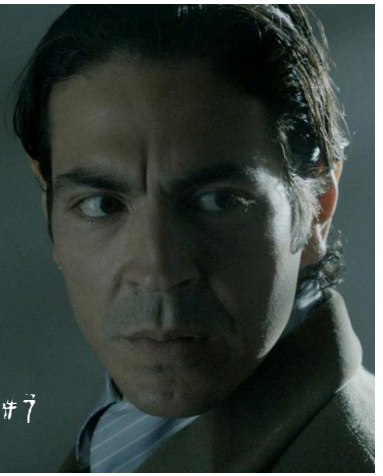


no more secrets

Revealing Jesus - Discussion Guide #7



INQUIRY

1. What is so important to you that you'd protect it with your very life?
2. How can you tell the difference between divine direction and wishful thinking?
3. Where do you see yourself in this story?
4. What is the most rewarding challenge you've taken on?

INQUEST

Jesus surprises people.

That's always been true, and perhaps always will be. God's people looked for a Messiah for thousands of years, and the clues to His nature were scattered throughout prophecy and revelation. In the garden God promised the first couple that one of their descendants would crush the serpent (Genesis 3:15).

The book of Revelation describes Jesus as "the lion of the tribe of Judah" (Revelation 5:5). The scepter in Jacob's prophecy symbolized royal authority, to be claimed by "he to whom it belongs"—or, as it is also translated, "Shiloh"—that is, the Messiah, the bringer of rest. In the sixth century B.C. Zechariah prophesied, "Rejoice greatly, Daughter Zion! Shout, Daughter Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and victorious, lowly and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey" (Zechariah 9:9). Jacob and Zechariah both looked forward to the day when a humble King would greet His people from the back of a donkey.

Perhaps the most striking prophecy comes from a downright scoundrel—Balaam, a non-Israelite follower of God who ever-so-reluctantly agreed to prophesy against God's people in exchange for some silver and gold. Able only to speak the words God gave Him, Balaam repeatedly enraged his client, Balak, king of Moab, with predictions of prosperity. "I see him, but not now," Balaam intoned. "I behold him, but not near. A star will come out of Jacob; a scepter will rise out of Israel" (Numbers 24:17).

The 8th-century B.C. prophet Micah looked forward to a time when a descendent of King David would once again rule over God's people and bring peace in the face of their enemies. Micah prophesied, "But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times" (Micah 5:2).

By the first century A.D., under occupation by the Roman empire, the people of Judea looked for a Messiah to set them free. But while they dreamed of political deliverance, too few looked for spiritual

salvation. They failed to see the Messiah as the redeemer of not just their nation, but of all humanity, the spiritual descendant of not just David, but of Adam and Eve. Most did not see their Messiah in the sanctuary services, in the lamb slain for their sins.

Read Isaiah 53:1-12.

1. How might Isaiah's original readers have interpreted this passage?
2. The suffering servant is described as lacking both "beauty" and "majesty." If Jesus looked like just an ordinary person, then what about Him may have drawn His followers to Him?
3. Why did so many reject Jesus?
4. What connection do you see between these verses and the Messianic promise of Genesis 3:15?

CROSS-EXAMINATION

"Satan employs every possible device to prevent men from obtaining a knowledge of the Bible. At every revival of God's work, he arouses to more intense activity. A final struggle against Christ and His followers is soon to open before us. So closely will the counterfeit resemble the true that it will be impossible to distinguish between them except by the Scriptures."

1. There were many false Messiahs in the years before and after Jesus. How could someone have recognized them as phonies?
2. What makes an imitation believable and persuasive?

"Before His crucifixion the Saviour explained to His disciples that He was to be put to death and rise again. Angels were present to impress His words on minds and hearts. But the words were banished from the disciples' minds. When the trial came, the death of Jesus as fully destroyed their hopes as if He had not forewarned them. So in the prophecies the future is opened before us as plainly as it was opened to the disciples by Christ. But multitudes have no more understanding of these important truths than if they had never been revealed."

1. Why can truth be so hard to comprehend?
2. What blinded Jesus' disciples to what He told them?
3. How can we prepare for future spiritual challenges?

"Many claim that it matters not what one believes, if his life is only right. But the life is molded by the faith. If truth is within reach and we neglect it, we virtually reject it, choosing darkness rather than light."

1. What is the value of truth versus error?
2. What difference can accurate information make in everyday life?
3. What qualities does truth have that falsehood lacks?

