



SAVED TO SERVE

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THE GREAT CONTROVERSY, PT. 2: EVENTS IN WORLD & CHURCH
THAT BROUGHT PERSECUTION IN 1ST CENTURIES ARE HERE

1. Let us study the second chapter in *The Great Controversy*, entitled "Persecution in the First Centuries."
2. Jesus prophesied to His disciples the destruction of Jerusalem in Matthew 24. What else did He foretell?

When Jesus revealed to His disciples the fate of Jerusalem and the scenes of the second advent, He foretold also the experience of His people from the time when He should be taken from them, to His return in power and glory for their deliverance. From Olivet the Savior beheld the storms about to fall upon the apostolic church; and penetrating deeper into the future, His eye discerned the fierce, wasting tempests that were to beat upon His followers in the coming ages of darkness and persecution. In a few brief utterances of awful significance He foretold the portion which the rulers of this world would mete out to the church of God. Matthew 24:9, 21, 22. The followers of Christ must tread the same path of humiliation, reproach, and suffering which their Master trod. The enmity that burst forth against the world's Redeemer would be manifested against all who should believe on His name. {GC 39.1}

3. Based on Matthew 24:9,21,22, why will God's people suffer persecution? _____
4. What does the name of the Lord represent? Exodus 34:5-8 _____
5. Which of the commandments did the Lord reiterate when He proclaimed His name? Exodus 20:4-6 _____
6. This means that God's people will be persecuted for keeping His commandments out of love and refusing to bow and worship the image.
7. What will be established in these last days? What will God's people encounter? Revelation 13:15-17 _____
8. Those who hold to God's name are His servants and they keep the Sabbath of the Lord; they will be carried to God's holy mountain. See Isaiah 56:6,7.
9. What will be seen in the foreheads of the saints, the 144,000, in the last days? Where will they stand with Jesus? Revelation 14:1 _____
10. What message will the 144,000 proclaim in these last days? Revelation 14:6-12 _____
11. What is another title for the name in the foreheads of the saints? Revelation 7:1-3 _____
12. In your own words, summarize for what reasons the saints will persecuted for God's name. _____
13. What did paganism summon her forces to destroy? _____

The history of the early church testified to the fulfillment of the Saviour's words. The powers of earth and hell arrayed themselves against Christ in the person of His followers. Paganism foresaw that should the gospel triumph, her temples and altars would be swept away; therefore she summoned her forces to destroy Christianity. The fires of persecution were kindled. Christians were stripped of their possessions and driven from their homes. They "endured a great fight of afflictions." Hebrews 10:32. They "had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment." Hebrews 11:36. Great numbers sealed their testimony with their blood. Noble and slave, rich and poor, learned and ignorant, were alike slain without mercy. {GC 39.2}

14. Why did the Jewish leaders join with the civil leaders to destroy Jesus? John 11:47,48,53 _____
15. Why did Cain kill Abel? Genesis 4:1-10 _____
16. Note: This is one application. The Papacy is taking steps to silence and to destroy true Protestants, in order to regain and to preserve her dominance over the world. See Revelation 13:3,4,11-18; Revelation 18:4-10.

Somewhere in Pope Francis's office is a document that could alter the course of Christian history. It declares an end to hostilities between Catholics and Evangelicals and says the two traditions are now "united in mission because we are declaring the same Gospel". The Holy Father is thinking of signing the text in [October 31] 2017, the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, alongside Evangelical leaders...Francis is convinced that the Reformation is already over. <http://www.catholicherald.co.uk/issues/july-24th-2015/the-popes-great-evangelical-gamble/>

"When Francis wanted to reach out to Evangelicals...he rang his old friend [Tony Palmer]. During a leisurely meeting at the Vatican, Palmer recorded a video of the Pontiff on his iPhone... Palmer took the film to a ministers' conference in Texas organized by prosperity gospel preacher Kenneth Copeland. Palmer introduced the film with what must count as one of the great Christian orations of the 21st century. 'Brothers and sisters, Luther's protest is over, is yours?...If there is no more protest how can there be a Protestant church?' he said. He told the audibly stunned audience that he was speaking to them 'in the spirit of Elijah,' who prepared the way for something much greater than himself...Francis then proclaimed that 'the miracle of unity has begun.'" <http://www.catholicherald.co.uk/issues/july-24th-2015/the-popes-great-evangelical-gamble/>

