



## 2024 2Q The Great Controversy Lesson 7 Motivated by Hope

by Tim Jennings

### SABBATH

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Last week the first question in our Q&A time was “When does hope become fantasy?” And the answer I gave was, “Whenever and wherever it is detached from reality.”

For hope to be more than wishful thinking, imaginary dreams, fantasies—our hope must be connected to objective reality—so, upon what do you base your hope and what is the basis for that choice?

I believe the God of love exists and it is the most rationale decision to place one’s hope in Him, because the various threads of evidence are overwhelmingly conclusive, consistent, rational, reasonable, and provide the best framework for life, health, and decision-making. And those threads of evidence are:

**Science:** Non-living matter exists on physical laws, such as the laws of physics and gravity—and those laws are constants, they are reliable, predictable, testable, and do not discriminate. They provide evidence to the God of Creation, the laws He built reality to operate upon. The heavens declare the glory of God.

Non-living matter and the physical laws provide the building blocks for living organisms. But life itself is built upon the law of love—and this law is also a constant, testable, reliable, predictable. Love is the principle of giving, and all living organisms operate upon it. With every breath, we give away carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) to the plants and the plants give oxygen back to us. If you put a plastic bag over your head and “hoard” your CO<sub>2</sub> for yourself, then you will die. Everything that lives gives. Cease to give and one dies. I believe in the Creator God of love who spoke reality into existence and built this planet with its life in six literal day and rested on the seventh day because **life requires** the simultaneous existence of diverse forms of interdependent life that give to each other. Only our God of love could have spoken these complex, mutually sustaining, symbiotic forms of life into existence at the same time. It is scientifically impossible for this to happen without an intelligent Creator.

What we can prove scientifically, measure, and test all confirm the God of love.

- Science proves that order never comes on its own but requires the input of an intelligence.
- Science proves that life, as we know it, never comes from non-living matter, only from another living organism.

- Science proves that all life requires three elements: matter, energy, and coded information (DNA) and science proves that information never codes itself; coded information requires an intelligence.

But science and nature are not the only reasons I believe in and have hope the Creator God of love. The next reason is:

**Scripture:** The Bible reveals that the Creator God of love did not hold on to power but surrendered power, position, and prestige to become our Savior. He suffered and died in order to reach us with His love and provide the solution to our terminal sin-condition so that we might have eternal life (Philippians 2:5–8; John 3:16; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Hebrews 2:14, 15; 2 Timothy 1:10). Love only exists in freedom. At the cross, Jesus not only provided the remedy to our terminal sin-condition, but He also proved that He is trustworthy. He showed that He would rather die than use His power to take away our freedom, even the freedom to kill Him.

The Scripture provides us meaning. We are created in the image of God, with abilities like God. We have identity; individuality; and the ability to think, act, build, and procreate. We have a purpose and a future. Our current life is not the sum totality of our existence. In Christ, we have a vision of a better life, an immortal life, in a world restored to sinless perfection, a world with no fear, no selfishness, no exploitation, sickness, pain, suffering, or death—a world where every single person loves others more than themselves.

But nature and the Bible are not the only reasons I believe in and have hope in the Creator God of love, but also because of:

**Experience:** I have felt pain in this world—the pain of loss, broken relationships, sickness, and injury. I have suffered from my own poor choices. I have felt the cruelty of selfishness, exploitation, and unkindness from others. And I have found that God’s principles heal. I have experienced the comfort, healing, restoration, and peace that come only from Jesus, from trusting Him, embracing His truth, living in harmony with His principles, practicing His methods, trusting His promises, and living in His presence. I have experienced His healing hand and know that the God of love is real and the only source of life, health, and happiness.

I believe that the God of love exists and is the best place to place our hope because it is scientific; because it gives life meaning and purpose and a vision of a better future; and because it is the healthiest way to be. Happiness only exists in harmony with God and the laws He has built life to operate upon.

Consider what the Bible says about hope:

- To you, O LORD, I lift up my soul; in you I trust, O my God. Do not let me be put to shame, nor let my enemies triumph over me. **No one whose hope is in you** will ever be put to shame, but they will be put to shame who are treacherous without excuse. **Show me your**

**ways, O LORD, teach me your paths; guide me in your truth and teach me**, for you are God my Savior, and **my hope is in you** all day long. (Psalm 25:1–5 NIV84, emphasis mine).

