

SS-Q2-L2-The Central Issue: Love or Selfishness?

April 6-12, 2024

Adult
Sabbath School Lesson
Meat in Due Season
April May June 2024



THE GREAT
CONTROVERSY
2nd Quarter

THE GREAT
CONTROVERSY
BETWEEN
CHRIST AND SATAN
E. G. WHITE
COMPLETE WITH ORIGINAL ILLUSTRATIONS

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THE CENTRAL
ISSUE:

LOVE OR
SELFISHNESS?

Lesson 2 for April 13, 2024



Sabbath Afternoon - April 6, 2024

Scripture Reading for the Week:

[Luke 19:41-44](#); [Matthew 23:37-38](#); [Hebrews 11:35-38](#); ; [Acts 2:44-47](#); [John 13:35](#).

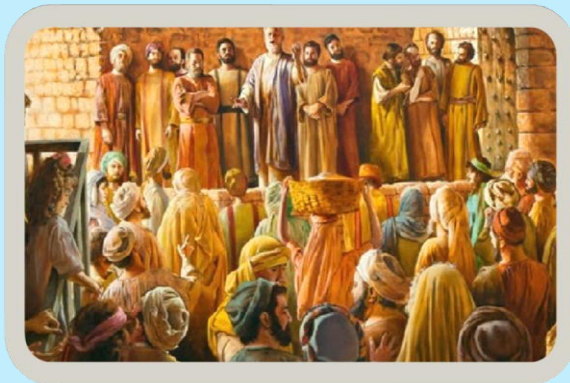
Thought for Meditation:

“One thing thou lackest,” Jesus said. “If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow Me.” Christ read the ruler’s heart. Only one thing he lacked, but that was a vital principle. He needed the love of God in the soul. This lack, unless supplied, would prove fatal to him; his whole nature would become corrupted. By indulgence, selfishness would strengthen. That he might receive the love of God, his supreme love of self must be surrendered.
... {CSA 15.1}

Memory Text

“ ‘Fear not, for I am with you; Be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, Yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand’ ’ (Isaiah 41:10).

This week's SS Lesson will compare the difference between love and selfishness which can be traced back to the history of God's ancient people. This includes the significant lessons that we can obtain by a close investigation of the facts that happened in the past.



Outline of the Study

Lessons from the Destruction of Jerusalem

Sunday-April 7, 2024

A Brokenhearted Saviour-The Rejection of the Love of God

[John 1:11](#); [Luke 19:41-44](#); [Matthew 23:37-38](#); [Matthew 24:15-20](#);
[John 5:40](#).

Monday-April 8, 2024

Christians Providentially Preserved-God's Care for His People

[Psalms 46:1](#); [Isaiah 41:10](#); [Hebrews 11:35-38](#).

Lessons from the First Christians

Tuesday-April 9, 2024

Faithful Amid Persecution-Fidelity in the Pursuit-Faithfulness in the Persecution

[Acts 2:41](#); [Acts 4:4](#); [Acts 4:17](#); [Acts 4:31](#); [Acts 5:17-18](#); [Acts 5:42](#);
[Acts 8:1-8](#); [Acts 7:59](#); [Acts 9:31](#); [Acts 12:2](#); [Acts 9:31](#); [Mark 16:15](#);
[Acts 1:8](#); [Acts 1:8](#); [Colossians 1:23](#).

Wednesday-April 10, 2024

Caring for the Community - Help the Needy

[Matthew 4:23](#); [Acts 2:44-47](#); [Acts 3:6-9](#); [Acts 6:1-7](#); [Acts 10:38](#);
[John 10:10](#); [Matthew 24:1-51](#); [Luke 21:1-38](#).

Thursday-April 11, 2024

A Legacy of Love-Love, our Sign of Identity

[John 13:35](#)

Friday-April 12, 2024

**Insights and Further Study
From the Pen of Inspiration**

Lessons from the Destruction of Jerusalem

Sunday-April 7, 2024

A Brokenhearted Saviour-The Rejection of the Love of God

[John 1:11](#); [Luke 19:41-44](#); [Matthew 23:37-38](#); [Matthew 24:15-20](#);

[John 5:40](#).

“Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were not willing!”

