

no more secrets

Revealing Jesus - Discussion Guide #5

INQUIRY

1. What causes you to fear? If we reject love, what is left?
2. What would you be willing to fight for?
3. What have you encountered in life that you would describe as transcendent? How did it make you feel?
4. Why do people settle for the passion of a moment in place of enduring love?

INQUEST

They were just three months removed from slavery. Three months since an astonishing sequence of events catapulted them out of Egypt, since waters parted to rescue them from a pursuing army. Each morning food had begun to rain from the sky for them to eat. When the only water they could find was bitter, God made it sweet. When they couldn't find water at all, water came out of solid rock. When an enemy attacked them, God gave them victory. All the Israelites had to do was trust the God who loved them enough to set them free.

And so after three months God announced He was coming to meet them personally, at Mount Sinai. God asked them to prepare themselves for His arrival, and asked them to stay off the mountain until He had come and gone.

But pretty soon the Israelites got tired of waiting. They figured God must have swallowed up Moses up on the mountain, so they demanded that Moses' brother Aaron help them make a god they could keep an eye—and perhaps a leash--on. They smelted themselves a calf of gold and declared it the source of their salvation. Ecstatic to finally have a god in their own bull-headed image, they threw a no-holds-barred bash. Read Exodus 19 and Exodus 32:1-6.

1. Why did God ask them to prepare themselves to meet Him?
2. Why might God choose smoke, fire, and thunder to reveal Himself?
4. Why were the Israelites so much more comfortable with and excited by a mundane idol than a God of surpassing power and transcendent glory?

The book of Revelation predicts an end-time deception, describing "three impure spirits that looked like frogs" (Revelation 16:13). Verse 14 says they are "demonic spirits that perform signs". As part of Revelation's description of the seven last plagues, this brings to mind the plague of frogs in Egypt before the Israelites escaped in the Exodus. Read Exodus 8:5-7 and Exodus 8:16-18 and Revelation 16:12-14.



1. Why did Pharaoh's sorcerers try to duplicate the plagues?
2. How can we avoid being deceived by supernatural feats that may dazzle our senses?
3. What value is there in supernatural signs, from God's perspective and Satan's? What are the drawbacks of supernatural signs when it comes to faith?

CROSS-EXAMINATION

"While it is true that the results of trickery have often been palmed off as genuine manifestations, there have been, also, marked exhibitions of supernatural power, the direct work of evil angels. Many believe that spiritualism is merely human imposture. When brought face to face with manifestations which they cannot but regard as supernatural, they will be deceived and accept them as the great power of God."

1. Why are people so eager to learn the future or make up for their past through connecting with lost loved ones?
2. Author Arthur Conan Doyle created detective Sherlock Holmes, the ultimate practitioner of rational deduction, yet he turned to spiritualism for comfort when he lost his son in World War I. How do deceivers prey on our emotions?
3. The original meaning of the word "occult" means that which is hidden from view. Why do people crave secret knowledge?

"Thus Satan has substituted the sinful nature of man himself for the law of God as the only rule of judgment. This is progress, not upward, but downward. Man will never rise higher than his standard of purity or goodness. If self is his loftiest ideal, he will never attain to anything more exalted. The grace of God alone has power to exalt man. Left to himself, his course must be downward."

1. What makes grace so powerful?
2. What are the limits of finding strength and direction in ourselves?
3. What balance is there between self-control and God's power?

"When people thus believe that desire is the highest law, that liberty is license, that man is accountable only to himself, who can wonder that corruption teems on every hand? Multitudes eagerly accept the promptings of lust."

1. How do we justify our worst actions?
2. If what is right is simply what we desire, what objective standard of morality can there be?
3. What responsibility comes with freedom?

"Except those who are kept by the power of God through faith in His Word, the whole world will be swept into the ranks of this delusion. The people are fast being lulled to a fatal security, to be awakened only by the outpouring of the wrath of God."

1. How can we know what to believe?
2. How can we avoid deception?
3. What is God's wrath? What is its purpose?

Chapter 5— *False Hope*

The doctrine of natural immortality, first borrowed from pagan philosophy and in the darkness of the great apostasy incorporated into the Christian faith, has supplanted the truth that "the dead know not anything." Ecclesiastes 9:5. Multitudes believe that the spirits of the dead are the "ministering spirits sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation." Hebrews 1:14.