Where is the psalmist's hope placed? And what is the psalmist asking for? To know reality, to know God's design laws, how things actually work, why things are the way they are. Notice, the hope is in God, in reality, in the truth—there is no hope in falsehood, no hope in fantasy, in wishful thinking, in a re-imagined future, in denying the truth, in proclaiming that your truth is your truth...there is only real hope in God, in eternal truth, in following the truth where it leads. But people place hope in all kinds of lies, fantasies, wishful thinking, dreams but in the end if they reject reality, reject our God of love, no matter how hopeful they are, their situation is hopeless.

And what evidence does the Bible give us that our hopes in God are not fantasies but are reality?

Evidence from nature:

- “**But ask the animals, and they will teach you, or the birds of the air, and they will tell you; or speak to the earth, and it will teach you, or let the fish of the sea inform you.** Which of all these does not know that the hand of the LORD has done this? ... **Though he slay me, yet will I hope in him.**” (Job 12:7-9 & 13:15 NIV84, emphasis mine).
- You answer us with **awesome deeds of righteousness**, O God our Savior, the **hope of all the ends of the earth** and of the farthest seas, **who formed the mountains by your power** (Psalm 65:5–6 NIV84, emphasis mine).

Evidence from life experiences:

- For **you have been my hope, O Sovereign LORD**, my confidence since my youth. From birth **I have relied on you** (Psalm 71:5–6 NIV84, emphasis mine).
- The LORD delights in those who fear him, who put their **hope in his unfailing love**. (Ps 147:11 NIV84, emphasis mine).

Evidence from Scripture:

- Do not snatch the **word of truth** from my mouth, for I have put **my hope in your laws**. (Psalm 119:43 NIV84, emphasis mine).
- May those who fear you rejoice when they see me, for I have put my **hope in your word**. (Psalm 119:74 NIV84, emphasis mine).
- You are my refuge and my shield; I have put **my hope in your word**. (Ps 119:114 NIV84, emphasis mine).
- I wait for the LORD, my soul waits, and in **his word I put my hope**. My soul waits for the Lord more than watchmen wait for the morning, more than watchmen wait for the morning.

O Israel, **put your hope in the LORD**, for with the LORD is unfailing love and with him is full redemption. He himself will **redeem Israel from all their sins**. (Ps 130:5–8 NIV84, emphasis mine).

But the question from last week was when does hope become fantasy? When it is detached from reality—and the Bible describes this as well:

- A **horse is a vain hope for deliverance**; despite all its great strength **it cannot save**. But the eyes of the LORD are on those who fear him, on those whose **hope is in his unfailing love**, to deliver them from death and keep them alive in famine. We wait **in hope for the LORD**; he is our help and our shield. In him our hearts rejoice, for we trust in his holy name. (Psalm 33:17–21 NIV84, emphasis mine).
- The prospect of the righteous is joy, but **the hopes of the wicked come to nothing**. (Proverb 10:28 NIV84, emphasis mine).

Why do the hopes of the wicked come to nothing?

Consider the following proverb, what is the reality it describes regarding hope?

- **Discipline your son, for in that there is hope**; do not be a willing party to his death. (Proverb 19:18 NIV84, emphasis mine).

Is there some design law at work in this proverb? Is there some real life condition, problem, issue, that if parents don't work against, through loving discipline, will lead to death? And is this testable, is there evidence to confirm this is so? Is this a promise that good parenting guarantees a good outcome, or that loving discipline offers hope?

And why is there so much false hope in the world—so much fantasy-based hope?

- This is what the LORD Almighty says: “Do not listen to what the **prophets** are prophesying to you; **they fill you with false hopes**. They speak visions **from their own minds**, not from the mouth of the LORD. They keep saying to those who despise me, ‘The LORD says: You will have peace.’ And to all who follow the stubbornness of their hearts they say, ‘No harm will come to you.’ (Jeremiah 23:16–17 NIV84, emphasis mine).
- For a time is coming **when people will no longer listen to sound and wholesome teaching**. **They will follow their own desires** and will look for teachers who will tell them whatever their itching ears want to hear. They will **reject the truth and chase after myths**. (2 Timothy 4:3-4 NLT).

Who are the prophets that are filling the people with false hope today? Those who are telling precious souls who are struggling with identity confusion that there is hope in mutilating their bodies; those telling honest souls to be afraid of global disaster and to place there is hope in carbon

control; that hope is found in more government, more laws, more taxes, more punishments, less freedoms, there is hope in removing objective truth, in declaring people to be competent when they have no competence and giving diplomas to those who have not merited them (very similar to the penal substitutionary theology that claims God declares people to be righteous while in reality they are unrighteous). And as we see people placing their hope in all kinds of myths and fantasies that their itching ears want to hear what is the outcome?