(Matthew 23:37)



The Solemn Assembly of the Last Day-Reason of Condemnation will be Heard

In view of the solemn responsibilities that rest upon us, let us contemplate the future, that we may understand what we must do in order to meet it. In that day shall we be confronted with neglect and contempt of God and His mercy, with rejection of His truth and love? In the solemn assembly of the last day, in the hearing of the universe, will be read the reason of the condemnation of the sinner. For the first time parents will learn what has been the secret life of their children. Children will see how many wrongs they have committed against their parents. There will be a general revealing of the secrets and motives of the heart, for that which is hid will be made manifest. Those who have made sport of solemn things connected with the judgment will be sobered as they face its terrible reality. **{CG 560.2}**

A Stubborn Rejection of Divine Love and Mercy-Protection will be Withdrawn

The Jews had forged their own fetters; they had filled for themselves the cup of vengeance. In the utter destruction that befell them as a nation, and in all the woes that followed them in their dispersion, they were but reaping the harvest which their own hands had sown. Says the prophet, "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself;" "for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity." [**Hosea 13:9; 14:1.**] Their sufferings are often represented as a punishment visited upon them by the direct decree of God. It is thus that the great deceiver seeks to conceal his own work. By stubborn rejection of divine love and mercy, the Jews had caused the protection of God to be withdrawn from them, and Satan was permitted to rule them according to his will. The horrible cruelties enacted in the destruction of Jerusalem are a demonstration of Satan's vindictive power over those who yield to his control. {**GC88 36.1**}

The Love for God, and Faith in His Word Grown Cold

Since the rejection of the first message, a sad change has taken place in the churches. As truth is spurned, error is received and cherished. Love for God, and faith in his word, have grown cold. The churches have grieved the Spirit of the Lord, and it has been in a great measure withdrawn. The words of the prophet Ezekiel are fearfully applicable: "Son of man, these men have set up their idols in their heart, and put the stumbling-block of their iniquity before their face. Should I be inquired of at all by them?" "I the Lord will answer him that cometh according to the multitude of his idols." [**Ezekiel 14:3, 4.**] Men may not bow down to idols of wood and stone, but all who love the things of the world and take pleasure in unrighteousness have set up idols in their hearts. The majority of professed Christians are serving other gods besides the Lord. Pride and luxury are cherished, idols are set up in the sanctuary, and her holy places are polluted. {**4SP 237.3**}

Consider the following

The rejection of the love of God

Jesus wept as he approached Jerusalem (**Luke 19:41-44**). He knew that they would suffer the well-deserved consequences of their stubborn rejection of God's loving calls (**Matt. 23:37**).

He cried because the tragedy could have been avoided. Because God loves us so much that he does not want anyone to die, but for everyone to have eternal life (**Jn . 5:39-40; Ezek. 18:31-32**).

History tells us that the Jews rebelled in the year 66 against Roman abuses. The various Jewish factions fought among themselves, while the Romans laid siege to the city. In the year 70 everything ended. Titus destroyed Jerusalem and the Temple. One million Jews perished.

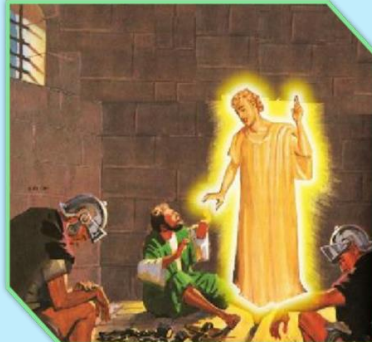
But history does not tell us how Satan incited the Jews to rebellion, and the Romans to revenge. The destruction of Jerusalem was the direct work of the devil. By turning away from the source of life, Israel was at the mercy of an enemy that only seeks destruction and death.

Monday-April 8, 2024

Christians Providentially Preserved - God's Care for His People

[Psalms 46:1](#); [Isaiah 41:10](#); [Hebrews 11:35-38](#).