New World Order by Henry Kissinger "Religious unity had fructured with the survival and spread of Protestantism. The protestant reformation destroyed the concept of a world order sustained by the "two-swords" of PAPACY and EMPIRE." {page 20} <http://www.penguin.com/ajax/books/excerpt/9781594206146>

Rome was not slow to inflame their jealous fears. Said the pope to the regent of France in 1525: "This mania [Protestantism] will not only confound and destroy religion, but all principalities, nobility, laws, orders, and ranks besides."-- G. de Felice, History of the Protestants of France, b. 1, ch. 2, par. 8. A few years later a papal nuncio warned the king: "Sire, be not deceived. The Protestants will upset all civil as well as religious order. . . . The throne is in as much danger as the altar. . . . The introduction of a new religion must necessarily introduce a new government."--D'Aubigne, History of the Reformation in Europe in the Time of Calvin, b. 2, ch. 36. And theologians appealed to the prejudices of the people by declaring that the Protestant doctrine "entices men away to novelties and folly; it robs the king of the devoted affection of his subjects, and devastates both church and state." Thus Rome succeeded in arraying France against the Reformation. "It was to uphold the throne, preserve the nobles, and maintain the laws, that the sword of persecution was first unsheathed in France."--Wylie, b. 13, ch. 4. {GC 277.2}

17. What did the saints encounter for their faithfulness? Hebrews 10:32 and Hebrews 11:36 _____
18. Under which civil leader did persecution begin for the Christians? _____

These persecutions, beginning under Nero about the time of the martyrdom of Paul, continued with greater or less fury for centuries. Christians were falsely accused of the most dreadful crimes and declared to be the cause of great calamities-- famine, pestilence, and earthquake. As they became the objects of popular hatred and suspicion, informers stood ready, for the sake of gain, to betray the innocent. They were condemned as rebels against the empire, as foes of religion, and pests to society. Great numbers were thrown to wild beasts or burned alive in the amphitheaters. Some were crucified; others were covered with the skins of wild animals and thrust into the arena to be torn by dogs. Their punishment was often made the chief entertainment at public fetes. Vast multitudes assembled to enjoy the sight and greeted their dying agonies with laughter and applause. {GC 40.1}

19. What did Nero do? _____
"The first documented case of imperially [kingly] supervised persecution of the Christians in the Roman Empire begins with Nero (37– 68), in 64 AD..." http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Persecution_of_Christians

"Christians were first, and horribly, targeted for persecution as a group by the emperor Nero in 64 AD. A colossal fire broke out at Rome, and destroyed much of the city. Rumors abounded that Nero himself was responsible. He certainly took advantage of the resulting devastation of the city, building a lavish private palace on part of the site of the fire. **Perhaps to divert attention from the rumors, Nero ordered that Christians should be rounded up and killed. Some were torn apart by dogs, others burnt alive as human torches.**" [http:// www.bbc.co.uk/history/ancient/romans/christianityromanempire_article_01.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/ancient/romans/christianityromanempire_article_01.shtml)
See also: <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ch/1990/issue27/2705.html>

20. How were the Christians viewed and treated, based on page 40, paragraph 1? _____
21. How were Elijah, Jesus and Paul viewed and treated? 1 Kings 18:17; Luke 23:1,2; Acts 24:5 _____

It will be declared that men are offending God by the violation of the Sunday sabbath; that this sin has brought calamities which will not cease until Sunday observance shall be strictly enforced; and that those who present the claims of the fourth commandment, thus destroying reverence for Sunday, are troublers of the people, preventing their restoration to divine favor and temporal prosperity.{GC 590.1}

