creation, but through all such back-and-forth relationships, and through everything else, **God's character is constant.** This is likewise affirmed in James 1:17, which proclaims that all good and perfect gifts come from God, with whom there is no variation. God is not the source of evil. [Consider God's discussion with Abraham regarding Sodom and Gomorrah as recorded in Genesis 18:16-33.]

Here and elsewhere, Scripture repeatedly teaches that **God's character is unchangeable.** In other words, the Bible consistently teaches that God is **morally changeless.** Yet, God can and does enter into real relationship with creatures, to whom God responds, but always with love and justice.—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Tuesday, February 4.†‡§

2 Timothy 2:13: “If we are not faithful,
he remains faithful,
because he cannot be false to himself.”—*Good News Bible*.*

Titus 1:2b: God, who does not lie, promised us this life before the beginning of time.—*Good News Bible*.*

Hebrews 6:17-18: ¹⁷To those who were to receive what he promised, **God wanted to make it very clear that he would never change his purpose**; so he added his vow to the promise. ¹⁸There are these two things, then, that cannot change and about which God cannot lie. So we who have found safety with him are greatly encouraged to hold firmly to the hope placed before us.—*Good News Bible*.*†

13. If you believe in the absolute reliability and fairness of God’s goodness and His mercy, how can you understand things which go badly in your own life? Does considering the experience of Jesus, especially His trial and crucifixion, help you to understand what could happen to you?

14. Continuing with the idea that part of God’s love and justice is His “constancy”:

Malachi 2:17: You have tired the LORD out with your talk. But you ask, “How have we tired him?” By saying, “The LORD Almighty thinks all evildoers are good; in fact he likes them.” Or by asking, “Where is the God who is supposed to be just?”—*Good News Bible*.*

Malachi 3:2: But who will be able to endure the day when he comes? Who will be able to survive when he appears? He will be like strong soap, like a fire that refines metal.—*Good News Bible*.*

[BSG:] In this context of judgment and hope, the Lord emphasizes that He does not change, and this fact is, indeed, the reason why His people are not destroyed (*Mal. 3:6*). The idea of God’s changelessness is rendered in the New English Translation [*sic*] Bible as “ ‘I, the LORD, do not go back on my promises,’ ” which captures the notion of God’s moral covenantal immutability, suggested by the context of the passage. At the same time, the emphasis of Malachi 3:7 (“ ‘Return to Me, and I will return to you’ ” [*NKJV*]) highlights a relational and positive change of attitude on God’s part, which is what He desires to do, depending on the people’s repentance.—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 82.†Ω§

Malachi 3:6-7 [Reading again]: ⁶ “**I am the LORD, and I do not change.** And so you, the descendants of Jacob, are not yet completely lost. ⁷You, like your ancestors before you, have turned away from my laws and have not kept them. Turn back to me, and I will turn to you. But you ask, ‘What must we do to turn back to you?’”—*Good News Bible*.*††

[BSG:] In James 1:17, the idea of divine constancy and moral immutability is also underscored. The context of James 1 indicates that temptations are not prompted by God, as He consistently and constantly gives us good and perfect gifts from above. Thus, **instead of a capricious combination of temptations and gifts, He consistently offers us only gifts.** As “the Father of lights,” He shows “no variation or shadow of turning” (*James 1:17, NKJV*). The connection between God as the Creator of light and His constancy also appears in Psalm 136:7–9, which is part of the iterative emphasis of the psalm: “For His mercy endures forever” (*NKJV*). In these verses, the psalmist underscores the creative power and constancy of God:

“to Him who made great lights, for His mercy endures forever—the sun to rule by day, for His mercy endures forever; the moon and stars to rule by night, for His mercy endures forever” (Ps. 136:7–9, NKJV).—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 82.†§

James 1:17: Every good gift and every perfect present comes from heaven; it comes down from God, the Creator of the heavenly lights, who does not change or cause darkness by turning.—*Good News Bible*.*

15. Is it possible to put these two passages in Malachi and James together and make sense of both?

16. **A part of God’s love is that He takes a person’s repentance into account.**

[BSG:] Can God “repent”? If so, what would that mean? We have seen that God’s character never changes. However, some biblical texts speak of God as “repenting” or “relenting.” At least for humans, repentance involves recognition that one has done something wrong. How, then, can some biblical passages depict God as “repenting”?—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Wednesday.‡

Exodus 32:14: So the LORD changed his mind and did not bring on his people the disaster he had threatened.—*Good News Bible*.*†

Jeremiah 18:4-10: ⁴Whenever a piece of pottery turned out imperfect, he would take the clay and make it into something else.