- The desire of the righteous ends only in good, but **the hope of the wicked only in wrath.** (Proverb 11:23 NIV84, emphasis mine).

What is wrath? God letting go, when God stops using His power to hold at bay the destruction their rebellious choices bring, when God sets people free to reap what they have insisted upon—and the people end up enslaved to fear, addictions, sickness, and demonic forces and ultimately, just as the Bible says those who sow to the carnal nature from that nature reap destruction (Galatians 6:8).

## SUNDAY

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The lesson focuses our attention on the hope of the second coming of Jesus—Do you share in this hope? What has given you the greatest confidence that Jesus is coming again?

- **Bible Promises** that He will come again—such as Jesus’ own testimony in John 14:1-3 and the writings of the Apostles like Paul in 1 Corinthians 15 and 1 Thessalonians 4, and Peter 2 Peter chapter 3.
- **Old Testament References** such as Isaiah
  - “As the new heavens and the new earth that I make will endure before me,” declares the LORD, “so will your name and descendants endure.” (Isaiah 66:22 NIV84).
- **Bible Prophecies**
  - Daniel 2, the multi-metal image, which ends with a rock, not cut by human hands striking the image on the feet of iron and clay and destroying the image, and the interpretation is as follows:
    - “And just as you saw the iron mixed with baked clay, so the people will be a mixture and will not remain united, any more than iron mixes with clay. In the time of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed, nor will it be left to another people. It will crush all those kingdoms and bring them to an end, but it will itself endure forever. This is the meaning of the vision of the rock cut out of a mountain, but not by human hands—a rock that broke the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver and the gold to pieces. The great God has shown the king what will take place in the future. The dream is true and the interpretation is trustworthy.” (Daniel 2:43-45 NIV84).

- The progression of the future kingdoms exactly as God foretold, from Babylon, to Medo-Persia, to Greece, to Rome, to Europe broken into many competing countries never to be united again—we are living in that time waiting for the second coming.
- All the other prophecies in Daniel and Revelation, Zechariah, and the other prophets.
- **The Great Controversy perspective**—does the Bible make any sense at all, is there really any point to its teachings, if Jesus never comes again? Isn't the entire point, the message of the Bible that God is going to eliminate sin and restore His creation back to sinless perfection where there is no more pain, suffering, sickness, betrayal, sin, evil, exploitation, abuse, guilt, shame, and death? The entire focus of the mission of Jesus Christ is the eradication of evil from His universe and thus, if we don't believe in that mission, there is nothing worth believing in. This is the same argument Paul makes in 1 Corinthians 15 when some were arguing that there is no resurrection—and the resurrection is tied directly to the future restoration of all things into sinless perfection, i.e., the second coming of Christ is when the resurrection of the righteous occurs. And notice Paul's argument:
  - “But if it is preached that Christ has been raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith. More than that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God, for we have testified about God that he raised Christ from the dead. But he did not raise him if in fact the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either. And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost. If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men.” (1 Corinthians 15:12-19 NIV84).
- **Signs of the times**
  - **Scoffers**
    - First of all, you must understand that in the **last days scoffers will come**, scoffing and following their own evil desires. **They will say, “Where is this ‘coming’ he promised?** Ever since our fathers died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation” (2 Peter 3:3, 4 NIV84, emphasis mine).
  - This sign was fulfilled in the late 18th and early 19th centuries during the Enlightenment, which directly opposed the Great Awakening. The Great Awakening was a religious movement that called people's attention to the nearness of the second coming of Christ. But this movement was countered by the Enlightenment, in which godless scientific views and human reason replaced a belief in God, and godless evolutionism spread throughout the world. In the wake of godless evolution came communism and other godless philosophies that scoff at the idea that Jesus is coming again.

Not only is the world today filled with scoffers, but the critics of God have come to dominate the scientific, educational, and media landscape, creating a societal attitude that those who continue to look for Christ's return are less educated, ignorant, or foolish.

But those of us who know God and trust the Bible know, just as Peter prophesied nearly 2,000 years ago, that it is the scoffers who are failing to understand reality. So, our first sign, which also gives us a timeframe for when the end-times began, is the rise of godless evolutionism, with its scoffers that ridicule our expectation of Jesus' return.