"Many congratulate themselves on the wrong acts which they do not commit. It is not enough that they are trees in the garden of God. They are to bear fruit. In the books of heaven they are registered as cumberers of the ground. Yet with those who have slighted God's mercy and abused His grace, the heart of long-suffering love yet pleads."

1. Why do so many people think that they'll get to heaven if they just maintain a spiritual holding pattern?
2. What is the danger of a static spiritual life?
3. How would you describe the patience of God?

Chapter 7— *Our Only Safeguard*

The people of God are directed to the Scriptures as their safeguard against the delusive power of spirits of darkness. Satan employs every possible device to prevent men from obtaining a knowledge of the Bible. At every revival of God's work, he arouses to more intense activity. A final struggle against Christ and His followers is soon to open before us. So closely will the counterfeit resemble the true that it will be impossible to distinguish between them except by the Scriptures.

Those who endeavor to obey all the commandments of God will be opposed and derided. To endure the trial, they must understand the will of God as revealed in His Word. They can honor Him only as they have a right conception of His character, government, and purposes, and act in accordance with them. None but those who have fortified the mind with the truths of the Bible will stand through the last great conflict.

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When God sends warnings, He requires every person endowed with reason to heed the message. The fearful judgments against the worship of the beast and his image (see Revelation 14:9-11) should lead all to learn what the mark of the beast is and how to avoid receiving it.* But the masses of the people do not want Bible truth, because it interferes with the desires of the sinful heart. Satan supplies the deceptions they love.

But God will have a people to maintain the Bible, and the Bible only, as the standard of all doctrines and the basis of all reforms. The opinions of learned men, the deductions of science, the decisions of ecclesiastical councils, the voice of the majority—not one of these should be regarded as evidence for or against any doctrine. We should demand a plain "Thus saith the Lord." Satan leads the people to look to pastors, to professors of theology as their guides, instead of searching the Scriptures for themselves. By controlling these leaders, he can influence the multitudes.

When Christ came, the common people heard Him gladly. But the chief of the priesthood and leading men incased themselves in prejudice; they rejected the evidence of His Messiahship. "How is it," the people asked, "that our rulers and learned scribes do not believe on Jesus?" Such teachers led the Jewish nation to reject their Redeemer.

Exalting Human Authority

Christ had a prophetic view of the work of exalting human authority to rule the conscience, which has been so terrible a curse in all ages. His warnings not to follow blind leaders were placed on record as an admonition to future generations.

The Roman Church reserves to the clergy the right to interpret the Scriptures. Though the Reformation gave the Scriptures to all, yet the same principle which was maintained by Rome prevents multitudes in Protestant churches from searching the Bible for

* This subject is presented in *The Great Controversy*, chapter 38.

themselves. They are taught to accept its teachings *as interpreted by the church*. Thousands dare receive nothing, however plain in Scripture, that is contrary to their creed.

Many are ready to commit their souls to the clergy. They pass by the Saviour's teachings almost unnoticed. But are ministers infallible? How can we trust their guidance unless we know from God's Word that they are lightbearers? A lack of moral courage leads many to follow learned men, and they become hopelessly fastened in error. They see the truth for this time in the Bible and feel the power of the Holy Spirit attend its proclamation, yet they allow the clergy to turn them from the light.

Satan secures multitudes by attaching them by silken cords of affection to those who are enemies of the cross of Christ. This attachment may be parental, filial, conjugal, or social. Souls under their sway have not courage to obey their convictions of duty.

Many claim that it matters not what one believes, if his life is only right. But the life is molded by the faith. If truth is within reach and we neglect it, we virtually reject it, choosing darkness rather than light.

Ignorance is no excuse for error or sin, when there is every opportunity to know the will of God. A man traveling comes to a place where there are several roads and a signpost indicating where each one leads. If he disregards the sign and takes whichever road seems to be right, he may be sincere, but will in all probability find himself on the wrong road.

The First and Highest Duty

It is not enough to have good intentions, to do what a man thinks is right or what the minister tells him is right. He should search the Scriptures for himself. He has a chart pointing out every waymark on the heavenward journey, and he ought not to guess at anything.

It is the first and highest duty of every rational being to learn from the Scriptures what is truth, and then to walk in the light and encourage others to follow his example. We are to form our opinions for ourselves as we are to answer for ourselves before God.

Learned men, with a pretense of great wisdom, teach that the Scriptures have a secret, spiritual meaning not apparent in the language employed. These men are false teachers. The language of the Bible should be explained according to its obvious meaning, unless a symbol or figure is employed. If men would but take the Bible as it reads, a work would be accomplished that would bring into the fold of Christ thousands now wandering in error.