⁵ Then the LORD said to me, ⁶ **“Haven’t I the right to do with you people of Israel what the potter did with the clay?”** You are in my hands just like clay in the potter’s hands. ⁷If at any time I say that I am going to uproot, break down, or destroy any nation or kingdom, ⁸**but then that nation turns from its evil, I will not do what I said I would.** ⁹On the other hand, if I say that I am going to plant or build up any nation or kingdom, ¹⁰but then that nation disobeys me and does evil, I will not do what I said I would.”—*Good News Bible*.*† [So, God does change?‡]

[BSG:] In these and many other passages, God is depicted as relenting of judgment in response to some repentance or intercession by people. God promises that, if the people will turn from their wickedness, He will turn from the judgment He planned. **God’s turning from bringing judgment in response to human repentance is a common theme throughout Scripture.**—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Wednesday, February 5.†‡

17. How do you explain this passage and talk about God’s constancy and being unchangeable?

1 Samuel 15:1,10-11,27-29,34: ¹Samuel said to Saul, “I am the one whom the LORD sent to anoint you king of his people Israel. Now listen to what the LORD Almighty says....”

¹⁰ The LORD said to Samuel, ¹¹ **“I am sorry that I made Saul king; he has turned away from me and disobeyed my commands.”** Samuel was angry, and all night long he pleaded with the LORD.... [Did God make a mistake in naming Saul king?]

²⁷ Then Samuel turned to leave, but Saul caught hold of his cloak, and it tore.

²⁸ Samuel said to him, “The LORD has torn the kingdom of Israel away from you today and given it to someone who is a better man than you. ²⁹**Israel’s majestic God does not lie or change his mind. He is not a human being — he does not change his mind.**” ...

³⁴ Then Samuel went to Ramah, and King Saul went home to Gibeah. ³⁵As long as Samuel lived, he never again saw the king; but he grieved over him. **The LORD was sorry that he had made Saul king of Israel.**—*Good News Bible*.*††

18. Did God really want Saul as king of Israel? Who wanted a king like Saul? (See 1 Samuel 8-9.) The people wanted a king like Saul—to be like the surrounding nations. Saul never was God’s choice for a king. In fact, God did not want them to have a human king at all! They believed that God was responsible for whatever He allowed or did not prevent! Is that true? Is God then responsible for all the evil that has taken place on this planet?
19. Have you been convinced by your experience and Bible reading that God can be trusted forever?

[BSG:] These passages explicitly declare that God “is not a man, that He should relent” (1 Sam. 15:29, NKJV) and “God is not a man, that He should lie, nor a son of man, that He should repent. Has He said, and will He not do? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?” (Num. 23:19, NKJV). Read in light of the other passages, these texts cannot be taken to mean that God does not “relent” at all, but instead they convey the truth that He does not “relent” or “repent” in the ways that humans do. **Rather, God always keeps His promises**, and while **He will change course in response to human repentance**, He does so always in accordance with His goodness and His Word. God relents from judgment in response to repentance, precisely because His character is good, righteous, loving, and merciful.—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Wednesday, February 5.†‡§ [God wishes that He could save everyone, even the Devil. But, if He did, that would be “torture” for them, and they would just start the whole great controversy all over again in heaven!†]

[BSG:] What is the significance of the biblical depictions of divine “relenting”? What does this convey about the constancy of God’s character alongside the fact that God enters into genuine give-and-take relationships that actually make a difference to Him?—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Wednesday, February 5.‡

20. We believe—as expressed by the ideas of this study—that loving justice takes repentance into account. Then, how do you explain some apparently contradictory notions in the Old Testament such as in 1 Samuel 15 (as above) and other texts such as those that follow?