- **Wars and rumors of wars**
  - You will hear of **wars and rumors of wars**. See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, **but the end is not yet** (Matthew 24:6 NIV84, emphasis mine).
  - Jesus here refers to the never-ending regional struggles, tribal wars, crusades, and conflicts throughout the Dark and Middle Ages prior to the “end times,” which began in the 19th century with the completion of the 1260 year prophecy which ended 1798 and the Enlightenment. The end times come after these wars. Notice the shift from wars to our third sign nations and kingdoms rising against each other.
- **World wars, natural disasters, famines, pandemics**
  - **Nation will rise against nation**, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be great **earthquakes, famines and pestilences** in various places, and fearful events and great signs from heaven (Luke 21:10, 11 NIV84, emphasis mine).
  - Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. All these are **the beginning of birth pains** (Matthew 24:7, 8 NIV84, emphasis mine).
- After the long history of wars and conflicts through the Dark and Middle Ages, after the Enlightenment and the rise of the scoffers, we enter the 20th century and experience WWI, WWII, nuclear weapons, wars in Korea, Vietnam, Afghanistan, Iraq, Kuwait, and Syria, and terrorism around the world. The 20th century, with its two world wars and other military conflicts, saw more people killed by war than any other century in human history. And we have seen ever increasing national conflicts and wars, some like WWI and WWII military wars, but now we are seeing economic and social and cultural wars. And in the past fifty years, the world has seen massive famines, the threats of climate change, HIV, SARS, Swine Flu, COVID, and the increasing frequency of earthquakes, hurricanes, destructive storms, and other disasters. But all of this is *the beginning of the birth pains*.

When a woman goes into labor, the time of delivery has begun. In other words, she has entered the “end time” of her pregnancy—but the labor isn't instantaneous. The pains get more frequent and more intense right up until delivery. We are now in the time of the end, the time of ever-increasing rapidity of events leading up to our Savior's return!

Understand that no matter what we do, things on Earth are not going to get better until Jesus returns. And the worsening of conditions on Earth, the increasing labor pains as

the Earth itself groans under the weight of sin, will be **used by the scoffers to incite fear, turn minds away from God, and promote their godless solutions that will solidify power into a global coalition that persecutes the righteous.**

- **The promise of an era of peace and safety**

Paul also used the metaphor of a woman going into labor when referring to the return of our Lord, adding an interesting detail:

- Now, brothers, about times and dates we do not need to write to you, for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. **While people are saying, “Peace and safety,” destruction will come on them suddenly, as labor pains on a pregnant woman,** and they will not escape. But you, brothers, are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief. You are all sons of the light and sons of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness. So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be alert and self-controlled (1 Thessalonian 5:1–6 NIV84, emphasis mine).

When those who don’t know God—the scoffers, the evolutionist, the humanists, the communist, the Marxist, the leftist, those who are desperately seeking to save themselves and “save the earth”—are saying, “This is the way we can have global peace and safety,” sudden destruction will come, as labor pains on a pregnant woman.

They will be unaware that sudden destruction is coming, but why? Because they have given up a belief in God, they no longer trust Scripture, they have accepted the false narrative of godless evolution and secular humanism, and they believe peace and safety can be achieved through the implementation of their worldly agenda. This is the delusion of socialism, of communism, of globalism, of the Green movement—that we can save the planet. They claim, “We can create a new world order in which all nations come together to stop climate change, to stop the destruction of the environment, to eliminate poverty—all doable through a new globalism that we can create with new economic realities that will bring in a new era of peace and safety. Just reimagine the future!”

But Jesus continues His warning and our next sign:

- **Increased divisions in society, loss of faith, persecution of believers in Jesus**

- Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and **you will be hated by all nations because of me.** At that time many will turn away from the faith and will **betray and hate each other**, and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people (Matthew 24:9–11 NIV84, emphasis mine).

Then, at the time of the end, at the time after the scoffers arise, at the time when the labor pains have begun, after the nations have had global wars, after the increase in natural disasters and pestilence, *then* those loyal to Christ will be persecuted, some put to death, and hated of all nations. Then people will betray each other to find security for themselves.



And what do we see in the world today? Christians beheaded in some parts of the world. Christians ridiculed for resisting the new world order, scorned for standing against the restrictions of liberty, hated for holding to faith in Jesus, vilified for voicing the hope in God and warning of Christ's soon return. Those who share the Christian view are called evil, the gospel is called hate speech, laws are passed to criminalize sharing the gospel message.