Many a Scripture which learned men pass over as unimportant is full of comfort to him who has been taught in the school of Christ. An understanding of Bible truth depends not so much on the power of intellect brought to the search as on the singleness of purpose, the earnest longing after righteousness.

Results of Neglect of Prayer and Bible Study

The Bible should never be studied without prayer. The Holy Spirit alone can cause us to feel the importance of things easy to be understood, or prevent us from wresting difficult truths. Heavenly angels prepare the heart to comprehend God's Word. We shall be charmed with its beauty, strengthened by its promises. Temptations often appear irresistible because the tempted one cannot readily remember God's promises and meet

Satan with the Scripture weapons. But angels are round about those willing to be taught, and they will bring to their remembrance the truths which are needed.

"He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." John 14:26. But the teachings of Christ must previously have been stored in the mind in order for the Spirit of God to bring them to our remembrance in the time of peril.

The destiny of earth's teeming multitudes is about to be decided. Every follower of Christ should earnestly inquire: "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" Acts 9:6. We should now seek a deep and living experience in the things of God. We have not a moment to lose. We are on Satan's enchanted ground. Sleep not, sentinels of God!

Many congratulate themselves on the wrong acts which they do not commit. It is not enough that they are trees in the garden of God. They are to bear fruit. In the books of heaven they are registered as cumberers of the ground. Yet with those who have slighted God's mercy and abused His grace, the heart of long-suffering love yet pleads.

In the summer there is no noticeable difference between evergreens and other trees; but when the blasts of winter come, the evergreens remain unchanged while other trees are stripped of their foliage. Let opposition arise, let intolerance again bear sway, let persecution be kindled, and the halfhearted and hypocritical will yield the faith; but the true Christian will stand firm, his faith stronger, his hope brighter, than in days of prosperity.

"He shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit." Jeremiah 17:8.

Sources

In the list below, under each chapter in the current work are listed the source chapters in *The Great Controversy* that correspond to it:

Chapter 1, “Why Is There Suffering?”

The Great Controversy, chapter 29

Chapter 2, “Hope for Triumph Over Evil”

The Great Controversy, chapters 30, 31

Chapter 3, “Dangerous Seductions”

The Great Controversy, chapter 32

Chapter 4, “Everlasting Life”

The Great Controversy, chapter 33

Chapter 5, “False Hope”

The Great Controversy, chapter 34

Chapter 6, “True Peace”

The Great Controversy, chapters 7, 27

Chapter 7, “Our Only Safeguard”

The Great Controversy, chapter 37

Chapter 8, “In Defense of the Truth”

The Great Controversy, chapters 3, 25, 26

Chapter 9, “Real Hope”

The Great Controversy, chapters 1, 17, 36, 38, 39

Chapter 10, “The Great Rescue”

The Great Controversy, chapter 40

Chapter 11, “Victory of Love”

The Great Controversy, chapter 42

A revealing
look at the
battle between
good and
evil — and
who wins.

The Great Hope





Younger Generation Church

YG is the vibrant young adult ministry of the Arlington Seventh-day Adventist Church. Our mission is to deepen our devotion to Christ Jesus by pursuing INTIMACY with GOD, experiencing COMMUNITY with each other, and inspiring those around us with the HOPE of GRACE. www.YGchurch.com



How it all began

YG began just after the turn of the century as a high-energy, contemporary worship service highlighting multimedia, upbeat music, and timely, creative messages – all focused on reaching young adults. Today, YG transcends age and program boundaries, making authentic efforts to foster the great commandment and great commission in new generations. www.vimeo.com/channels/ygchurch



Intimacy

We are wholeheartedly pursuing a 24/7 experience of the living GOD. Our worship is for His fame. Each week Younger Generation Church offers a powerful worship experience, Saturday mornings, 10:15 am [Central], where we authentically gather to focus our attention and adoration on Christ Jesus. www.YGchurch.com



Community

We express best who GOD is by doing life together well. Our relationships express His love. Younger Generation Church enjoys LIFEgroups affording our members an opportunity to build inspiring community and foster healthy relationships. We love having fun and taking time to enjoy each other's company. www.facebook.com/ygchurch



Grace

We are compelled to share the hope we have with others. Our compassionate witness reveals His Good News as real. Younger Generation Church generously shares the grace of Jesus Christ with whomever we might serve. Feeding the hungry, encouraging the orphan, consoling the widow—being grace dispensers to the least of these bring us joy. @YGChurch