

# ***Uniting Heaven and Earth: Christ in Philippians and Colossians***

## ***Life and Death***

Lesson #3 for January 17, 2026

Scriptures: **Philippians 1:19-30**; 1 Corinthians 4:14-16; 2 Corinthians 10:3-6; Micah 6:8; John 17:17-19; Acts 14:22.

### 1. What is it that is “life and death”?

[From the *Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*=T-BSG:] This ... lesson emphasizes three major themes:

- 1) God summons us to **live mission-minded lives**, even calling us to be willing to die for Him.
- 2) **Death is likened to sleep**, for which the solution is the resurrection of the body, not the immortality of the soul.
- 3) **Christ calls us to unity in His Spirit**. Because we are all involved in a spiritual war, we must not only use the right weapons but also fight together in unity.—T-BSG\* 39.†‡

[From the *Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*=BSG:] **Death, we’re often told, is just part of life. That’s a lie.** Death is the opposite of life, the enemy of life. Death was no more built into life than wreckage was built into a car. Paul emphatically says that Christ died to “destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil [*sic*]; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage” (*Heb. 2:14, 15*).

Although ready to die for Christ, **Paul was confident of his long-term fate.** The most important thing for him in the meantime was, by his own life or death, to honor Christ and to preach the gospel to as many as possible. Perhaps that is one reason we have so many epistles bearing his name. Through his writings, he could reach many people and places, including places that he himself had never visited.—BSG\* for Sabbath Afternoon.†‡§

**Hebrews 2:14-15:** <sup>14</sup> Since the children, as he calls them, are people of flesh and blood, Jesus himself became like them and shared their human nature. He did this so that through his death he might destroy the Devil, who has the power over death, <sup>15</sup>and in this way set free those who were slaves all their lives because of their fear of death.—American Bible Society. (©1992). *The Holy Bible: The Good News Translation*®\* [GNT] (*Today’s English Version*) [TEV], Second Edition, Hebrews 2:14-15). Philadelphia: American Bible Society [abbreviated as *Good News Bible-TEV*\* or *GNB-TEV*\*].‡

[BSG:] Life is short, and it is vital to make the biggest impact possible for God’s kingdom within the span of the years that God grants us. No small part of that impact has to do with our encouraging “the unity of the faith.” As we shall see ..., this theme was one important reason for Paul’s writing to the Philippians.—BSG\* for Sabbath Afternoon.‡

[T-BSG:] **Martin Luther King, Jr., once said, “If a man hasn’t discovered something he will die for, he isn’t fit to live.”**—quoted in Mark Water, *The New Encyclopedia of Christian Quotations* (Alresford, Hampshire, England: John Hunt Publishers Ltd., 2000), p. 404. Paul expressed a similar sentiment, **“For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain”** (*Phil. 1:21*,

NKJV). These are not empty words! Paul truly was willing to die for Christ (*Rom. 14:8*), which he ultimately did (*2 Tim. 4:6–8*). Quoting from Psalm 44:22, Paul announced to the Lord, “ ‘For Your sake we are killed all day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter’ ” (*Rom. 8:36, NKJV*). Thus, his words in Galatians 2:20 should not surprise us: “ ‘I have been crucified with Christ’ ” (*NKJV*). Paul was willing to die for Christ because he was committed to living for Him. Paul continues, “ ‘It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God’ ” (*Gal. 2:20, NKJV*). Thus, Paul lived and died for the sake of the gospel.—*T-BSG\** 39.†§ [Earlier, Paul had killed Christians!]<sup>‡</sup>

**Philippians 1:21: For what is life? To me, it is Christ. Death, then, will bring more.**—*Good News Bible-TEV*.\*†

[T-BSG:] The story is told about John Bradford, who was burned to death at the stake on July 1, 1555. Bradford “was chaplain to King Edward Sixth of England, and was one of the most popular preachers of his day. But he was a martyr to his faith. As he was being driven out to Newgate to be burned, permission was given him to speak, and from the wagon in which he rode to his death the entire way out from West London to Newgate he shouted: ‘Christ, Christ, none but Christ.’ ”—Paul Lee Tan, *Encyclopedia of 7,700 Illustrations: Signs of the Times* (Garland, TX: Bible Communications, Inc., 1996), p. 787. As did Paul, Bradford gave himself to mission by living and dying for Christ.—*T-BSG\** 39-40.‡§

