

What More Could I Do?



SABBATH—MARCH 8

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON: John 18:37; Romans 3:23–26; Isaiah 5:1–4; Matthew 21:33–39; Romans 3:1–4.

MEMORY VERSE: “Pilate said to Him, ‘So You are a King?’ Jesus said, ‘You are right [correct] when you say that I am a King. I was born for this reason. I came into the world for this reason. I came to speak about the truth. Everyone who is of [belongs to] the truth hears [obeys] My voice’ ” (John 18:37, NLV).

MANY YEARS AGO, a powerful children's story was printed in *Guide* magazine. The story is about a boy named Denis who lives during the Middle Ages. Denis is an orphan who lives with a family who takes care of him. Denis hates the king of his land. When Denis's parents were sick, the king's soldiers carried him away. Denis never saw his parents again. Later, Denis learned that the king separated Denis from his parents to protect him from a very terrible disease named the Black Death. The truth about the king made Denis free from hate. Then Denis understood that the king loved his people. He always did what was best for them.

Many people today feel about God the way Denis felt about the king. People hate God because of the evil that happens on this earth. Where is God when there is suffering? If God is good, why is there so much evil? The worldwide war between God and Satan helps us understand these important questions better. But we do not have answers for many questions. When we can't answer these questions, we can always look to Jesus on the cross. Then we can see that we can trust God with everything we don't understand for now.



When we look to Jesus on the cross, we can see that we can trust God with everything we don't understand for now.

JESUS THE WINNER (John 18:37)

Satan, our enemy, is hard at work. Jesus says Satan is the prince of this earth. But Satan is a prince because he stole his kingdom from Adam when Adam sinned. The real king of heaven and earth is Jesus Christ. Jesus wins the fight against Satan for us. He gives us strength and success. He gives us hope during hard times and suffering.

The Bible tells us many things about the devil. He is:

1. The one who fools and tricks the people on this earth from the beginning (Revelation 12:9; Matthew 4:3; John 8:44; 2 Corinthians 11:3; 1 John 3:8).
2. The one who talks bad about God. Satan accuses God and His people in heaven (Revelation 12:10; Revelation 13:6; Job 1–2; Zechariah 3:1, 2; Jude 9).
3. The one who stole this earth's kingdom from Adam when he sinned and who now controls many things on this planet (John 14:30; John 16:11; Acts 26:18; 2 Corinthians 4:4; Ephesians 2:2; 1 John 5:19).

Read John 18:37. What does this verse tell us about Jesus' work to stop the lies of Satan? What does it mean that Jesus is King?

In the Bible, we learn that Satan is a liar. Satan talks bad about God. He accuses God and His people. Satan stole the control of this earth away from Adam. The Bible also teaches us that Jesus is the winner over Satan in every way.

1. Jesus “ ‘came into the world for this reason. I came to speak about the truth’ ” (John 18:37, NLV).
2. Jesus showed God's perfect love (Romans 3:25, 26; Romans 5:8). When Jesus showed God's perfect love, He gave proof that the devil's words against God were lies (Revelation 12:10, 11).
3. Jesus will finally destroy the devil's kingdom. Then Jesus will be the King over heaven and earth forever and ever (Revelation 11:15). So, the devil “knows he doesn't have much time” (Revelation 12:12, ERV; compare with Romans 16:20).

In the end, Satan has already lost the war. Satan can't do anything to win the war now.



Jesus wins the fight against Satan for us.

THE ONE WHO MAKES US HOLY AND ACCEPTED WITH GOD (Romans 3:23–26)

All the time, Jesus works to stop and reverse the devil's work. 1 John 3:8 tells us that "the Son of God came . . . to destroy the devil's work" (ERV). Jesus also came to "destroy the one who has the power of death. That one is the devil" (Hebrews 2:14, ICB). Jesus will destroy Satan's control in two parts. First, Jesus will die on the cross. His death will show that Satan's words against God are lies. Second, God will destroy Satan and his kingdom later on.

Read Romans 3:23–26 and Romans 5:8. What do these verses teach us about the way Jesus destroys the lies of Satan?

As we already saw, Satan says that God is not full of mercy or love. In Jesus, God gives us proof of His mercy and love. The Cross is the proof.

After Jesus died, "Satan saw that God showed everyone who he really was. God also showed the angels in heaven the truth about Satan's government. Satan was a killer. When Satan killed Jesus, the angels stopped feeling any more pity or sorrow for Satan."—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, page 761, adapted.

Read Revelation 12:10–12 along with Genesis 3:15. How do these verses help us understand why Jesus' win at the cross was so very important?

The history of God's plan to save us gives us more than enough proof that God always works to do what is best for everyone. God always does what is good. He works within the limits He agreed to in the worldwide war between good and evil (Deuteronomy 32:4; 1 Samuel 3:18; Psalm 145:17; Daniel 4:37; Habakkuk 1:13; Revelation 15:3; Genesis 18:25).