Those who honor the Bible Sabbath will be denounced as enemies of law and order, as breaking down the moral restraints of society, causing anarchy and corruption, and calling down the judgments of God upon the earth. Their conscientious scruples will be pronounced obstinacy, stubbornness, and contempt of authority. They will be accused of disaffection toward the government. Ministers who deny the obligation of the divine law will present from the pulpit the duty of yielding obedience to the civil authorities as ordained of God. In legislative halls and courts of justice, commandment keepers will be misrepresented and condemned. A false coloring will be given to their words; the worst construction will be put upon their motives. {GC 592.1}

22. What did the faithful have to do, in order to escape persecutions? Matthew 24:15,16; Luke 21:20-22; Hebrews 11:37,38

Wherever they sought refuge, the followers of Christ were hunted like beasts of prey. They were forced to seek concealment in desolate and solitary places... Under the fiercest persecution these witnesses for Jesus kept their faith unsullied. Though deprived of every comfort, shut away from the light of the sun, making their home in the dark but friendly bosom of the earth, they uttered no complaint. With words of faith, patience, and hope they encouraged one another to endure privation and distress. The loss of every earthly blessing could not force them to renounce their belief in Christ. Trials and persecution were but steps bringing them nearer their rest and their reward. {GC 40.2} {GC 41.1} and {GC 41.2}

23. Note: *The Great Controversy* page 41 mentions the following three scriptures. Meditate upon them. Matthew 5:10-12; Hebrews 11:35; Revelation 2:10.

24. What is the thematic sentence in the following paragraph? _____

In vain were Satan's efforts to destroy the church of Christ by violence. The great controversy in which the disciples of Jesus yielded up their lives did not cease when these faithful standard-bearers fell at their post. By defeat they conquered. God's workmen were slain, but His work went steadily forward. The gospel continued to spread and the number of its adherents to increase. It penetrated into regions that were inaccessible even to the eagles of Rome. **Said a Christian, expostulating with the heathen rulers who were urging forward the persecution: You may "kill us, torture us, condemn us. . . . Your injustice is the proof that we are innocent. . . . Nor does your cruelty . . . avail you."** It was but a stronger invitation to bring others to their persuasion. **"The oftener we are mown down by you, the more in number we grow; the blood of Christians is seed."**--Tertullian, Apology, paragraph 50. {GC 41.3}

25. How was the blood of Jesus seed? Isaiah 53:1-12; John 1:29; Luke 23:40-43; Matthew 27:54 _____

26. How was the blood of Stephen seed? Acts 7:58; Acts 9:1-6; Acts 22:18-21 _____

27. How can our blood or life be seed? Revelation 14:13; 2 Corinthians 3:2; Matthew 5:16 _____

28. How did Satan change his tactics to war against the saints and to plant his banner in the church? _____

Satan therefore laid his plans to war more successfully against the government of God by planting his banner in the Christian church. If the followers of Christ could be deceived and led to displease God, then their strength, fortitude, and firmness would fail, and they would fall an easy prey. {GC 42.2}

The great adversary now endeavored to gain by artifice what he had failed to secure by force. Persecution ceased, and in its stead were substituted the dangerous allurements of temporal prosperity and worldly honor. Idolaters were led to receive a part of the Christian faith, while they rejected other essential truths. They professed to accept Jesus as the Son of God and to believe in His death and resurrection, but they had no conviction of sin and felt no need of repentance or of a change of heart. With some concessions on their part they proposed that Christians should make concessions, that all might unite on the platform of belief in Christ. {GC 42.3}

29. Note: Satan's two tools are found in Revelation; they are the tail and the sword. The tail represents deception. See Revelation 12:4 and Isaiah 9:15. The sword represents war and persecution. See Revelation 12:17.

