The Central Issue: Love or Selfishness?

Lesson 8 | Teal Quarter April 6-12, 2026

Sabbath Afternoon, April 6

Memory Text:

"Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness." KJV — Isaiah 41:10

"The Saviour's prophecy concerning the relation of judgments upon Jerusalem is to have another fulfillment, of which that terrible desolation was but a faint shadow. In the fate of the chosen city we may behold the doom of a world that has rejected God's mercy and trampled upon His law. Even the records of human history that earth has witnessed during its long centuries of crime. The heart sickens, and the mind grows faint in contemplating the woes that have afflicted the children of men, the calamities of Heaven. But a scene yet darker is presented in the revelations of the future. The records of the past,—the long procession of tumuls, conflicts, and revolutions, the "battle of the warrior . . . with confused noise, and garments rolled in blood" (Isaiah 9:5),—what are these, in contrast with the terrors of that day when the restraining Spirit of God shall be wholly withdrawn from the wicked, no longer to hold in check the outburst of human passion and satanic power, when the world will then behold, as never before, the results of Satan's rule." GC 36.2

Sunday, April 7

A Brokenhearted Savior

Read Luke 19:41-44 Matthew 23:37, 38 and John 5:40. What do these verses tell you about God's attitude toward the people and their destruction? What does this portrayal of grace and mercy? What revelation of God's character do you see?

"The Son of God himself was sent to plead with the impenitent city. It was God that brought the people out of Egypt, God who had led them, God who with His own hand had cast out the heathen before them. He had planted "it in a very fruitful hill." "In a vineyard of the red wine" God had lavished upon it, His servants had been sent to nurture it. "What could have been done more to My vineyard," he asks, "that I have not done in it?" Isaiah 5:1, 2, 4. Yet the vineyard had brought forth wild grapes. It had rejected the Lord of the vineyard, who came in person to seek the fruit of righteousness. Even the husbandman, the disciple of the Lord, who had been specially cherished, it has unwearied in his efforts to save this vine of his own planting." GC 35.1

"Looking down the ages, he saw the covenant people scattered in every land. "Ye wretch—as a desert in the wilderness, and as a land of salt and not inhabited" he children, He saw but the first draft from that cup of wrath which at the last should be poured out upon the impenitent city. Yet even then, in the utterance in the mournful words: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" Luke 13:34. Christ was willing to have spared the city even at the last moment, if only the people would have turned from their sins and unity their power I have brought the angel of justice, I have called them to repentance, I have pled with them tenderly, earnestly, and with long-suffering, whom thou hast refused and rejected, but the Holy One of Israel, thy redeemer, I will not destroy thee, thou mourning, penitent city! I will not cast thee to Me, that yet might have life." Maxtone 23.07; John 5:40." GC 21.2

"We are accustomed to think that Jesus and Jerusalem were the ripe production of the overthrow of the temple, and they desired to understand more fully the prophecy of Christ, which was to be fulfilled in the destruction of the city from forty years been freely expended to enhance its splendors. Herod the Great had lavished upon it his wealth and his skill as an architect. Pilgrims from all parts of the world had contributed to its adornment. Its magnificent edifices, of white marble, of almost fabulous size, towered from form for this purpose, and the disciples had called the attention of their Master, saying "What manner of stones and what buildings are here!" Luke 21:5." GC 24.3

"In these words, Jesus made the solemn and startling reply: "Verily I say unto you, there shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down." Matthew 24:2." GC 25.1

Read Matthew 24:15-20. What instruction did Jesus give to His people to escape the coming destruction of Jerusalem?