## “Christ Will Be Magnified” (Philippians 1:20)

2. What was Paul’s attitude toward dying for Christ?

**Philippians 1:19-20:** <sup>19</sup>Because I know that by means of your prayers and the help which comes from the Spirit of Jesus Christ I shall be set free. <sup>20</sup>My deep desire and hope is that I shall never fail in my duty, but that at all times, and especially right now, I shall be full of courage, so that with my whole being I shall bring honor to Christ, whether I live or die.—*Good News Bible-TEV*.\*

[BSG:] Although Paul was no criminal, this was not the first time that he had been imprisoned, and he was no stranger to persecution. To the Corinthians, he detailed his sufferings up to that time: “In prisons....” [See the full text just below.] (*2 Cor. 11:23–27, NKJV*).—*BSG\** for Sunday.‡§

**2 Corinthians 11:23-29:** <sup>23</sup>Are they Christ’s servants? I sound like a madman—but I am a better servant than they are! I have worked much harder, I have been in prison more times, I have been whipped much more, and I have been near death more often. <sup>24</sup>Five times I was given the thirty-nine lashes by the Jews; <sup>25</sup>three times I was whipped by the Romans; and once I was stoned. I have been in three shipwrecks, and once I spent twenty-four hours in the water. <sup>26</sup>In my many travels I have been in danger from floods and from robbers, in danger from my own people and from Gentiles; there have been dangers in the cities, dangers in the wilds, dangers on the high seas, and dangers from false friends. <sup>27</sup>There has been work and toil; often I have gone without sleep; I have been hungry and thirsty; I have often been

without enough food, shelter, or clothing. <sup>28</sup>And not to mention other things, every day I am under the pressure of my concern for all the churches. <sup>29</sup>When someone is weak, then I feel weak too; when someone is led into sin, I am filled with distress.—*Good News Bible-TEV*.\*

[BSG:] But lest we think these sufferings were uppermost in his mind, Paul immediately adds, “besides the other things, what comes upon me daily: my deep concern for all the churches” (2 Cor. 11:28, NKJV). Read 1 Corinthians 4:14–16; 1 Thessalonians 2:10, 11; Galatians 4:19; and Philemon 10. What relationship does Paul have with the churches he established and the people he won for Christ?—BSG\* for Sunday.<sup>‡§</sup>

3. See 1 Corinthians 11:1; 1 Thessalonians 2:10-11; Galatians 4:19; and Philemon [1:]10.

[From the writings of Ellen G. White=EGW:] **Paul’s patience and cheerfulness during his long and unjust imprisonment, his courage and faith, were a continual sermon.** His spirit, so unlike the spirit of the world, bore witness that a power higher than that of earth was abiding with him. And by his example, Christians were impelled to greater energy as advocates of the cause from the public labors of which Paul had been withdrawn. In these ways were the apostle’s bonds influential, so that when his power and usefulness seemed cut off, and to all appearance he could do the least, then it was that he gathered sheaves for Christ in fields from which he seemed wholly excluded.—Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles*\* 464.2.<sup>†‡</sup> [<https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p127.2056&index=0>]<sup>‡</sup>

**2 Timothy 3:12:** Everyone who wants to live a godly life in union with Christ Jesus will be persecuted.—*Good News Bible-TEV*.\* [Is that a threat? Or, a promise?]<sup>‡</sup>

[BSG:] Look at how you live and how you treat people, especially people who don’t treat you nicely. What kind of witness for Jesus do you present?—BSG\* for Sunday, January 11.<sup>‡</sup>

## The Great Controversy—Is It a War of Ideas?

4. In this lesson, we encounter some very unexpected ideas!

[BSG:] In case you have not noticed, we are all, as believers especially, involved in the great controversy, which rages all around us and, indeed, in us as well. We all, in one way or another, experience the reality of this cosmic struggle, and we will until the day we die, whenever or however that happens.—BSG\* for Monday, January 12.<sup>‡</sup>

5. ***The greatest war of all time, the great controversy over God’s character and government, is going on as we speak. It occurs in the minds and “hearts” of each of us. Will we choose to follow God’s way? Or, the Devil’s way, the selfish way?***
6. What are the weapons we use in fighting this war of the great controversy?