Numbers 23:19: “God is not like men, who lie;
He is not a human who changes his mind.
Whatever he promises, he does;
He speaks, and it is done.”—*Good News Bible*.*

Hebrews 6:17-18 [Reading again]: ¹⁷To those who were to receive what he promised, **God wanted to make it very clear that he would never change his purpose**; so he added his vow to the promise. ¹⁸There are these two things, then, that cannot change and about which God cannot lie. So we who have found safety with him are greatly encouraged to hold firmly to the hope placed before us.—*Good News Bible*.*††

[BSG:] On the other hand, Old Testament passages narrate God’s relenting or repenting in the sense of His not bringing the judgment He announced against those who did evil. One of the most well-known examples is the **divine mercy**

shown to Nineveh in the book of Jonah (*Jon. 3:10*), where Jonah himself, in the beginning of chapter 4, disagrees with God's repenting. Jonah's explanation of why he does not want to announce the coming divine judgment against Nineveh reinforces God's mercy: " 'LORD, was not this what I said when I was still in my country? Therefore I fled previously to Tarshish; for I know that You are a gracious and merciful God, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness, One who relents from doing harm' " (*Jon. 4:1, 2, NKJV*).—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 83.†§ [Read again Exodus 32:14 and Jeremiah 18:7-10 as quoted in Item #16. Don't you wish we had a recording of that previous discussion?]†

Exodus 34:6-7: ⁶ The LORD then passed in front of him [Moses] and called out, "I, the LORD, am a God who is full of compassion and pity, who is not easily angered and who shows great love and faithfulness. ⁷I keep my promise for thousands of generations and forgive evil and sin; but I will not fail to punish children and grandchildren to the third and fourth generation for the sins of their parents."—*Good News Bible*.*†

Deuteronomy 7:9: "Remember that the LORD your God is the only God and that he is faithful. **He will keep his covenant and show his constant love** to a thousand generations of those who love him and obey his commands."—*Good News Bible*.*†

21. And how should God's goodness have an effect on us and our relationship with others?

Romans 3:25-26: ²⁵⁻²⁶God offered him, so that by his blood he should become the means by which people's sins are forgiven through their faith in him. God did this **in order to demonstrate that he [God] is righteous**. In the past he was patient and overlooked people's sins; but in the present time he deals with their sins, **in order to demonstrate his [God's] righteousness**. In this way **God shows that he himself is righteous** and that he puts right everyone who believes in Jesus.—*Good News Bible*.*†† [This is the only verse in the Bible in which the author tried to explain directly why Jesus came, ministered, and died. And he said three times that it was to demonstrate *God's righteousness* before he even mentioned anything that God does for us humans!][†]

Matthew 5:43-48: ⁴³ "You have heard that it was said, 'Love your friends, hate your enemies.' ⁴⁴But now I tell you: **love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,** ⁴⁵so that you may become the children of your Father in heaven. For he makes his sun to shine on bad and good people alike, and gives rain to those who do good and to those who do evil. ⁴⁶Why should God reward you if you love only the people who love you? Even the tax collectors do that! ⁴⁷And if you speak only to your friends, have you done anything out of the ordinary? Even the pagans do that! ⁴⁸You must be perfect — just as your Father in heaven is perfect!"—*Good News Bible*.*† [The word *perfect* in this context means "mature" or even "fully ripe" as in the case of a vegetable or fruit.]†

[BSG:] Though God's love and mercy far exceed any reasonable expectations, it never overrides or contravenes justice. On the contrary, it brings justice and mercy together (*Ps. 85:10*). Likewise, the Bible exhorts us: " 'Observe mercy and justice, and wait on your God continually' " (*Hos. 12:6, NKJV*). As another version puts it, "Hold fast to love and justice" (*Hos. 12:6, ESV; compare with Luke 11:42*).—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Thursday, February 6.†§

22. ***When the great controversy comes to an end, will we be convinced that God has been completely fair, just, and loving in everything that He has done?***