30. What did Satan do to plant his banner in the church, according to page 42 paragraph three? _____

31. Are there any applications that you can make of Satan's devices being repeated in these last days? _____

32. What did the faithful do as they saw that the majority of the professed Christians were in apostasy? _____

Now the church was in fearful peril. Prison, torture, fire, and sword were blessings in comparison with this. Some of the Christians stood firm, declaring that they could make no compromise. Others were in favor of yielding or modifying some features of their faith and uniting with those who had accepted a part of Christianity, urging that this might be the means of their full conversion. {GC 42.4}

As the followers of Christ united with idolaters, the Christian religion became corrupted, and the church lost her purity and power. There were some, however, who were not misled by these delusions. They still maintained their fidelity to the Author of truth and worshiped God alone. {GC 43.1}

33. Satan once worked through Nero and the civil power to persecute the saints. Through whom did Satan work to persecute the faithful as he began to plant his banner of deception in the church? _____

But there is no union between the Prince of light and the prince of darkness, and there can be no union between their followers. When Christians consented to unite with those who were but half converted from paganism, they entered upon a path which led further and further from the truth. Satan exulted that he had succeeded in deceiving so large a number of the followers of Christ. He then brought his power to bear more fully upon these, and inspired them to persecute those who remained true to God. None understood so well how to oppose the true Christian faith as did those who had once been its defenders; and these apostate Christians, uniting with their half-pagan companions, directed their warfare against the most essential features of the doctrines of Christ. {GC 45.1}

34. Through whom did Satan work to betray Jesus? Matthew 26:14,15, 47-49; John 13:2 _____

35. What erroneous teachings entered the church that led to the saints separating? _____

It required a desperate struggle for those who would be faithful to stand firm against the deceptions and abominations which were disguised in sacerdotal garments and introduced into the church. The Bible was not accepted as the standard of faith. The doctrine of religious freedom was termed heresy, and its upholders were hated and proscribed. {GC 45.2}

36. Do you see similar things happening now in the church? If yes, please state. _____

37. Read the following and write down your thoughts _____

After a long and severe conflict, the faithful few decided to dissolve all union with the apostate church if she still refused to free herself from falsehood and idolatry. They saw that separation was an absolute necessity if they would obey the word of God. They dared not tolerate errors fatal to their own souls, and set an example which would imperil the faith of their children and children's children. To secure peace and unity they were ready to make any concession consistent with fidelity to God; but they felt that even peace would be too dearly purchased at the sacrifice of principle. If unity could be secured only by the compromise of truth and righteousness, then let there be difference, and even war. {GC 45.3}

Well would it be for the church and the world if the principles that actuated those steadfast souls were revived in the hearts of God's professed people. There is an alarming indifference in regard to the doctrines which are the pillars of the Christian faith. The opinion is gaining ground, that, after all, these are not of vital importance. This degeneracy is strengthening the hands of the agents of Satan, so that false theories and fatal delusions which the faithful in ages past imperiled their lives to resist and expose, are now regarded with favor by thousands who claim to be followers of Christ. {GC 46.1}

38. What are some of the pillars of the Seventh-day Adventist movement? _____

“After the passing of the time, God entrusted to His faithful followers the precious principles of present truth. These principles were not given to those who had had no part in the giving of [the first and second angels' messages](#)... These men are not to permit their faith to be changed to infidelity; [they are not to permit the banner of the third angel to be taken from their hands](#)... Every truth that He has given for these last days is to be proclaimed to the world. [Every pillar that He has established is to be strengthened](#). We cannot now step off the foundation that God has established. [We cannot now enter into any new organization; for this would mean apostasy from the truth](#).” {2SM 390.1}

39. Note: The following reports show that the pillars are being torn down within the church.

But the more I came to understand [Sabbath](#) as a sign of redemption, the more [I became convinced that the sign is not necessary once you get to the destination](#)... This will sound strong, but I must say it... and I say it in love: [the Adventist perspective of Sabbath is a denial of the gospel](#)... Trust me when I say, [I know many SDA pastors who have fundamental theological differences with the Pillars of Adventism \(Sabbath, Sanctuary-Investigative Judgment, Spirit of Prophecy, and State of the Dead\)](#). My counsel would be for them to value their character above all else. To do so honors God and prioritizes personal integrity over any perceived or real benefit of staying in the system. <https://exsdapastors.wordpress.com/2014/09/08/an-interview-with-kurtley-knight-part-3/>
<https://exsdapastors.wordpress.com/2014/08/24/an-interview-with-kurtley-knight-part-2/>