**2 Corinthians 10:4-6:** <sup>4</sup>The weapons we use in our fight are not the world’s weapons but God’s powerful weapons, which we use to destroy strongholds. **We destroy false arguments; <sup>5</sup>we pull down every proud obstacle that is raised against the knowledge of God; we take every**

**thought captive and make it obey Christ.** <sup>6</sup>And after you have proved your complete loyalty, we will be ready to punish any act of disloyalty.—*Good News Bible-TEV.\*†* [To defeat lies, you need the truth!]<sup>‡</sup>

[BSG:] **The most deadly spiritual weapons are ideas**, good and bad. Satan uses criticism, betrayal, embarrassment, fear, peer pressure, and a host of similar tools that Christians should never employ. We are, instead, to use love, mercy, peace, gentleness, longsuffering, kindness, and self-control. **Our most powerful weapon, judiciously used, is “the Word of God” wielded by the Spirit** (*Eph. 6:17, AMP*), because only God can bring the truth home to a person’s heart. **We are merely the instrument that God uses to accomplish His purposes.**—BSG\* for Monday.<sup>†§</sup>

7. ***Would you be willing to follow the example of Jesus and Paul?***

[T-BSG:] Paul’s statement in Philippians 1:21 is one of the most noteworthy in all his letters. His willingness to live for Christ—which implies enduring inevitable hardships—and even to die for Him, underscores the hope expressed in the preceding verse, “And I trust that my life will bring honor to Christ, whether I live or die” (*Phil. 1:20, NLT*).—T-BSG\* 40.<sup>‡§</sup>

**Philippians 1:21-22:** <sup>21</sup>For what is life? To me, it is Christ. Death, then, will bring more. <sup>22</sup>But if by continuing to live I can do more worthwhile work, then I am not sure which I should choose.—*Good News Bible-TEV.\**

[BSG:] **Because the battle is spiritual, we’re in a war of ideas and values.** Yet, Christ has won the victory at the cross for us, and as long as we stay connected to Him, we can never be defeated, even if we are killed. Paul surrendered his life to whatever happened to him here on earth, however unjust, because he entrusted his life and his future to a higher court. **As Christians, we should not fight so much for our rights as for what is right. It’s not “might makes right,” but “right makes might.”** Submission to God’s will is honorable; in fact, it is the only way to be victorious in the war in which we find ourselves. Jesus, of course, is the quintessential example of submission to the will of God, as Paul will bring out in Philippians 2.—BSG\* for Monday, January 12.<sup>†‡</sup>

8. ***Do we day by day experience the reality of the great controversy? If we can remain faithful to God, it will be a death sentence for Satan and his allies!***

**Being Confident**

[T-BSG:] A puzzling concept ... is Paul’s assertion that dying is gain. What does he mean by that? How can one benefit from his or her own death? Based on Paul’s desire, expressed in Philippians 1:23, “to depart and be with Christ” (*NKJV*), some have inferred that Paul is affirming that he would be in the presence of Christ immediately after death.—T-BSG\* 40.<sup>‡§</sup>

**Philippians 1:23-24:** <sup>23</sup>I am pulled in two directions. I want very much to leave this life and be with Christ, which is a far better thing; <sup>24</sup>but for your sake it is much more important that I remain alive.—*Good News Bible-TEV.\**

[BSG:] This passage has been greatly misunderstood through the ages. In this ... passage for study, Paul dealt with the contrast between living and

dying. The Christian lives for Christ and may even die for Him. In that sense it is “gain” because our witness is that much more powerful and persuasive (*Phil. 1:21*). **No doubt a person believes when willing to die for that belief.**—BSG\* for Tuesday, January 13.†§

[BSG:] But we must also recognize that the dead are really dead. They “know nothing.” They rest in the grave till the resurrection (see *Eccl. 9:5; John 5:28, 29*). That’s why Jesus said of Lazarus, who had died, “Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep” (*John 11:11*).—BSG\* for Tuesday, January 13.†§