The belief that spirits of the dead return to minister to the living has prepared the way for modern spiritualism. If the dead are privileged with knowledge far exceeding what they before possessed, why not return to earth and instruct the living? If spirits of the dead hover about their friends on earth, why not communicate with them? How can those who believe in man's consciousness in death reject "divine light" communicated by glorified spirits? Here is a channel regarded as sacred through which Satan works. Fallen angels appear as messengers from the spirit world.

The prince of evil has power to bring before men the appearance of departed friends. The counterfeit is perfect, reproduced with marvelous distinctness. Many are comforted with the assurance that their loved ones are enjoying heaven. Without suspicion of danger, they give ear "to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils." 1 Timothy 4:1.

Those who went into the grave unprepared claim to be happy and to occupy exalted positions in heaven. Pretended visitants from the world of spirits sometimes utter warnings which prove to be correct. Then, as confidence is gained, they present doctrines that undermine the Scriptures. The fact that they state some truths and at times foretell future events gives an appearance of reliability, and their false teachings are accepted. The law of God is set aside, the Spirit of grace despised. The spirits deny the deity of Christ and place the Creator on a level with themselves.

While it is true that the results of trickery have often been palmed off as genuine manifestations, there have been, also, marked exhibitions of supernatural power, the direct work of evil angels. Many believe that spiritualism is merely human imposture. When brought face to face with manifestations which they cannot but regard as supernatural, they will be deceived and accept them as the great power of God.

By satanic aid Pharaoh's magicians counterfeited the work of God. See Exodus 7:10-12. Paul testifies that the coming of the Lord is to be preceded by "the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness." 2 Thessalonians 2:9, 10. And John declares: "He doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, and deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by means of those miracles which he had power to do." Revelation 13:13, 14. No mere impostures are here foretold. Men are deceived by the miracles which Satan's agents do, not which they pretend to do.

Appeal to Intellect

To persons of culture and refinement the prince of darkness presents spiritualism in its more refined and intellectual aspects. He delights the fancy with enrapturing scenes and eloquent portrayals of love and charity. He leads men to take so great pride in their own wisdom that in their hearts they despise the Eternal One.

Satan beguiles men now as he beguiled Eve in Eden, by exciting ambition for self-exaltation. "Ye shall be as gods," he declares, "knowing good and evil." Genesis 3:5. Spiritualism teaches "that man is the creature of progression . . . toward the Godhead." And again: "The judgment will be right, because it is the judgment of self. . . . The throne is within you." And another declares: "Any just and perfect being is Christ."

Thus Satan has substituted the sinful nature of man himself for the law of God as the only rule of judgment. This is progress, not upward, but downward. Man will never rise higher than his standard of purity or goodness. If self is his loftiest ideal, he will never attain to anything more exalted. The grace of God alone has power to exalt man. Left to himself, his course must be downward.

Appeal to the Pleasure-Loving

To the self-indulgent, the pleasure-loving, the sensual, spiritualism presents a less subtle disguise. In its grosser forms they find what is in harmony with their inclinations. Satan marks the sins each individual is inclined to commit and then takes care that opportunities shall not be wanting to gratify the tendency. He tempts men through intemperance to weaken physical, mental, and moral power. He destroys thousands through indulgence of passion, brutalizing the entire nature. And to complete his work, the spirits declare that "true knowledge places man above all law"; that "whatever is, is right"; that "God doth not condemn"; and that "*all* sins . . . are innocent." When people thus believe that desire is the highest law, that liberty is license, that man is accountable only to himself, who can wonder that corruption teems on every hand? Multitudes eagerly accept the promptings of lust. Satan sweeps into his net thousands who profess to follow Christ.

But God has given sufficient light to discover the snare. The very foundation of spiritualism is at war with Scripture. The Bible declares that the dead know not anything, that their thoughts have perished; they have no part in the joys or sorrows of those on earth.