Philippians 2:10-11: ¹⁰ And so, in honour [*sic-Br*] of the name of Jesus all beings in heaven, on earth, and in the world below will fall on their knees, [this includes Satan and all his followers] ¹¹and all will openly proclaim that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.—*Good News Bible*. *‡

Romans 2:4-5: ⁴Or perhaps you despise his great kindness, tolerance, and patience. Surely you know that God is kind, because he is trying to lead you to repent. ⁵But you have a hard and stubborn heart, and so you are making your own punishment even greater on the Day when God’s anger and righteous judgements will be revealed.—*Good News Bible*. *

Revelation 15:3-4: ³And singing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb:
“Lord God Almighty,
how great and wonderful are your deeds!
King of the nations,
how right and true are your ways!
⁴Who will not stand in awe of you, Lord?
Who will refuse to declare your greatness?
You alone are holy.
All the nations will come
and worship you,
because your just actions are seen by all.”—*Good News Bible*. *

23. What could God do to get even the Devil to admit that God has done everything He possibly could to save everyone? See *The Great Controversy* pages 662-673 for the full story.

24. And how will God respond to those who oppose Him in every possible way?

Revelation 19:1-2: ¹ After this I heard what sounded like the roar of a large crowd of people in heaven, saying, “Praise God! Salvation, glory, and power belong to our God! ²True and just are his judgements! He has condemned the prostitute who was corrupting the earth with her immorality. God has punished her because she killed his servants.”—*Good News Bible*. *

[EGW:] The word of God reveals His character. He Himself has declared His infinite love and pity. When Moses prayed, “Show me Thy glory,” the Lord answered, “I will make all My goodness pass before thee.” Exodus 33:18, 19. This is His glory. The Lord passed before Moses, and proclaimed, “The Lord, The Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin.” Exodus 34:6, 7. He is “slow to anger, and of great kindness,” “because He delighteth in mercy.” Jonah 4:2; Micah 7:18.

God has bound our hearts to Him by unnumbered tokens in heaven and in earth. Through the things of nature, and the deepest and tenderest earthly ties that human hearts can know, He has sought to reveal Himself to us. Yet these but

imperfectly represent His love. Though all these evidences have been given, the enemy of good blinded the minds of men, so that they looked upon God with fear; **they thought of Him as severe and unforgiving. Satan led men to conceive of God as a being whose chief attribute is stern justice,—one who is a severe judge, a harsh, exacting creditor. He pictured the Creator as a being who is watching with jealous eye to discern the errors and mistakes of men, that He may visit judgments upon them. It was to remove this dark shadow, by revealing to the world the infinite love of God, that Jesus came to live among men.**—Ellen G. White, *Steps to Christ** 10.2-3.†‡ [Jesus came to reveal the truth about God!][‡] [<https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p108.29&index=0>][‡]

[BSG:] 1.) Why is it so important to recognize that God's glory is bound up with His goodness? How does this correct a theology of glory that emphasizes sheer power without emphasizing the love and character of God?

2.) Have you ever questioned God's goodness? Do you know anyone who has questioned God's goodness because of the way those who claim to follow God sometimes act, or simply because of all the evil in the world? How did you work through that question for yourself, and how might you be able to help someone struggling with the question of God's goodness....

3.) How does the reality of the great controversy help us understand all the evil that exists now?—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Friday.‡

25. In conclusion, consider these challenging questions:

[BSG:] 1.) How can we reflect God's justice as we react to injustice and wrongdoing in the world?

2.) God repents and changes His judgment depending on the people's attitude toward Him. Is God's justice full of revenge and retribution, or does it envisage some form of restoration? Explain. How is God's repentance related to restoration?

3.) God is willing to relent and restore His relationship with His people. From this perspective, how can we cultivate justice and love to restore broken relationships?

4.) Have there been times when you tried to confront injustice and it backfired or went poorly? If so, how did you respond? How can you continue to pursue justice and help the most vulnerable?

5.) Have you ever been treated unjustly? If so, what was the outcome of your situation? How does your experience influence the way you treat others?—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 84.‡

[BSG:] Considering that God may change relationally toward His people when they choose to accept or reject Him, how can we reflect God's loving justice as we react to injustice and wrongdoing in the world?—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 80.‡

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