9. ***Is it possible that Paul went straight to heaven after his death?***

[T-BSG:] But such a notion contradicts plain scriptural teachings about the non-immortality of the soul and death as a slumber. To understand what Paul meant by referring to death as gain, it is helpful to examine his use of the term “gain” (from the Greek *kerdos*) and its cognate verb “to gain” (from the Greek *kerdainō*), elsewhere in his writings. In *Philippians 3:7, 8*, Paul mentions that what he previously considered as gain (*kerdos*), he now counts as loss “because of Christ” (*Phil. 3:7, NRSV, emphasis added*); that is, “because of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus” (*Phil. 3:8, NRSV, emphasis added*). Paul further explains, “Because of him I have suffered the loss of all things . . . so that I may gain [*kerdainō*] Christ” (*Phil. 3:8, CSB*). Thus, for Paul, dying is gain in the sense that he will ultimately gain Christ by seeing Him at His second coming (*2 Tim. 4:8*).—T-BSG\* 40.†§

10. Read *2 Timothy 4:8; Ecclesiastes 9:5; John 5:28-29; and John 11:11*.

[BSG:] If, when people die, they go immediately to heaven, imagine how that would be for Lazarus. After four days of Lazarus frolicking in Paradise, an angel comes with the “bad” news: “Sorry, Lazarus, but Jesus is calling you back to earth. You can’t stay here.”

When we follow error to its logical conclusion, we see how erroneous it is. Death is like a dreamless sleep from which Jesus will awaken His faithful followers at the Second Advent; then, together with the living saints, they will be caught up and taken to heaven to be with Jesus forever (see *1 Thess. 4:16, 17*).—BSG\* for Tuesday, January 13.†§

[T-BSG:] It is also possible that “gain” (*kerdos*) in *Philippians 1:21* has a missionary sense. In *1 Corinthians 9:19–23*, Paul uses *kerdainō* as a missionary term: “I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win [*kerdainō*] the more; . . . to the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might win [*kerdainō*] Jews; to those who are under the law, as under the law, that I might win [*kerdainō*] those who are under the law; to those who are without law, as without law . . . that I might win [*kerdainō*] those who are without law; to the weak I became as weak, that I might win [*kerdainō*] the weak” (*NKJV*). In that regard, the following comment [from the *The SDA Bible Commentary*] on *Philippians 1:21* is helpful.—T-BSG\* 40.†§

[*SDA Bible Commentary*.] [Paul] is concerned with magnifying Christ. If his Lord saw best for him to bear testimony through living and ministering, he

would rightly represent Him. But the death of a righteous man can also be a powerful affirmation of the efficacy of the gospel of grace. The contrast between his death and the death of one who dies without hope would be so marked that its influence **would bring gain for the kingdom of Christ. Hearts are touched and softened** by the calm assurance and confidence of the one whose trust is completely in his God, even in the hour of death.—Article on Philippians 1:21. In F. D. Nichol (Ed.), *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7 (page 147). Washington, DC: Review and Herald Publishing Association (1957).<sup>†‡</sup>

[BSG:] Paul’s “departing” from the present life to be with Christ means to be with Him in suffering and dying (2 *Tim.* 4:6) in order to “attain to the resurrection from the dead” (*Phil.* 3:11, NKJV). Also, he was no doubt aware that he would close his eyes in death and that the very next thing he would know, in the twinkling of an eye, would be seeing Jesus, who would take him, with all God’s people, to the place Jesus has prepared for all who love Him (*John* 14:3, *1 Cor.* 2:9).—BSG\* for Tuesday, January 13.<sup>‡§</sup>

11. ***If you could know for sure that you would go to heaven in a few days, would you be willing to die for Christ right now? How many Christians will die for Christ in the final days of this world’s history? Is that time coming soon?***

**2 Timothy 4:6-8:** <sup>6</sup> As for me, the hour has come for me to be sacrificed; the time is here for me to leave this life. <sup>7</sup>I have done my best in the race, I have run the full distance, and I have kept the faith. <sup>8</sup>And now there is waiting for me the victory prize of being put right with God, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me on that Day—and not only to me, but to all those who wait with love for him to appear.—*Good News Bible-TEV*.\*