Forbidden Fellowship

Furthermore, God has forbidden pretended communication with departed spirits. The "familiar spirits," as these visitants from other worlds were called, are declared by the Bible to be "the spirits of devils." See Numbers 25:1-3; Psalm 106:28; 1 Corinthians 10:20; Revelation 16:14. Dealing with them was forbidden under penalty of death. Leviticus 19:31; 20:27. But spiritualism has made its way into scientific circles, invaded churches, and found favor in legislative bodies, even in the courts of kings. This mammoth deception is a revival in a new disguise of the witchcraft condemned of old.

By representing the basest of men as in heaven, Satan says to the world, "No matter whether you believe or disbelieve God and the Bible, live as you please; heaven is your home." Saith the Word of God: "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness." Isaiah 5:20.

Bible Represented as Fiction

The apostles, personated by lying spirits, are made to contradict what they wrote when on earth. Satan is making the world believe that the Bible is fiction, a book suited to the infancy of the race, but now to be regarded as obsolete. The Book that is to judge

him and his followers he puts in the shade; the Saviour of the world he makes to be no more than a common man. And believers in spiritual manifestations try to make it appear that there is nothing miraculous in our Saviour's life. Their own miracles, they declare, far exceed the works of Christ.

Spiritualism is now assuming a Christian guise. But its teachings cannot be denied or hidden. In its present form it is a more dangerous, more subtle, deception. It now professes to accept Christ and the Bible. But the Bible is interpreted in a manner pleasing to the unrenowned heart. Love is dwelt upon as the chief attribute of God, but is degraded to a weak sentimentalism. God's denunciations of sin, the requirements of His holy law, are kept out of sight. Fables lead men to reject the Bible as the foundation of their faith. Christ is as verily denied as before, but the deception is not discerned.

Few have a just conception of the deceptive power of spiritualism. Many tamper with it merely to gratify curiosity. They would be filled with horror at the thought of yielding to the spirits' control. But they venture on forbidden ground, and the destroyer exercises his power on them against their will. Let them once be induced to submit their minds to his direction, and he holds them captive. Nothing but the power of God, in answer to earnest prayer, can deliver these souls.

All who willfully cherish known sin are inviting the temptations of Satan. They separate themselves from God and the watchcare of His angels, and are without defense.

"When they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep, and that mutter; should not a people seek unto their God? for the living to the dead? To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." Isaiah 8:19, 20.

If men had been willing to receive the truth concerning the nature of man and the state of the dead, they would see in spiritualism Satan's power and lying wonders. But multitudes close their eyes to the light, and Satan weaves his snares about them. "Because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved," therefore "God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie." 2 Thessalonians 2:10, 11.

Those who oppose spiritualism assail Satan and his angels. Satan will not yield one inch of ground except as driven back by heavenly messengers. He can quote Scripture now as in the days of Christ, and he will pervert its teachings. Those who would stand in this time of peril must understand for themselves the testimony of the Scriptures.

Understand the Scriptures

Spirits of devils personating relatives or friends will appeal to our tender sympathies and will work miracles. We must withstand them with the Bible truth that the dead know not anything and that they who thus appear are the spirits of devils.

All whose faith is not established on the Word of God will be deceived and overcome. Satan "works with all deceivableness of unrighteousness," and his deceptions will increase. But those who seek a knowledge of the truth and purify their souls through obedience will find in the God of truth a sure defense. The Saviour would sooner send every angel out of heaven to protect His people than leave one soul that trusts in Him to be overcome by Satan. Those who comfort themselves with the assurance that there is no punishment for the sinner, who renounce the truths which Heaven has provided as a defense for the day of trouble, will accept the lies offered by Satan, the delusive pretensions of spiritualism.

Scoffers hold up to ridicule the declarations of Scripture concerning the plan of salvation and the retribution to be visited upon the rejecters of truth. They affect great pity for minds so narrow, weak, and superstitious as to obey the requirements of God's law. So fully have they yielded to the tempter, so closely are they united with him and imbued with his spirit, that they have no inclination to break away from his snare.

The foundation of Satan's work was laid by the assurance given to Eve in Eden: "Ye shall not surely die." "In the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." Genesis 3:4, 5. His masterpiece of deception will be reached in the last remnant of time. Says the prophet: "I saw three unclean spirits like frogs; . . . they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty." Revelation 16:13, 14.