"Jesus declared to the listening disciples the judgments that were to fall upon apostate Israel, and especially the retributive vengeance that would come upon them for their rejection of the Saviour. He had warned them that these signs would precede the awful climax. The dreaded hour would come suddenly and unexpectedly. And the Saviour warned His followers "When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, whoso readeth, let him understand: Then let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains." Matthew 24:15, 16; Luke 21:20, 21. When the idolatrous standards of the Romans should be set up in the holy ground, which extended some furlongs outside the city walls, then the followers of Christ were to find safety in flight. When the warning sign appeared, they were to make their escape without a moment's delay. Those in the land of Judea, as well as in Jerusalem itself, the signal for flight must be immediately obeyed. He who chanced to be upon the housetop must not go down into his house, even to save his most valued treasures. Those who were working in the fields or vineyards must not take time to return for the outer garment which they had laid by when they should be toiling in the heat of the day. They must not hesitate a moment, lest they be involved in the general destruction." GC 25.4

Monday, April 8

Christians Providentially Preserved

"Not one Christian perished in the destruction of Jerusalem. Christ had given his followers a sign whereby they might know the time and the place of the promised sign. "When ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies," said the Saviour, "then know that the desolation thereof is nigh." Not a man who was in Judea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not the remaining be cut off from it." Luke 21:20, 21. Christians, being prepared by this unexpected sign, were enabled to escape when every prospect favorable for an immediate attack. The besieged, despairing of successful sallies, were in the power of their foes. Christians could not be taken from their withdrew his forces without the least apparent cause, the Christians in Jerusalem were delivered from the good of his own people. The promised sign had been given to the waiting Christians, and now all understood the signal for flight. Christians, to the number of many thousands, were not slaughtered in the general massacre that followed the destruction of the flight of the Christians. Upon the remnant of Cestius, the Jews, sallying from Jerusalem, pursued with the strength, energy, and courage which had so fully engaged, the Christians had an opportunity to leave the city. At this time Jerusalem was filled with people who had come up to the city to celebrate the Jewish feast. The gates of the city were closed, the Jews were assembled in Jerusalem, and the Christians had time to escape. The Christians had time to escape the terrible ordeal through which the Jews were to pass, and to delay their flight to a place of safety—the city of Pella, in the land of Perea. Maxtone 23.07." GC 26.2

Tuesday, April 9

Faithful Amid Persecution

Read Acts 2:41; Acts 4:4, 31; Acts 5:42; and Acts 8:1-8. What do the verses teach us about the challenges the New Testament Church had and also why it grew so rapidly?

"The enemies of the cross assumed out upon the early church, the brethren loved one another. "They ... did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." Those primitive Christians were not perfect, but they were in the main honest, pure, and upright in their dealings. The light of the world shone out from them. They were a terror to evildoers. Wherever they went, they were persecuted, imprisoned, and put to death. Yet they were hunted by the ancient and primeval enemy of God and man." GC 43.1

"The standard of holiness is the same today as in the days of the apostles. Neither the promises nor the requirements of God have lost aught of their force. But what is the state of the Lord's professed people as compared with the early church? Where is the Spirit and power of God which then attended the preaching of the word? Where is the faith, love, and consecration to God which the first gold changed?" GC 44.1

"The apostles and martyrs of the church who professed godliness while they were secretly cherishing iniquity. Ananias and Sapphira acted the part of deceivers, pretending to make an entire sacrifice for God, when they were covetously withholding portion for themselves. The Spirit of truth revealed the deception practiced by these professed disciples. The Spirit of truth made God rid the church of this foul blot upon its purity. This signal evidence of the disowning Spirit of Christ in the church was a terror to hypocrites and evildoers. They could not long remain in connection with those who were, in habit and disposition, consistent representatives of Christ; and as trials and persecution came upon his followers, those only who were willing to forsake all for the truth's sake desired to become His disciples. Thus, as long as persecution prevailed, the church was purified and strengthened. But when it ceased, converts were added who were less sincere and devoted, and the way was open for Satan to obtain a foothold." GC 44.1

"And "all the people ran together with one them in the porch that is called Solomon's, and as they went about to kill him, there came up a report unto the chief captain, rejoicing in the full use of his limbs and happy in believing in Jesus. 21 Acts 5:12." GC 45.1