“So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand” (Isaiah 41:10)



God's Care for His People in the Great Final Struggle

In one of the most beautiful and comforting passages of Isaiah's prophecy, reference is made to the pillar of cloud and of fire to represent God's care for His people in the great final struggle with the powers of evil: "The Lord will create upon every dwelling place of Mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night: for above all the glory shall be a covering. And there shall be a tabernacle for a shadow in the daytime from the heat, and for a place of refuge, and for a covert from storm and from rain" (**Isaiah 4:5, 6, margin**). {CC 91.3}

Perfect Trust in the God of Israel-God Their Protector

For I was ashamed to require of the king a band of soldiers and horsemen to help us against the enemy in the way: because we had spoken unto the king, saying, The hand of our God is upon all them for good that seek him; but his power and his wrath is against all them that forsake him. **Ezra 8:22. {CC 261.1}**

Ezra's faith that God would do a mighty work for His people, led him to tell Artaxerxes of his desire to return to Jerusalem to revive an interest in the study of God's word and to assist his brethren in restoring the holy city. As Ezra declared his perfect trust in the God of Israel as one abundantly able to protect and care for His people, the king was deeply impressed.... He made him a special representative of the Medo-Persian kingdom, and conferred on him extensive powers for the carrying out of the purposes that were in his heart. . . . **{CC 261.2}**

Thus again the children of the dispersion were given opportunity to return to the land with the possession of which were linked the promises to the house of Israel. . . . **{CC 261.3}**

Affliction Purifies God's People

Soon there is to be trouble all over the world. It becomes everyone to seek to know God. We have no time to delay. . . . **{LDE 153.3}**

God's love for His church is infinite. His care over His heritage is unceasing. He suffers no affliction to come upon the church but such as is essential for her purification, her present and eternal good. He will purify His church even as He purified the temple at the beginning and close of His ministry on earth. All that He brings upon the church in test and trial comes that His people may gain deeper piety and more strength to carry the triumphs of the cross to all parts of the world.--**9T 228 (1909). {LDE 153.4}**

Afflictions, crosses, temptations, adversity, and our varied trials are God's workmen to refine us, sanctify us, and fit us for the heavenly garner.--**3T 115 (1872). {LDE 154.1}**

Wonder at the Marvelous Work of God on Behalf of His People

All the world should wonder at the marvelous work of God in behalf of His people--that a man determined to pursue a sinful course should be so controlled by divine power as to utter, instead of imprecations, the richest and most precious promises, in the language of sublime and impassioned

poetry. And the favor of God at this time manifested toward Israel was to be an assurance of His protecting care for His obedient, faithful children in all ages. When Satan should inspire evil men to misrepresent, harass, and destroy God's people, this very occurrence would be brought to their remembrance, and would strengthen their courage and their faith in God. {PP 449.1}

Please visit this site for more information on this matter:

- [Meat In Due Season - The Final Display of God's Power and Glory \(google.com\)](#)
- [Meat In Due Season - The Close of Probation and the Time of Trouble \(google.com\)](#)

Consider the following

God's care for his people

In his love, God gave an opportunity to everyone who wanted to escape destruction. He gave a sign: Jerusalem surrounded by armies (**Luke 21:20**). Gaius Cestius Gallus fulfilled that sign in the year 66. The siege was lifted, and the Zealot leader Eleazar ben Simon pursued the Romans and defeated them.

Everyone who believed in Jesus' words took advantage of that moment when Jerusalem was left unguarded to flee.

A few months later, Nero sent Vespasian to quell the rebellion. From the year 67 to 70, the siege was permanent.

God can and wants to protect his children, even in the most difficult times (**Ps. 46:1; Isa. 41:10**). However, many have lost their lives because of their faithfulness to God (**Heb. 11:35-38**).

—Why are some protected and others, apparently, abandoned by God?

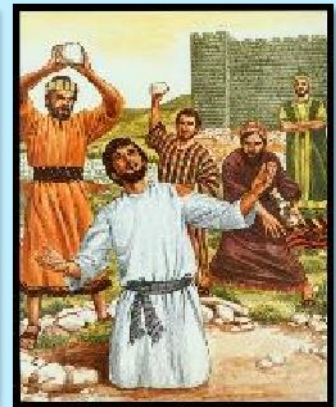
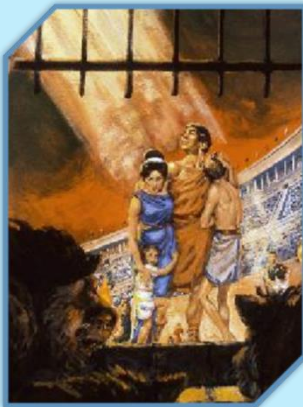
Lessons from the First Christians

Tuesday-April 9, 2024

Faithful Amid Persecution-Fidelity in the Pursuit-Faithfulness in the Persecution

[Acts 2:41](#); [Acts 4:4](#); [Acts 4:17](#); [Acts 4:31](#); [Acts 5:17-18](#); [Acts 5:42](#); [Acts 8:1-8](#); [Acts 7:59](#); [Acts 9:31](#); [Acts 12:2](#); [Acts 9:31](#); [Mark 16:15](#); [Acts 1:8](#); [Acts 1:8](#); [Colossians 1:23](#).