Opening Remarks: [“I thank God for the shift that is happening in this pace-setting field...”](#) [“Ephesians 1:2-14 tells us that, here we go, that the seal of God, the seal of God is the spirit, not the Sabbath](#) [thunderous applause]. [Did you just hear what I said? Oh you have a problem with that because somebody told you that if you keep a day then you are sealed](#). Ellen says that the sealing is a settling into the truth. Question, how do I get settled in the truth? Well the Bible teaches me that the Spirit leads and guides me into - question, what truth? The first truth that the Holy Spirit is trying to guide you in is the truth about your behind. [thunderous applause]” June 12—June 20, 2015, South Central Conference (SCC) of Seventh-day Adventists held its annual camp meeting in Huntsville, Alabama, on the campus of Oakwood University. Dr. MyRon Edmonds preached this sermon under the camp meeting theme “Come Holy Spirit”.

[As a historicist I find myself in that very position and wonder](#), how can I effectively share this story with those who do not share my worldview... Examples of hateful rhetoric can include articles and memes insulting the Pope with phrases such as “Marxist,” [“idolater,” “blasphemer,” or “man of sin.”](#) Now some may argue “but that’s what the Bible calls him!” [To which I would say, No. That’s what we call him while borrowing Scripture’s language. Truth is, we don’t know who the Antichrist is.](#) While I share the conviction that the [Antichrist is certainly the papacy, that does not automatically mean that a particular pope is the Antichrist.](#) <http://ssnet.org/blog/top-3-mistakes-avoid-sharing-prophecy/>

“What Is The Image Of The Beast?” ASI Live Panel Discussion Sabbath Afternoon, 8/9/2014

“James [Rafferty] what is the image of the beast?” “An image can be identified two different ways. You can look at it in Daniel 3 as an image that is made out of certain materials that people worship. [But in this case the image is more like a mirror, a reflection of.](#) So what we see here in Revelation 13 is a second power coming up out of the earth and is reflecting the image of this first beast. [It is mirroring that image.](#) What we see in the first power, the first earthly kingdom in Revelation 13 [is going to be mirrored by a second power](#) that is going to rise to prominence in the earth in the last days.” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-mcpNJcTxE>

“What Is The Mark Of The Beast?” ASI Live Panel Discussion Sabbath Afternoon, 8/9/2014

“And in fact, [the Mark of the Beast would be the worship of God on any other day](#) than that particular day because that is a sign of God authority. In fact let’s contrast the Mark of the Beast with the Seal of God. Because the seal of God for God’s people in the last days will be their adherence, their love of Him, and their observance of the day which He has ordained and made sacred, the seventh-day Sabbath. So you are sealed with a special connection with Him when you keep that day. [Anyone keeping a day other than that](#), ultimately will be keeping [the sign or the mark of the authority of the Beast](#) which has [changed the day of worship to another day.](#)” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-mcpNJcTxE>

Pastor Snell (chuckles): “Well again [I just think to say that worshipping on Sunday is the Mark of the beast, I think that’s maybe a little bit too narrow of a way to look at it.](#) I think the issue with [the mark of the beast is actually lawlessness](#) and rebellion against God, and I just think that God is going to use certain things as a test of loyalty, the Sabbath being one of them. [But I think the larger issue is actually lawlessness...](#) The thoughts and the decisions handling them in a way that is anti-God, contrary to the scriptures... I think the problem is as well... [I just think its important that we, as we try to win people to the truth that we don’t create an adversarial scenario by kind of... using terminology that is going to alienate us](#) from those that need to hear the truth and be able to respond to it.” <http://advindicate.com/articles/2015/2/16/an-adventist-church-begins-sunday-services-as-evangelism-tool>