## Death Is Like a Sleep

12. Read Philippians 3:10-11; John 14:3; and 1 Corinthians 2:9.
13. ***In his discussions “with himself” as he was writing in the book of Philippians, Paul recognized that it would be better for the Philippians if he remained alive. However, Paul was well aware that at the moment of his death, the next conscious thought he, personally, would have would be seeing Jesus at the second coming.***

[T-BSG:] Paul compared death to sleep (1 *Thess.* 4:14, 15), suggesting a state of unconsciousness. This idea aligns with Jesus’ teaching in the Gospels (*Luke* 8:52, 53; *John* 11:11–13). One clear example is the story of the resurrection of Jairus’s daughter. Interestingly, while Matthew and Mark mention only that people ridiculed Jesus’ affirmation that the girl was sleeping (*Matt.* 9:24; *Mark* 5:39, 40), Luke’s observation as a physician is more precise: “And they ridiculed him, **knowing that she was dead**” (*Luke* 8:53, NKJV, *emphasis added*). Additionally, the book of Acts—also written by Luke—portrays the death of Stephen by affirming, “he fell asleep” (*Acts* 7:60, NKJV). The same is said about David (*Acts* 13:36).—T-BSG\* 41.<sup>†‡§</sup>

- John 11:11-14:** <sup>11</sup>Jesus said this and then added, “**Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I will go and wake him up.**”

<sup>12</sup> The disciples answered, “If he is asleep, Lord, he will get well.”

<sup>13</sup> Jesus meant that **Lazarus had died**, but they thought he meant natural sleep. <sup>14</sup>So Jesus told them plainly, “Lazarus is dead.”—*GNB-TEV*.<sup>\*†</sup>

14. Read 1 Thessalonians 4:14-15; Luke 8:52-53; Matthew 9:24; Mark 5:39-40; Acts 7:60; and Acts 13:36. However, notice especially John 5:28-29.

15. ***It is very obvious from statements throughout Scripture that death is like a sleep, lasting until either the second coming or the third coming for every human being. Every person will come back to life to appear before God at the third coming.***

## Stand Fast in Unity

[BSG:] Jesus’ last prayer for His disciples was dominated by one key theme: unity. Jesus looked beyond the cross to reunion with His Father *and* reunion with us: “Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me” (*John 17:24, NKJV*).... (*John 17:21, 23, NKJV*).—*BSG*<sup>\*</sup> for Wednesday.<sup>‡§</sup>

**John 17:11-21:** <sup>11</sup> “And now I am coming to you; I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world. Holy Father! Keep them safe by the power of your name, the name you gave me, so that they may be one just as you and I are one.... <sup>17</sup>Dedicate them to yourself by means of the truth; your word is truth. <sup>18</sup>I sent them into the world, just as you sent me into the world. <sup>19</sup>And for their sake I dedicate myself to you, in order that they, too, may be truly dedicated to you. [Almost all the disciples died as martyrs!]

<sup>20</sup> “I pray not only for them, but also for those who believe in me because of their message. <sup>21</sup>**I pray that they may all be one.** Father! May they be in us, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they be one, so that the world will believe that you sent me.”—*Good News Bible-TEV*.<sup>\*†‡</sup>

**Philippians 1:27:** Only **let your conduct be worthy** of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of your affairs, that you **stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together** for the faith of the gospel.—*New King James Version*.<sup>\*†</sup> [See John 17.]<sup>‡</sup>

[BSG:] The Greek word in Philippians 1:27 translated “let your conduct be worthy” is *politeuomai*, which means “live as a citizen”—not of any earthly kingdom but as a citizen of the heavenly kingdom. **The Sermon on the Mount paints a beautiful picture of what it means to be children of the heavenly Father and members of His kingdom: poor in spirit, meek, hungering and thirsting for righteousness, merciful, pure in heart, peace-makers, turning the other cheek, loving one’s enemies, blessing those who curse us, doing good to those who hate us. In short, “to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God” (*Micah 6:8*).** It’s difficult to be upset or angry with someone like that, or is it?—*BSG*<sup>\*</sup> for Wednesday, January 14.<sup>†‡§</sup>

16. Unfortunately, there are many so-called Christians who consider this world of more value than their future prospects with God.