The governments of the world are becoming ever more dominated by global corporations in the West, communism in the East, and Islam in the Middle East—all of which are hostile to Christianity and all moving toward consolidation of power through globalism. Consider how COVID-19, a pestilence originating in a communist country, has been used to incite fear, divide society, and increase governmental control. Note how big business and global media coordinate together to advance a narrative to increase fear and give more power to a few ruling elites, destroy small business, which makes individuals more dependent on either the state or big corporations. All of this undermines individual liberties. Government leaders are encouraging people to spy on their neighbors, to report family members who violate arbitrary edicts from local government leaders—and often these rules are violations of law and due process. Governments close houses of worship and restrict freedom of assembly and interfere with free commerce. Governments and big tech censor speech, seeking to silence voices that oppose the formation of their global coalition. The signs of the nearness of Christ's return are everywhere!

○ **Love of most will grow cold**

- Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold (Matthew 24:12 NIV84, emphasis mine).

Because of the increase in wickedness—which is all the violations of God's designs, laws, methods, and principles—the love in the hearts of most people grows cold. Because of the denial of God and the rise of the lies of secularism, humanism, socialism, evolutionism; because of the breakdown of families; because of the assault on our common heritage and community values, because of the penal legal god who requires appeasement and payment taught in too many places, love is dying in the human heart.

○ **So caught up in entertainment and living, people are unaware**

- As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. For in the days before the flood, **people were eating and drinking, marrying** and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark; and **they knew nothing about what would happen** until the flood came and took them all away. **That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man** (Matthew 24:37–39 NIV84, emphasis mine).

Incredible! The people before the Flood knew nothing about what was going to happen despite Noah preaching for 120 years and building a giant boat. How did they not know? Because they were consumed with pleasure-seeking, eating, drinking, and marrying. They were too busy either being entertained or living their lives to be bothered with eternal realities.

This is exactly the state of the world today: It is caught up in increasing consumption of mind-altering substances, or leaving reality behind for their preferred fantasy world of video games, social media activity, TV shows, movies, sports, concerts, amusement parks, or anything else to consume and distract the mind. This is the world today—ignoring the warnings of Jesus, ignoring the signs of the end all around, and living merely for the pleasures of the moment.

- **The good news about God’s kingdom of love lightens the world**
  - **But he who stands firm to the end will be saved.** And **this gospel of the kingdom** will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, **and then the end will come** (Matthew 24:13, 14 NIV84, emphasis mine).

But those who stand firm for the truth of God’s kingdom of love will be saved! We will be the ones who take the good news about God and His kingdom of love to the world. We will advance the cause of liberty, for love only exists in an atmosphere of freedom. We will stand for truth in a world of falsehood and propaganda. We will glorify God by revealing His character of love in how we treat our neighbors. We will call people back to the truth of our Creator by teaching people God’s design laws—the laws our Creator built reality to operate upon, demonstrating that harmony with God and His design laws are the only way to health and happiness.

The truth about God and His kingdom of love, in the face of a world consumed with greed and selfishness, is the final message to lighten the world for Christ’s return. It is the final message of mercy, the message of hope, the message of God’s true character of love that Jesus revealed. It is the message that Satan hates because God’s love destroys the fear Satan works so hard to incite.

So, as you see the signs all around us, don’t let fear rule your heart; instead,

- “When these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near” (Luke 21:28 NIV84).

Do you have hope in the soon coming of Christ?

## **TUESDAY**

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The lesson focuses our attention on Baptist preacher William Miller who in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century began preaching the soon coming of Jesus Christ, based on the prophecy of Daniel 8:14, unto 2300 days then shall the sanctuary be cleansed, in which he thought the sanctuary was the earth and the cleansing was the second coming. He calculated the date of the fulfillment of that 2300 year prophecy starting with the decree to rebuild and restore Jerusalem after the 70 year captivity, which was 457 BC to conclude or end in 1844.

Of course, Jesus did not return in 1844, so many believed his entire understanding was wrong, but others re-examined their beliefs and the prophecy in light of Scripture and discovered the error was not on the dates, but on the meaning of the sanctuary and its cleansing. This led to a new understanding of the fulfillment of the prophecy, and the teaching within the SDA church of the heavenly sanctuary message—which was supposed to teach Jesus making His people righteous, so that we become the righteousness of God as 2 Corinthians 5:21 teaches, but instead, got twisted by the legalists who rejected the truth of God’s design law and clung to the Roman view of imposed law, that the work in the heavenly sanctuary is a legal work, a human court room type of work.