“But Saul began to destroy the church. Going from house to house, he dragged off both men and women and put them in prison” (Acts 8:3)



Amidst Darkness and Persecution There have always been True and Faithful Ones

The will of God, so plainly revealed in His Word, was covered up with errors and traditions, which have been taught as the commandments of God. Although this heaven-daring deception will be suffered to be carried on until the second appearing of Jesus, yet through all this time of error and deception, God has not been left without witnesses. Amid the darkness and

persecution of the church there have always been true and faithful ones who kept all of God's commandments. {EW 216.1}

Why there's no Persecution? One Reason is the Church Conformed to the World's Standard

There is another and more important question that should engage the attention of the churches of today. The apostle Paul declares that "all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." [2 Timothy 3:12.] Why is it, then, that persecution seems in a great degree to slumber?—The only reason is, that the church has conformed to the world's standard, and therefore awakens no opposition. The religion which is current in our day is not of the pure and holy character that marked the Christian faith in the days of Christ and his apostles. It is only because of the spirit of compromise with sin, because the great truths of the Word of God are so indifferently regarded, because there is so little vital godliness in the church, that Christianity is apparently so popular with the world. Let there be a revival of the faith and power of the early church, and the spirit of persecution will be revived, and the fires of persecution will be rekindled. {GC88 48.2}

The Destruction Comes to Those Who Are Not Pressing Together

True faith and sanctified work are greatly needed at this time. God says to His people, "Press together, press together; that you may not be destroyed as were the inhabitants of Jerusalem." "Come, My people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee, hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast. For, behold, the Lord cometh out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity; the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain." Persecution is coming, and God calls upon all to stand firm in Christian love, their hearts knit together, of one mind and one judgment. His people are to cleave to Him, and they are to love one another as He has loved them. Christ's life is to be their example. In love, in meekness, in humility, they are to follow Him. Mrs. E. G. White.{ST, October 31, 1900 par. 13}

Persecution Surely Comes because of Bitter Opposition

All who have genuine faith will be tested and tried. They may have to forsake houses and lands, and even their own relatives, because of bitter opposition. But "when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another," Christ said, "Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, til the Son of man be

come" (**Matthew 10:23**). **Ms. 9, 1900, p.4.**("Our Duty Under Persecution," **Jan. 26, 1900.**) {12MR 149.2}

God Wants His People to Be Ready to Meet Him in Peace

God is deferring the bringing of His judgment upon the earth in order that those who are supposed to be His people, but who have been bringing in the very things He has condemned in ancient Israel, working according to methods He will not accept, may get ready to meet Him in peace. Those who have been devising and bringing in selfish, covetous principles, and taking credit to themselves for their sharpness, will never see the kingdom of God unless they are decidedly changed in character; for selfishness is an abomination in the sight of the Lord, and is a dishonor to Christ, their Creator and Redeemer, whose name they claim. God says, "I will thoroughly purge My floor of all chaff. I will sift My people as in a sieve. Those who name My name must be thoroughly cleansed from all false and corrupting principles. Those whom I claim as My heritage will even now be wondered at as a peculiar people, cleansed from all fraud, all injustice. Those who enter the city of God will here have worked righteousness revealing to the world the principles of heaven."--**Ms. 15, 1901, pp. 3-4. (Diary, Feb. 21, 1901.) White Estate Washington, D. C. October 27, 1982** {12MR 150.1}

Consider the following

Fidelity in the Pursuits

The beginnings were truly hopeful: conversions numbered in the thousands (**Acts 2:41; 4:4**); the believers preached with power (**Acts 4:31; 5:42**).

But the enemy was restless. First threats (**Acts 4:17-18**); then, punishments (**Acts 5:40**); finally, death (**Acts 7:59**).

Because of the persecution raised by Saul, the disciples were scattered (**Acts 8:1**). But, far from the light going out, thanks to the faithfulness of the believers, it shone with much more brilliance throughout the entire known world (**Acts 8:4; 11:19-21; Rom. 15:19; Col. 1:23**).