[EGW:] .... Their lives in no way represent Christ; for **they love the world**

**and its gain better than they love God or the truth.** “If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.”—Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*,\* vol. 5, 277.2.†‡

[\[https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p113.1408&index=0\]](https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p113.1408&index=0)‡

[EGW:] The Lord has bestowed great blessings upon His church. Justice demands that she return these talents with usury. As the treasures of truth committed to her keeping have increased, her obligations have increased. But instead of improving upon these gifts and going forward unto perfection, she has fallen away from that which she had attained in her earlier experience. The change in her spiritual state has come gradually and almost imperceptibly. As she began to seek the praise and friendship of the world, her faith diminished, her zeal grew languid, her fervent devotion gave place to dead formality. Every advance step toward the world was a step away from God. **As pride and worldly ambition have been cherished, the spirit of Christ has departed, and emulation, dissension, and strife have come in to distract and weaken the church.**—Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*,\* vol. 5, 240.3-241.0.†‡

[\[https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p113.1240&index=0\]](https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p113.1240&index=0)‡

## Unity in Christ

**Philippians 1:27-30:** <sup>27</sup> Now, the important thing is that your way of life should be as the gospel of Christ requires, so that, whether or not I am able to go and see you, I will hear that you are standing firm with one common purpose and that with only one desire you are fighting together for the faith of the gospel. <sup>28</sup> Don't be afraid of your enemies; always be courageous, and this will prove to them that they will lose and that you will win, because it is God who gives you the victory. <sup>29</sup> For you have been given the privilege of serving Christ, not only by believing in him, but also by suffering for him. <sup>30</sup> Now you can take part with me in the battle. It is the same battle you saw me fighting in the past, and as you hear, the one I am fighting still.—*GNB-TEV*.\*

[T-BSG:] Philippians 1:27 begins a section in the letter (*Phil. 1:27–30*) in which Paul shifts from discussing his own suffering to the suffering of his audience in their work for Christ. Two crucial themes emerge in Philippians 1:27: **a Christlike manner of life** and **unity**. Believers are called to display outstanding conduct and remain united, despite the hard-hearted opposition and suffering that they face for their faith in Christ.—*T-BSG*\* 42.†‡§

[T-BSG:] Paul uses two key phrases to highlight the type of connection that should characterize the relationship among believers; that is, “one spirit” and “one mind” (*Phil. 1:27, NKJV*). This language of companionship runs throughout the letter. In this context, Paul affirms that the Philippians would complete his joy “by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind” (*Phil. 2:2, ESV*). In Philippians 4:1–3, Paul hints that unity is crucial for the fulfillment of mission. Philippians 4:3 presents four compound words introduced by the Greek particle *syn* (“with” or “together with”); *syzygos* (“yokefellow”); *syllambanō* (literally, “take together”); *synathleō* (“struggle along with”); and *synergos* (“fellow worker”).

Thus, Paul mentions women who “labored with” (NKJV) him in the gospel and also “fellow workers” (NKJV), all of whom were involved in mission.—*T-BSG\** 42.†§

[BSG:] **Satan’s strategy is to divide and conquer. Disunity is deadly.** Jesus said, “If a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand” (*Mark 3:25, NKJV*).... Because unity is crucial to fulfill our mission to spread this God-given message, and Jesus’ prayer in John 17 highlights “the truth” of God’s Word as one of the most important keys for unity (*John 17:17, 19*), **our message cannot be separated from our mission or our unity.** All three stand or fall together. If one of these three keys is missing, we can’t succeed. However, if we have all three in place, there is nothing to fear. We need not be “in any way terrified” by opposition (*Phil. 1:28, NKJV*). Satan is a defeated foe. Even if we should be put to death for our faith, nothing can harm us if we “become followers of what is good” (*1 Pet. 3:13, NKJV*). The devil [*sic*] is powerless to stop the onward march of God’s truth.—*BSG\** for Thursday.†§ [Our onward march is a death knell for Satan.]‡

**Mark 3:25:** “If a family divides itself into groups which fight each other, that family will fall apart.”—*Good News Bible-TEV.\**