Except those who are kept by the power of God through faith in His Word, the whole world will be swept into the ranks of this delusion. The people are fast being lulled to a fatal security, to be awakened only by the outpouring of the wrath of God.

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

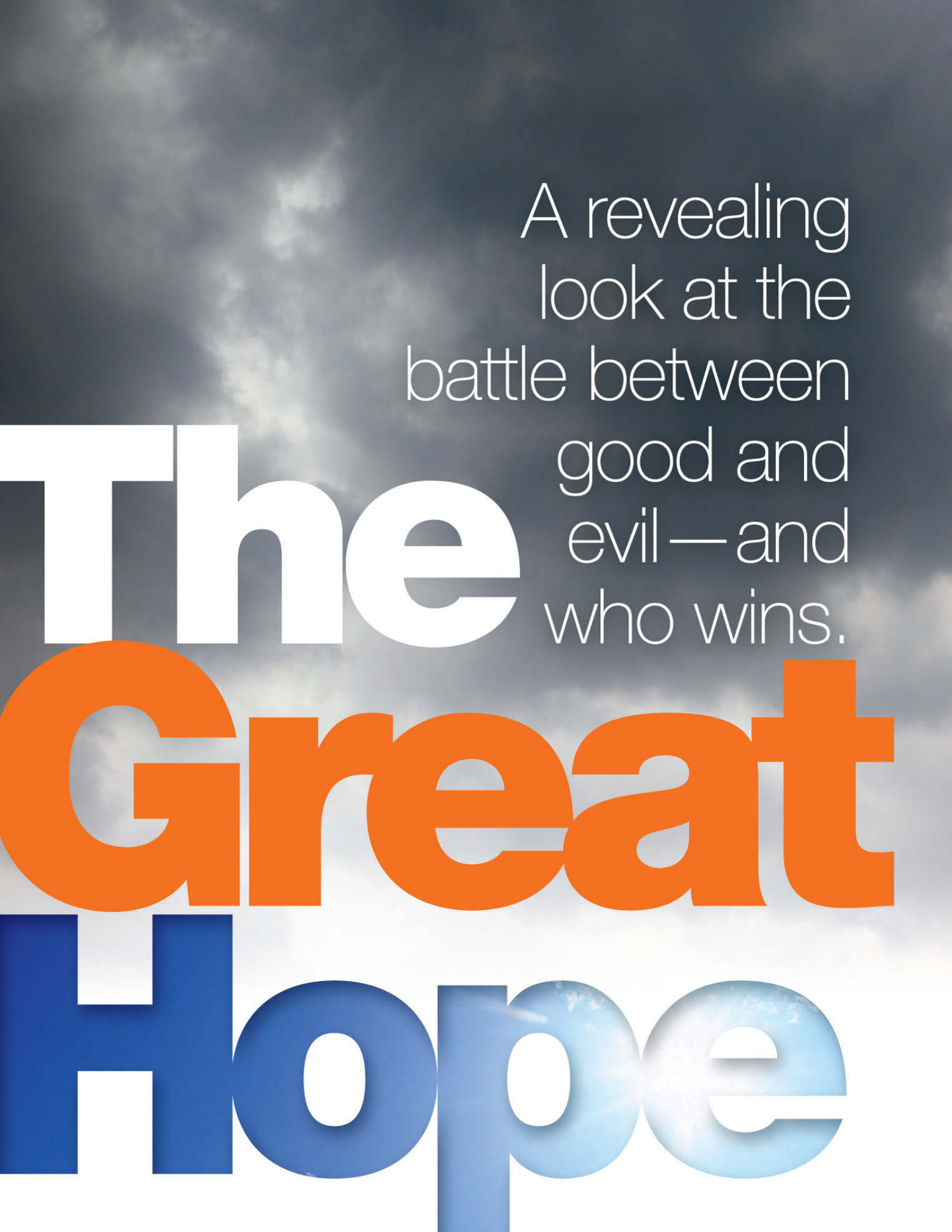
Chapter 7, “Our Only Safeguard”
The Great Controversy, chapter 37

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