Before I explain what the true message is all about, are there any questions people have about this?

We have explained this in detail in our magazine [The Wedding of Christ to His Bride: Preparing the Church for the Second Coming](#) which you can read online or download a pdf or order print copies to share.

The big overview of this message is very simple—before Jesus comes He cleanses His bride and makes her ready to meet Him face to face. As Scripture says, we shall see Him face to face for we shall be like Him (1 John 3:2). We become like Him by the work of Christ via the Holy Spirit healing, cleansing, renewing, recreating us in actual righteousness. This requires our heavenly physician, high priest, Savior, to examine and judge what is wrong in our hearts and minds, where we are out of harmony with Him and His Father, and to apply His blood (which is symbolic of His sinless life) to us, so that we become partakers of the divine nature, so that we receive an actual new heart and right spirit, so that it is no longer our old fear-ridden selfish sinful selves living, but Christ living in us, so that our thoughts, desires, motives are cleansed from fear and selfishness and we are set right, purified, cleansed to be like Jesus. This is the reality of the message.

It is a simple message. Jesus became a real human being. Took up humanity damaged and infected with fear and selfishness by Adam. Was tempted in all points like we are, but Jesus destroyed the infection of fear and selfishness, killing those elements at the Cross and rewrote, restored, implanted the purity of heaven, the motives of perfect love and trust into the humanity He took upon Himself. He rose again as a human being, sinless, righteous, and perfected by His work and self-sacrifice. Now, He offers His life, His victory to everyone who trust Him, we receive from the Holy Spirit the mind of Christ, the spirit of power and love and sound mind, we are renewed, cleansed, restored, recreated to be like Jesus and thus when He comes we see Him face to face because He has done His final work to prepare His bride, His people living on Earth to meet Him without ever seeing death.

The 2300 year prophecy is the vision of the future God gave to His friend Daniel. God looking down the corridors of time, tells Daniel that there are 490 years (70 sevens) left for your people Israel to fulfill their mission, to be the avenue for the Messiah. In the middle of that final 7 years of the 490 years, Jesus will put an end to all the symbolic ceremonial sacrifices by becoming the true sacrifice to cure the sin problem. But after Jesus finishes His work on Earth and returns to heaven, Satan counters the work of Jesus and introduces a false interpretation and meaning of what Christ accomplished. The little horn power wars against the saints—and this war is not primarily physical, it is the war of lies about God, and the man of sin, the man of lawlessness sets himself up by his lies in the spirit temple,

the hearts and minds of people, proclaiming himself to be God. And because of this false god being enthroned in the spirit temple as the god who is worshiped, it will be 2300 years before enough truth is recovered to cleanse the spirit temple, the hearts and minds of people and prepare them for the second coming. Thus, it will be 2300 years before the sanctuary will be cleansed, before the truth that God is not an imperial dictator who makes up rules and uses power to inflict punishment for rule breaking is recovered, it will be that long before the Bible is translated and printed and distributed into enough languages and to enough people that the truth can set the captives free and people can leave the false system of Babylon and begin worshiping the Creator God whose laws are design laws and thereby experience full trust and be cleansed settled and sealed to meet Jesus when He comes.

## WEDNESDAY

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The lesson focuses more on the prophecy of Daniel 8:14, which I agree with, but I have not found it is very helpful in sharing this end time message with non Adventists, and within the Adventist church there is a lot of confusion about this message, so I have not found this approach to be very helpful. And thankfully, as with many truths in Scripture, God has presented this same truth in other language, metaphor, symbols and description. And that is what we use in the Bride magazine, and that is the symbolism of the annual feast days.

The purpose of the ceremonial system was to teach the plan of salvation, to teach the reality of Jesus. In that symbolic system, there were seven annual feasts that were like a theatrical play meant to illustrate, to teach sinful humans, God's saving plan from the fall of Adam to the earth made new. Each of the seven major feasts had a real-life fulfillment and covered a portion of human history from Adam's fall all the way to the earth made new:

- **Passover:** The first feast in the annual cycle was the Passover. As soon as Adam and Eve sinned, God “passed over” their sins. He “left the sins committed beforehand unpunished” (Romans 3:25 NIV84) and promised a Passover Lamb who “takes away the sin of the world” (John 1:29 NIV84). This feast had its fulfillment in Jesus—the Passover Lamb, who was crucified on Passover Friday. The time in human history covered by this feast was from Adam's sin until Christ's death on the cross.
- **Unleavened Bread:** This feast was concurrent with the Passover and symbolizes that after Adam's sin, God immediately began dispensing truth unmixed with error (symbolized by the unleavened bread) to nurture and feed His children. The bitter herbs represent the bitterness caused by sin, which became a part of human life. Both the Lamb slain and the bread without yeast represent Christ, the source of truth and healing for sinful humanity.