Jesus had given his Church a commission and the power to carry it forward (**Acts 1:8**). No power, physical or spiritual, can stop the advance of the gospel (**Mt. 16:18; Rom. 8:31**).

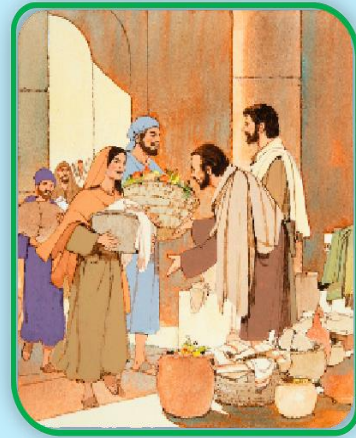
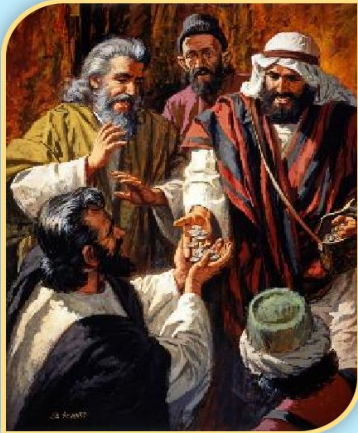
Wednesday-April 10, 2024

Caring for the Community-Help the Needy

[Matthew 4:23](#); [Acts 2:44-47](#); [Acts 3:6-9](#); [Acts 6:1-7](#); [Acts 10:38](#);

[John 10:10](#); [Matthew 24:1-51](#); [Luke 21:1-38](#).

“And they sold their property and their goods, and distributed it to all according to each one's need” (**Acts 2:45**)



Angels Constantly Bringing Blessing, and Hope, Courage, and Help to the Needy

Heaven is brought near to earth by that mystic ladder, the base of which is firmly planted on the earth, while the topmost round reaches the throne of the Infinite. Angels are constantly ascending and descending this ladder of shining brightness, bearing the prayers of the needy and distressed to the Father above, and bringing blessing and hope, courage and help, to the children of men. These angels of light create a heavenly atmosphere about the soul, lifting us toward the unseen and the eternal. We cannot behold their forms with our natural sight; only by spiritual vision can we discern heavenly things. The spiritual ear alone can hear the harmony of heavenly voices. {AA 153.1}

Those Who are Enlightened will give Freely to Support the Needy Portions of the Lord's Vineyard

When God's messengers recognize their responsibilities toward the needy portions of the Lord's vineyard, and in the spirit of the Master Worker labor untiringly for the conversion of souls, the angels of God will prepare the way before them, and the means necessary for the carrying forward of the work

will be provided. Those who are enlightened will give freely to support the work done in their behalf. They will respond liberally to every call for help, and the Spirit of God will move upon their hearts to sustain the Lord's cause not only in the home fields, but in the regions beyond. Thus strength will come to the working forces in other places, and the work of the Lord will advance in His own appointed way. **{AA 357.3}**

Helping the Helpless, Feeding the Hungry, and Bringing the Poor to our Homes

The work of gathering in the needy, the oppressed, the suffering, the destitute, is the very work which every church that believes the truth for this time should long since have been doing. We are to show the tender sympathy of the Samaritan, . . . feeding the hungry, bringing the poor that are cast out to our homes, gathering from God everyday grace and strength that will enable us to reach to the very depths of human misery and help those who cannot possibly help themselves. In doing this work we have a favorable opportunity to set forth Christ the Crucified One. **{CME 24.1}**

Please visit this site for additional input on the Medical Missionary Work
[Advent Health Messages - MMW Lessons on Health 2023 \(google.com\)](#)
[Advent Health Messages - SDA Theology of Health \(google.com\)](#)

Consider the following

Help the needy

What effect did the gospel have on the early Christians (**Acts 2:42-47**)?

As ambassadors of Christ, they imitated Jesus. By caring for the needs of those around them, they gained the favor of the entire town.

As then, the Church must be characterized by the love of Christians for each other, and by concern for their community.