40. What are some of the pillars of the Seventh-day Adventist movement?

"Infidelity prevails to an alarming extent, not in the world merely, but in the church. Many have come to deny doctrines which are the very pillars of the Christian faith. The great facts of creation as presented by the inspired writers, the fall of man, the atonement, and the perpetuity of the law of God, are practically rejected, either wholly or in part, by a large share of the professedly Christian world." {GC 582.3}

"Wilson: No Room for Evolutionists in Adventist Schools" **"He cautioned against associating with scientists, humanists and 'some who claim to be Seventh-day Adventists' who have embraced an evolution-based creation theory.** 'Do not believe them nor participate in this manipulation of biblical truth regarding creation and the visible commemoration of creation—the Sabbath,' he told conference participants. 'In essence, evolution is not a science.' **The popular teaching, which mixes the biblical story with Darwin's theory of evolution, has crept into some Adventist schools in recent years** and prompted, in part, a decision by the Adventist Church to start organizing Bible and science conferences in 2002." <http://www.adventistreview.org/affirming-creation/pan-american-health-organization-urges-adventists-to-share-health-expertise>

Why do we need to insert on line 35 the word "recent"? I move to exclude on line 35 the word "recent" that has been inserted because **it is not biblical.** **And again, why insert the word "literal" in line 39?.. It is not a matter of salvation.** **"But what thinking person, who believes in evidence-based research is going to want to join a church that specifically excludes evidence."** <http://spectrummagazine.org/sites/default/files/LA%20Forum%20-%20Larry%20Geraty.mp3>

Question: How would you describe what happened at the 1980 Glacier View conference to a young person today?

Answer: My views on the investigative judgment remain the same and I rejoice **that leading figures at Glacier View have not preached on the topic since 1980. Most of the Bible scholars at Glacier View accepted the essence of my views. Most of them refused to teach the investigative judgment. Andrews had not taught it for decades.** The most important result of Glacier View was the evidence in the years that followed that **our Bible scholars had not and do not believe in the investigative judgment. One Andrews professor said the teaching was like that about the man in the moon.** <http://spectrummagazine.org/article/2015/03/12/des-ford-reflects-his-adventist-history>

41. What are some of the pillars of the Seventh-day Adventist movement?

"The ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper are two monumental pillars, one without and one within the church. **Upon these ordinances Christ has inscribed the name of the true God.** {6T 91.1}

42. Read the following and explain the gospel of peace and the sword of the gospel.

How, then, can the gospel be called a message of peace? When Isaiah foretold the birth of the Messiah, he ascribed to Him the title, "Prince of Peace."...There is a seeming contradiction between these prophetic declarations and the words of Christ: **"I came not to send peace, but a sword."** Matthew 10:34. But, rightly understood, the two are in perfect harmony. **The gospel is a message of peace.** Christianity is a system which, received and obeyed, would spread peace, harmony, and happiness throughout the earth... **But the world at large are under the control of Satan, Christ's bitterest foe. The gospel presents to them principles of life which are wholly at variance with their habits and desires, and they rise in rebellion against it.** They hate the purity which reveals and condemns their sins, and they persecute and destroy those who would urge upon them its just and holy claims. **It is in this sense--because the exalted truths it brings occasion hatred and strife--that the gospel is called a sword.** {GC 46.3}

43. Why does the Lord allow His faithful to experience persecution for the truth's sake?

"The Lord is not slack concerning His promise." 2 Peter 3:9. **He does not forget or neglect His children;** but He permits the wicked to reveal their true character, that none who desire to do His will may be deceived concerning them. **Again, the righteous are placed in the furnace of affliction, that they themselves may be purified;** that their example may convince others of the reality of faith and godliness; and also that their consistent course may condemn the ungodly and unbelieving. {GC 48.1}

44. Why is it that persecution seems to slumber?

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.**

45. Meditate upon the following scriptures John 15:20 and 1 Peter 4:12-16.