This Passover meal was eaten before the death angel came, which symbolizes that God had predetermined to “passover” our transgression and provide a remedy to save and heal us from our terminal sin condition. Jesus is our remedy; He is the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world (Revelation 13:8).

The Feast of Unleavened Bread symbolized the internalization of the truth about God as provided by Christ. The time period represented in the Feast of Unleavened Bread is from Adam's fall until the crucifixion of Christ. This feast was replaced with the communion service

to commemorate the sacrifice of Christ after the crucifixion and to represent the continual necessity of the partaking of Jesus to be saved.

- **The Wave Sheaf:** This was also symbolic of Christ, who is the sinless first fruit raised from the dead. Just as the wheat is buried in the ground, symbolically dying, and comes forth in newness of life, so also Christ was buried in the ground, came forth in newness of life, and brought forth many righteous with Him. The time frame represented by this ceremony was from the time of Christ's resurrection until Pentecost—the time Jesus and those resurrected with Him witnessed in person in Jerusalem (Matthew 27:52, 53).
- **Feast of Weeks (Pentecost):** The truth spreads and takes root in many hearts and a harvest is experienced. This was fulfilled during Pentecost two thousand years ago, when the Holy Spirit fell upon those believers of the early church and the truth about God spread throughout the known world. The time frame covered is from ad 31 (Pentecost) until the nineteenth century.
- **Trumpets:** A special message for the end of time that is to awaken the end-time church (symbolized by the ten virgins in Christ's parable) from their slumber and announce Jesus, the Bridegroom, is coming soon. Prepare! Get Ready! Christ is coming back soon! This trumpet call is to call the people to the wedding of Christ, the Groom, with His bride, the church, and occurred with the Great Awakening in the nineteenth century.
- **Atonement:** At-one-ment is the time immediately before the second coming of Christ, when the Groom puts the final cleansing touches upon His bride, wedding her to Himself, purifying her into complete harmony of heart, mind, motive, method, and character with Him, for "we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is" (1 John 3:2). This is the time in which we are living today!
- **Tabernacles:** This feast symbolically taught the time after the wedding (two becoming one), when the saints tabernacle (dwell) with God away from the world of sin in the earth made new. This is the wedding supper of the Lamb.

Just as the Old Testament Passover feast had a real and literal fulfillment when Jesus died as our Passover Lamb on Passover Friday, so also there is a real and literal cleansing, uniting, bonding, and at-one-ment of the Bridegroom and His bride that precedes the second coming. We are living in that time right now!

So Jesus is in heaven working through His agencies to heal the hearts and minds of those who have placed their faith/trust in Him to prepare us for His return.

## FRIDAY

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The lesson quotes two paragraphs from the book *The Great Controversy*:

- "Like the first disciples, William Miller and his associates did not, themselves, fully comprehend the import of the message which they bore. **Errors that had been long established in the church** prevented them from arriving at a correct interpretation of an important point in the prophecy. Therefore, though they proclaimed the message which God

had committed to them to be given to the world, yet through a misapprehension of its meaning they suffered disappointment.”—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, pp. 351, 352.

“Yet God accomplished His own beneficent purpose in permitting the warning of the judgment to be given just as it was. The great day was at hand, and in His providence the people were brought **to the test** of a definite time, in order to reveal to them what was in their hearts. The message was designed for **the testing and purification of the church**. They were to be led to see whether their affections were set upon this world or upon Christ and heaven. They professed to love the Saviour; now they were to prove their love. Were they ready to renounce their worldly hopes and ambitions, and welcome with joy the advent of their Lord? **The message was designed to enable them to discern their true spiritual state**; it was sent in mercy to arouse them to seek the Lord with repentance and humiliation.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 353. (*Adult SS Guide 2nd Q 2024, The Great Controversy* p. 62, emphasis mine).

When the Lord puts someone to the test, what is He testing? It is always the same ultimate reason behind the test: Do they trust God or not? Do they have faith/ confidence in God or not? And does their faith/trust/confidence go beyond the belief of devils who tremble, to the faith that is a living faith that results in loyalty to God?