Thursday-April 11, 2024
A Legacy of Love-Love, our Sign of Identity

[John 13:35](#)

"By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another"
(John 13:35)



Supreme Love for God-the Great Principle that Keeps to One Another

Every man is to remember that every other man has an identity which must not be submerged in any human being. Supreme love for God is the great principle that keeps men close to one another in unselfish fellowship. The love of Christ leads man to see the good there is in his fellow beings. But he who is absorbed in correcting his neighbor neglects to give attention to his own defects and loses God out of his reckoning. He does not appreciate God enough to seek to be like Him, and he loses the power to bring forth the fruits of righteousness. He watches for the defects in his brother, forgetting that he is the purchase of the blood of Christ. **{20MR 326.2}**

Christ's Identity is the Power of His Influence-God's Love Demonstrated in Him

Christ's identity with man will ever be the power of His influence. He became bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh. . . . He clothed His divine nature with the garb of humanity, and demonstrated before the heavenly universe, before the unfallen worlds, and before the fallen world how much God loves the human race.--**Ms 165, 1899, pp. 2-4. ("Words of Counsel to Ministers and Physicians," typed December 26, 1899.) {5MR 114.3}**

Love to God and Man-the Greatest Evidence of True Conversion

One of the strongest evidences of true conversion is love to God and man. Those who accept Jesus as their Redeemer have a deep, sincere love for others of like precious faith. Thus it was with the believers at Thessalonica. "As touching brotherly love," the apostle wrote, "ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another. And indeed ye do it toward all the brethren which are in all Macedonia: but we beseech you, brethren, that ye increase more and more; and that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you; that ye may walk honestly toward them that are without, and that ye may have lack of nothing." **{AA 262.3}**

Consider the following

Love, our sign of identity.

Each of the parties involved in the cosmic conflict has its own characteristics: Satan hates and destroys; God loves and restores.

Followers of one party or another act according to these patterns. If we follow God, we will show it through the love shown to others **(1Jn. 4:20-21)**.

Christians of the 2nd and 3rd centuries put selfless love into practice. During two major pandemics

(in the years 160 and 265), they dedicated themselves to caring for those affected, without taking into account, their own safety.

They gave themselves out of love, and they benefited millions of people. But they did not draw their attention to themselves, but to the one for whom they were willing to give their lives, their Savior: Jesus.

Friday-April 12, 2024

Insights and Further Study

The young among us are, as a general thing, allied to the world. But few maintain a special warfare against the internal foe. But few have an earnest, anxious desire to know and do the will of God. But few hunger and thirst after righteousness. But few know anything of the Spirit of God as a reprover or comforter. Where are the missionaries? Where are the self-denying, self-sacrificing ones? Where are the cross-bearers? Self and self-interest have swallowed up high and noble principles. Things of eternal moment bear with no special weight upon the mind. God requires you individually to come up to the point, to make an entire surrender. Ye cannot serve God and mammon. Ye cannot serve self and at the same time be servants of Christ. You must die to self, die to your love of pleasure, and learn to inquire, Will God be pleased with the objects for which I purpose to spend this means? Shall I glorify him? We are commanded, whether we eat or drink, or whatsoever we do, to do all to the glory of God... {RH, August 10, 1886 par. 9}

Questions to Ponder

1. What does the event in the destruction of Jerusalem foreshadow in our lesson this week?
2. How does Satan deceive and destroy God's people?
3. In the destruction of Jerusalem, what instruction did Jesus give to His disciples before it happened?
4. In what way does the experience of the early Christian relate to us at present?
5. In the great controversy, what did Satan want to deface from humanity?
6. How do we die to selfishness to experience true love?
7. Based on the statement above, **{RH, August 10, 1886 par. 9}**, what lesson and precaution is given to the youth in the last days?

From the Pen of Inspiration

“It is the privilege of every soul to be a living channel through which God can communicate to the world the treasures of His grace, the unsearchable riches of Christ. There is nothing that Christ desires so much as agents who will represent to the world His Spirit and character. There is nothing that the world needs so much as the manifestation through humanity of the Saviour's love. All heaven is waiting for channels through which can be poured the holy oil to be a joy and blessing to human hearts.” **EGW (God's Amazing Grace - Unsearchable Riches, June 28)**

Disclaimer

This Sabbath School Lesson, Meat in Due Season Advanced Commentary is not to replace, discredit, disapprove, or discriminate against what had been made by the Sabbath School Department of General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist but to uphold, advance, sustain, facilitate, clarify, and protect the essence of the truth taught in the Bible **{Isa. 8:20}** and the inspiration (through the Prophetic Ministration of Ellen G. White and another prophet she predicted in **TM 475**).

For more information and inquiry

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Glory be to the Lord Jesus Christ, Our Coming King of kings!