"Peter assured the people that our Lord had been wrought through the merits of the crucified and risen Jesus, whom God raised from the dead. His name through faith in His name, hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know, yea, even faith which is by him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all." 22 33.1

"The appointment of the seven to take the oversight of special lines of work, proved a blessing to the church. It was a step in advance, and gave consideration to individual needs as well as to the general financial interests of the church, and by their prudent management and their godly example they were an important aid to their fellow officers in binding together the various interests of the church into a united whole. AA 89.2

"That this step was in the order of God, is revealed in the immediate results. Not only did the church prosper in temporal things, but the number of the disciples multiplied in proclaimed gospel, and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith." This ingathering of souls was due both to the greater freedom secured by the apostles and to the zeal and power shown by the seven deacons. The fact that these brethren had been ordained for the special work of looking after the needs of the poor, did not exclude them from teaching the faith. On the contrary, they were fully qualified to instruct, and they did teach, and preach, and engage in the work with great earnestness and success." AA 89.3

Wednesday, April 10

Caring for the Community

Read Acts 2:44-47; Acts 3:6-9; and Acts 6:1-7. Although circumstances vary, what principles can we learn from these passages about authentic Christianity?

"Christians were thus separated out upon the early church, the brethren loved one another. "They ... did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." Those primitive Christians were not perfect, but they were in the main honest, pure, and upright in their dealings. The light of the world shone out from them. They were a terror to evildoers. Wherever they went, they were persecuted, imprisoned, and put to death. Yet they were hunted by the ancient and primeval enemy of God and man." GC 43.1

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Thursday, April 11

A Legacy of Love

Read Psalm 133:35 and 1 John 4:21. What do the passages reveal about God's challenge against the government of God in the great controversy? What do they tell us about the essence of genuine Christianity?

"This love is the evidence of their discipleship. "By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples," said Jesus, "if ye have love one to another." Christians are bound together, not by force or self-interest, but by love, they show the power of influence that is above all other influences. Wherever there is love, sweetness exists, it is evidence that the image of God is being restored in humanity. Love is the fruit that grows in the garden of God, and we are to cultivate it. Jesus is the place where to withstand the supernatural agencies of evil, and that the grace of God subdues the selfishness inherent in the natural heart. GC 44.2

"This love, manifested in the church, will surely stir the world of Satan. Christ did not mark out for His disciples an easy path. "If the world hate you," He said, "ye know that it hated Me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept My saying, they will keep yours. But all these things will they do unto you for My name's sake, because they know not him that sent Me." The gospel is to be carried into all the world, and the world will be stirred by the presence of the Spirit of God. We are those who do this work are only following in their Master's steps." DA 678.2

"These natural brothers must be fully reconciled to each other before they can be reconciled to God. Christ's disciples are to show to the world that they are this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother." 23 If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us. Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit. 24 Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. 25 "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? And this commandment have we from him, that he who loveth God love his brother also." 9T 38.4

Friday, April 12

Further Thought

"We cannot know how much we owe to Christ for the peace and protection which we enjoy. It is the restraining power of God that prevents mankind from passing under the control of Satan. The disobedient and unfaithful have great reason for gratitude for God's mercy and long-suffering in holding in check the cruel, malignant power of the evil one. But when men pass the limits of divine forbearance, that restraint is removed. God does not stand ready to withdraw his protecting power from those who show themselves to be not heaven the rejections of his mercy to themselves, to reap that which they have sown. Every act of light rejected, every warning despised or contemned, every ray of heavenly influence, every transgression of the law of God, is a seed sown which yields its unfailing harvest. The Spirit of God, persistently resisted, is at last withdrawn from the sinner, and there is left no power to control the evil passions of the soul, and no protection from the malice and power of Satan. The man who has been so long in the habit of resisting the Holy Spirit of God that he has become fully ripened for destruction, and receiving the plaudits of divine mercy. Never was there given a more decisive testimony to God's hatred of sin and to the certain punishment that will fall upon the guilty." GC 36.1