Such tests are necessary in this world of sin because we cannot grow in faith, in trust, unless we are placed in a position in which our faith is tried or tested and we choose to exercise our faith. We must choose to say no to the fear, the insecurity, the doubts, the temptations to act to save self and, instead, choose to apply the truth and do what we understand is right, what is God’s will for us in that situation, and trust God with the outcome.

This is the issue; it has always been the issue—are we faithful, loyal friends of God who actually trust Him even when we don’t understand everything that is happening?

Jesus asked this very question about His second coming:

- When the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth? (Luke 18:8 NIV84).

When Jesus comes again, will He find people who trust Him, who will be faithful to Him, who have chosen to trust Him with their lives, futures, fortunes, and families? Or will He only find people who claim to believe in Him but who have put their trust in their rules, rituals, ceremonies, blood payments, wealth, institutions, and the power they can wield over others—all in His “name,” of course?

Paul said,

- “Everything that does not come from faith is sin” (Romans 14:23 NIV84).

God wants us to return to a living confidence, trust, and faith in Him, and He allows events to come upon us that will test our faith, put us in positions in which we have to decide whether we scheme, calculate, plot, plan, connive, manipulate, bend the rules, make excuses, cheat in order to save self, or whether we stand for what we know is right and trust God with how it turns out.

David, when he was dedicating materials and his son for the building of the temple, prayed:

- I know, my God, **that you test the heart and are pleased with integrity**. All these things have I given willingly and with honest intent. And now I have seen with joy how willingly your people who are here have given to you. O LORD, God of our fathers Abraham, Isaac and Israel, keep this desire in the hearts of your people forever, and keep their hearts loyal to you (1 Chronicles 29:17, 18 NIV84, emphasis mine).

God doesn't test, as a human teacher would, to discover the answer—God already knows the answer. God tests so we can actively choose to trust and, thereby, grow, develop, advance, and mature. It is for our development that God tests.

This is why God provided the test in Eden with the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil—it was the simplest of tests, yes, but it was a place for our first parents to exercise their abilities to think and choose to trust God—or not—and, thereby, either develop mature godly character or corrupt their character with fear, selfishness, guilt, and shame—the knowledge of evil. God, of course, wanted them to know only good, but they chose to know evil.

What God wants cannot be created by Him nor chosen by Him. God wants our love, devotion, trust, friendship, and loyalty. He wants us to internalize into our hearts and live out His living laws and, thus, develop Christlike character. This requires us to be placed in circumstances and situations in which we have to choose to trust God or not. So God tests us, but He never allows the test to be more than we can handle at any given point in our development. He has promised:

- No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it (1 Corinthians 10:13 NKJV).

God always provides everything necessary for our healing, salvation, and deliverance from fear and selfishness.

- He provides the truth that destroys lies and wins us to trust (John 8:32)
- He provides the love that casts out the fear (1 John 4:18)
- He provides the Savior, His Son, who became a real human and as a human, using only human abilities, chose to love and trust His Father in all things and received as a human the empowering of the Holy Spirit to succeed in all things. And as a human, Jesus developed a perfect righteous and mature human character and destroyed the infection of fear and selfishness that Adam introduced into humanity when he broke trust with God. Thus, Jesus

became the new head of humanity, the second Adam (Hebrews 2:14, 4:15, 5:9; 2 Timothy 1:10; 1 John 3:8).

- He provides the Holy Spirit to bring the truth home to our hearts and minds, to convict of sin, to convict of duty, and then (John 14:16) ...
- He provides freedom, real freedom, to accept and choose the truth or reject it—and when we choose the truth (Joshua 24:15; Galatians 5:1) ...
- He provides the opportunity to test our faith, situations that require us to choose—do we trust God? Do we choose what we know is in harmony with His will, purposes, instructions, guidance, design laws for life and trust Him with outcomes, or do we choose to break trust with Him and seek to advance and save ourselves?
- When we choose to trust Him, He then provides divine power, the indwelling Holy Spirit, to give us the ability to carry out the truth, to stand firm in the face of fear, threat, selfish temptations with a peace that passes understanding, with love for our enemies, with a vision of eternity as we choose to keep our eyes fixed on Jesus and our hearts loyal to Him.

God brings people into circumstances that are beyond their ability so that they will choose to turn to Him, ask for His deliverance, and learn to trust Him; i.e., increase their faith in Him. I encourage you that when faced with tests to remember the secret to victory is turning to Jesus, to:

Do you think the error that the Earth was the sanctuary was the only error that was still operating in their minds? No! They still hadn't cast off the error about God's law.