

Quarter Two: The Great Controversy  
Lesson 2—The Central Issue: Love or Selfishness?  
Sunday: A Broken-Hearted Savior  
April 7, 2024

- **Last Week:** “The War Behind All Wars”
  - The origin of evil & God’s longsuffering with the sin problem
  - God’s love & our free will to choose
  
- **This Week:** “The Central Issue: Love or Selfishness?”
  - Where is God in pain?
    - The Jews & the Holocaust (word of Greek origin; means “burnt offering”)
      - 6 million Jews killed
      - 5 million others
      - 1 million killed at Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp alone
    - Destruction of Jerusalem – AD 70
      - Starvation prior to destruction, during the siege
      - Not one Christian lost their lives – followed Jesus’ instruction to leave
    - Persecution of early Christian Church
      - Began under Nero & continued for centuries
      - Spreading of the gospel through persecution
      - Love of those Christians for God & for others
  - Discover this week – the power of love
    - Jesus’ love over His people, even though they rejected Him (Jill’s day)
      - Impending Destruction of Jerusalem from Matt 24
      - “Our theology is only as good as the love it produces.”
    - Persecution – doesn’t deter God’s people because of love for Him
    - Early Christian church’s love for humanity (John & Daniel’s day)

**Memory Text:** “ ‘Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.’ ” (Isa 41:10, NKJV)

The week in brief:

- 1. **Sunday:** A Broken-Hearted Savior (Jill)
  - Luke 19:41 – 44; Christ’s cry over His people who rejected Him & would be destroyed
- 2. **Monday:** Christians Providentially Preserved (John L)
  - Some Christians preserved; others persecuted & tortured & killed – in the midst, Christ sustains His people & is sovereign over all
- 3. **Tuesday:** Faithful Amid Persecution (Ryan)
  - Acts - Growth of the early Christian church, in spite of persecution
- 4. **Wednesday:** Caring for the Community (John D)
  - Acts – early Christian Church’s unselfish love for one another in community
- 5. **Thursday:** A Legacy of Love (Daniel)
  - John 13:35 – unselfish love manifested in unselfish acts in the early Christian church – dying to self

## Sunday: A Broken-Hearted Savior

Luke 19:41 – 44; Matt 23:37, 38; John 5:40; Matt 24:15 – 20

### The Power of Love: Even though His people rejected Him

- History of Israel – God’s vine & the cycle of disobedience
  - Ps 80:8 – “You have brought a vine out of Egypt; You have cast out the nations, and planted it.”
    - Israel was transplanted from Egypt – the land of oppression
      - To the promised land – land of abundance & freedom
  - Jer 2:21 – “Yet I had planted you a noble vine, a seed of highest quality. How then have you turned before Me into the degenerate plant of an alien vine?”
    - His people disobeyed Him
    - Turned away from Him
    - The vineyard had gone bad
  - Isa 5:1 – 7 – “Now let me sing to my Well-beloved a song of my Beloved regarding His vineyard: my well-beloved has a vineyard on a very fruitful hill. (2) He dug it up and cleared out its stones, and planted it with the choicest vine. He built a tower in its midst, and also made a winepress in it; so He expected it to bring forth good grapes, but it brought forth wild grapes.... (4) What more could have been done to My vineyard, that I have not done in it?... (5) And now, please let Me tell you what I will do to My vineyard: I will take away its hedge, and it shall be burned; and break down its wall, and it shall be trampled down. (6) I will lay it waste; it shall not be pruned or dug, but there shall come up briars and thorns...”
- Story of children of Israel from Nehemiah 9
  - History of Israel: 5-fold cycle
    - 1. Disobedience
    - 2. Judgment
    - 3. Repentance
    - 4. Mercy
    - 5. Deliverance

### A Broken-Hearted Savior

- Luke 19: Triumphal entry, Passover Week – right before Crucifixion
  - Jesus on a young male donkey
  - Just beginning descent of Mount of Olives
  - Praise God – “Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord!”
- Luke 19:41 – 42 – “Now, as He drew near, He saw the city and wept over it, (42) saying, ‘If you had known, even you, especially in this your day, the things that make for your peace! But now they are **hidden from your eyes.**’”
  - Hidden from your eyes – Jesus brought the gospel to His people – they refused Him
  - John 1:11 – “He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him.”

- Why did He weep?
  - Not sad because of impending crucifixion
  - Sad because His own people, God’s chosen people, the people He came to save – were going to reject Him & go their own way
  
- Luke 19:43—44 – “For days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment around you, surround you and close you in on every side; (44) and level you, and your children within you, to the ground; and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not know the time of your visitation.”
  - AD 70 – destruction of Jerusalem – just under 40 years in the future
  
- Cry of His heart: parallel passage from Matthew
  - Matt 23:37-39 – “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing! (KJV: but you would not) (38) See! Your house is left to you desolate; (39) for I say to you, ‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!’”
    - **3 stages for Jerusalem / Israel**
      - **1. Rejected counsel in the past**
        - “kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her”
        - Stubborn & stiffnecked
        - 5-fold cycle of disobedience
        - Already gone into Babylonian captivity; didn’t effect lasting change
      - **2. Refused Christ’s entreaty today**
        - “you were not willing”
        - Christ coming in Person didn’t change their minds, still refused Him
      - **3. Retribution / Judgment is coming**
        - “Your house is left to you desolate”
        - Divine protection would be removed
        - People would suffer terribly
          - Tens of thousands died as Roman general Titus led armies against the city
          - Men, women & children were slaughtered
    - **Where was God?**
      - His heart was broken; eyes filled with tears
      - For centuries, He had pleaded with His people
      - Lesson: “by their rebellion against His loving-kindness, they forfeited His divine protection. God does not always intervene to limit the results of His people’s choices.”
      - Isa 5:4 – “What more could have been done to My vineyard, that I have not done in it?”

- **Application for today**
  - “Our theology is only as good as the love it produces.”
  - **How do we love others / humanity?**
    - **1. Love God first**
      - John 13:34, 35 – “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. (35) By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”
        - Cannot love one another until we love God
        - His love poured into us enables us to love each other
    - **2. Love by actions**
      - Christ showed His love through actions: healing the sick, raising the dead, dying on the Cross
      - 1 John 3:18 – “My little children, let us now love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth.”