Why is God's love in the worldwide war between good and evil so important? Think about the Cross and everything that God did to save us. How do His works give you hope to trust in His love, even when you suffer?



“When Satan killed Jesus, the angels stopped feeling any more pity or sorrow for Satan.”

THE SONG OF MY BELOVED (ISAIAH 5:1–4)

In amazing ways, God shows His love for us in the worldwide war between good and evil. But some may ask, “Should God do more than He did to prevent or remove evil?” We saw that the worldwide war between good and evil shows that God always acts in a way that respects our free choice. God respects our free choice so that we will love Him. As we saw, this free choice is necessary for a love relationship between God and humans. We also saw that God follows rules in the worldwide war between good and evil. The rules are named the rules for war. The rules for war show us how God will act and what He can and cannot do because He is a God of love.

Read Isaiah 5:1–4. Who is talking in these verses? What is Isaiah talking about? The grape field and its owner are word pictures. What do these word pictures show us? What does the owner do for his grape field? Why are these things important? What do they mean? What happens because of the things that the owner does?

In these verses, Isaiah sings a song about his beloved, who is the same as a grape field. The grape field is a word picture for God’s people (for more examples, read Isaiah 1:8 and Jeremiah 2:21). But the grape field can also be a word picture for all the people that God is trying to save everywhere on earth. The owner of the grape field is God. God did everything we could expect to make sure His field grew. The field should grow good grapes. But the field grew wild grapes. Some Bible translations say “useless” grapes that aren’t worth anything. The Hebrew word for “wild” or “useless” also can be written as “stink-fruit”! God’s grape field grew rotten grapes.

In Isaiah 5:3, God starts talking. God invites people to judge between Him and His grape field. In Isaiah 5:4, God asks an all-important question, “What more could I do for my vineyard [grape field]? I did everything I could. I hoped for good grapes to grow, but there were only rotten ones. Why did that happen?” (ERV). What more could God do? Do you see that God asks other people to judge what He did? That is very interesting!

When you look at the Cross, think about Isaiah 5:4. What more could God do to save us than die for our sins?



God’s grape field grew rotten grapes.

JESUS' PICTURE STORY ABOUT THE GRAPE FIELD (Matthew 21:33–39)

In Matthew 21, Jesus tells a picture story about an owner of a grape field. This picture story helps us remember Isaiah's song about the grape field in Isaiah 5.

Read Matthew 21:33–39 as you think about the question that God asked in Isaiah 5:4. What more could God do to save us than He already did?



The Cross shows us that God did everything He could do to destroy evil without removing our free choice.

The first part of Jesus' picture story is a quote from the song of Isaiah 5 about the grape field and its owner. Then, Jesus adds, the owner rented His field to some farmers and went on a trip to visit a country far away (Matthew 21:33). Two times the owner sent His servants to check on the grape field. (The servants are a word picture for God's prophets or special messengers.) The owner sent the servants to collect the grapes. But the farmers beat and killed his servants (Matthew 21:34–36). Finally, the Owner (God) sent His Son (Jesus), saying, " 'They will respect my son' " (Matthew 21:37, NKJV). "But when the farmers saw the son, they said to each other, 'This is the owner's son. This vineyard [grape field] will be his. If we kill him, it will be ours.' So the farmers took the son, threw him out of the vineyard, and killed him" (Matthew 21:38, 39, ERV).

What more could God do? The Father loved us so much. He gave His beloved Son to save us (John 3:16). As we already saw, the worldwide war between good and evil can't be solved with God destroying evil too soon. First, God must show that He is a God of love. God showed His love in a public way in the work of Jesus (Romans 3:25, 26; Romans 5:8). What more could we ask God than to give us His Son to die for us? God gave us His Son so that He could honor His law. Then He could accept us. He could be both fair and loving at the same time.

The Cross shows us that God did everything He could do to destroy evil without removing our free choice. Free choice is necessary for love. If God could save us any other way, don't you think He would choose it? Of course He would! People suffer much in the worldwide war between God and Satan. But God suffers the most. When we look at the Cross, we see how much God suffered because of sin. But Jesus was willing to die so that we could be free to love. That's how much Jesus respects our freedom to choose.

GOD IS INNOCENT (Romans 3:1–4)

In the end, everyone in heaven and on earth will see that God is not guilty of the things Satan says about Him. The Father, the Son, and Holy Spirit will show in Their plan to save us that God is a God of love. Then no one will doubt God's love or mercy again (read Romans 3:25, 26; Romans 5:8).

Read Romans 3:1–4, along with Isaiah 5:3, 4. What do these verses teach us about how God will be shown to be innocent in the worldwide war between good and evil?