**Revelation 12:17:** The dragon was furious with the woman and went off to fight against the rest of her descendants, all those who obey God’s commandments and are faithful to the truth revealed by Jesus.—*Good News Bible-TEV.\**

**Philippians 1:28:** Don’t be afraid of your enemies; always be courageous, and this will prove to them that they will lose and that you will win, because it is God who gives you the victory.—*Good News Bible-TEV.\**

**Matthew 10:38:** “Those who do not take up their cross and follow in my steps are not fit to be my disciples.”—*Good News Bible-TEV.\**

17. ***These words were spoken quite early in Christ’s ministry! What did the disciples think He was talking about? They had not the faintest idea that Jesus would end up on a cross! What does it mean in 2026 to take up one’s “cross”? Are we ready?***

**2 Timothy 3:12:** Everyone who wants to live a godly life in union with Christ Jesus will be persecuted.—*Good News Bible-TEV.\*†*

18. ***Could persecution possibly involve people in our day? People are dying for their faith currently! See: <https://youtu.be/bcpDtKeJ-F8?si=-SAqDbv84B7jfTmk>.***

[BSG:] Life itself in this fallen world is hard, even for the “best” of us. Job was a righteous man; even the Bible says that he “was blameless and upright, and one who feared God and shunned evil” (*Job 1:1, NKJV*). And yet, overnight, calamity struck him and his family. Who hasn’t learned, either by personal experience or by seeing what happened to others, that life here is lived, it seems, on a precipice, and you never know when you will go over the edge? **Suffering, to some degree, is the lot of us all.** In the end, though, better to suffer for Christ’s sake than for anything else.—*BSG\** for Thursday, January 15.†§

**Job 1:1:** There was a man named Job, living in the land of Uz, who worshiped God

and was faithful to him. He was a good man, careful not to do anything evil.—*Good News Bible-TEV*.\*

19. Think of the story of Job! Would you be prepared to be tested as Job was? Does the story of Job scare you? Or, does it give you comfort?
20. What hope and what comfort should we, as Christians, have amid our suffering?

[EGW:] This man of faith.... His [Paul's] faith is strengthened as he calls to mind how patriarchs and prophets have relied upon the One who is his support and consolation, and for whom he is giving his life. From these holy men who from century to century have borne testimony for their faith, he hears the assurance that God is true. His fellow apostles, who, to preach the gospel of Christ, went forth to meet religious bigotry and heathen superstition, persecution, and contempt, who counted not their lives dear unto themselves that they might bear aloft the light of the cross amidst the dark mazes of infidelity—these he hears witnessing to Jesus as the Son of God, the Saviour [*sic*-British spelling] of the world. **From the rack, the stake, the dungeon, from dens and caves of the earth, there falls upon his ear the martyr's shout of triumph.** He hears the witness of steadfast souls, who, though destitute, afflicted, tormented, yet bear fearless, solemn testimony for the faith, declaring, "I know whom I have believed." These, yielding up their lives for the faith, declare to the world that He in whom they have trusted is able to save to the uttermost.—Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles*\* 512.1.†‡

[\[https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p127.2263&index=0\]](https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p127.2263&index=0)‡

[Cottrell:] Now let us reason a moment upon this point. All these gifts were given for the perfecting of the saints in unity, knowledge, and spirit. **Under their influence the primitive church for a time enjoyed that unity....** And it seems a natural consequence of this state of unity, that "with *great power* gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: And great grace was upon them all." Acts 4:31-33. How desirable such a state of things now!... **Never was there so great a diversity of faith in Christendom as at the present day. If the gifts** [of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers (Eph. 4:11-13)] **were necessary to preserve the unity of the primitive church, how much more so to restore unity now!**—R. F. Cottrell, "Introduction," in Ellen G. White, *Early Writings*\* 140.1.†‡§ [Similar to Introduction to *Spiritual Gifts*,\*€ vol. 1, 12.3.]‡

[\[https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p28.770&index=0\]](https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p28.770&index=0)‡

21. ***This lesson has talked a lot about Christians who faced death. How would you try to describe the truth about the Bible's teaching about death to someone who has never heard of the biblical approach? What should you say to those who think that all the saints are in heaven already?***

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Email: [Info@theox.org](mailto:Info@theox.org)