In Romans 3 and Isaiah 5, God invites (in a limited way) people to judge who He is and what He does. No one is good enough to judge God. But God invites His people to judge His actions anyway. In the end, we will see the proof that God is fair and holy. God will show everyone in heaven and on earth that He is not guilty of the things Satan accuses Him of doing.

Read Revelation 15:3 and Revelation 19:1–6. What do these verses teach us about how God will show everyone that He is innocent in the end?

All through the Bible, God shows that He cares about His name. Why? You can't have a deep love relationship with someone you hate or don't trust. If someone told your husband or wife terrible things about you, what would you do? You'd show you were innocent, right? If your husband or wife believed those lies, the lies would destroy your relationship.

In the end, God will show that He is innocent, and that Satan lied about Him. The Cross is proof, and so is God's plan to save us. In God's work as Judge, everyone in heaven and on earth will see that God is innocent.

After we get to heaven, we will judge the lost, both humans and angels (1 Corinthians 6:2, 3). When we review the records of their lives, we will see that God isn't guilty of anything Satan said. We will see that all of God's punishments were fair, loving, and holy. For sure, we all have questions that need answering. Before we finish our work in heaven, God will answer all our questions (read 1 Corinthians 4:5).



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ADDITIONAL THOUGHT: Read Ellen G. White, “The Reward of Earnest Effort,” pages 285–288, in *Testimonies for the Church*, volume 9.

“When we get to heaven, we will understand everything that confused us about God’s plan in this life. We will get an explanation for the things that are hard to understand now. God will explain the mystery of His mercy and love. Where we now see only broken promises, we shall see the most perfect plan. We shall know that God in His love gave us the experiences that seem the most difficult. We will understand that God in His tender care for us makes all things work together for our good. Then we will rejoice with joy that can’t be put into words. Our joy will be filled with praise to God.”—Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, volume 9, page 286, adapted.



“We will understand that God in His tender care for us makes all things work together for our good.”

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- ① Do you sometimes feel confused when you try to understand God’s plan for your life? What hope do you feel about God’s plan to explain everything to you in heaven?
- ② Think about everything Jesus gave up to become human and die for us. Also, think about what His decision tells us about God’s love and why we can trust God. What more could God do to save us?
- ③ What is so important about God’s name? What does your answer tell you about how important our name is as Seventh-day Adventist Christians? In what ways do Christians sometimes do things to cause people to lose respect for the name of Jesus? What can we do in our local communities to show people what following Jesus in this life is all about?
- ④ In the end, our best answers to the sin problem are not complete. What can we do now to help people who are suffering while we wait for God to show us His answers to the problem with evil?
- ⑤ Think more about Isaiah 53:4. What does it mean that Jesus carried our sorrow and pain on the cross? How does the Cross help us understand God’s saving plan?

THE DOCTOR WHO DIDN'T GIVE UP: PART 3

Dr. Colette Reahl hoped to bring Matrona home before the Sabbath started. Matrona was a 13-year-old Indian girl who was born in Alaska. Colette told Matrona that she was a Seventh-day Adventist. Colette wanted to get Matrona settled into her new home in Anchorage before they spent their first Sabbath together.

But the managers for the adoption center had other plans. The managers told Colette that she could take Matrona home on the Sabbath.

The day before the big move, Colette called Matrona at the adoption center in Anchorage. Colette said, "I go to church each Sabbath. Would you like to go with me?"

Matrona said, "No."

When Matrona arrived to see Colette the next morning, Matrona announced that she wanted to watch TV.

Colette said, "On Sabbaths in my house we watch Christian shows or nature programs."

Matrona was surprised. So, she asked if she could watch a TV show about wild animals.

Colette and Matrona spent the next two months in Anchorage getting to know each other. Then Matrona and Colette moved to Bethel, where Colette had a new job at a hospital. Colette and Matrona built a strong relationship during this time. They had morning and evening worship together. Matrona became a very spiritual person.

Today, Matrona is 15 years old. She loves living in Bethel, Alaska, where she is homeschooled, takes piano lessons, and has many friends. Church is also very important to Matrona.

Colette said, "God brought Matrona and me together." Colette also serves as a Bible worker and is a leader in the church.

Colette also said, "The Matrona I met on the phone is very different from the Matrona now. Matrona is a leader for the kids at church and in the community. I see God working in her life and helping her faith grow strong."

Matrona is thankful that Colette didn't stop calling her. Matrona also is thankful for Colette's love as a mother. Matrona said, "I know who God is because Colette never gave up on getting to know me."

Matrona said that God used Colette to change her life. "God led Colette to me, and me to her. God brought me to a good place and gave me peace."

This mission story offers an inside look at Bethel (Alaska) Seventh-day Adventist Church. Bethel Church got part of a 13th Sabbath Offering in 2024. Thank you for your offering on March 29 to help people learn about Jesus.

INSIDE
Story
by ANDREW MCCHESENEY



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Dr. Colette Reahl and Matrona