

On Death, Dying, and the Future Hope Contrary Passages?

Lesson #9 for November 26, 2022

Scriptures: Luke 16:19-31; 23:43; John 5:39; 20:17; Philippians 1:21-24; 1 Peter 3:13-20; Revelation 6:9-11.

1. What is a *contrary passage*? Have you ever had a discussion with someone who believes that one of these passages proves the immortality of the soul? How should we deal with such issues?
2. Careful Bible scholars need to consider everything in Scripture, not just the passages that support the things we/they believe.
3. We must never forget that we are in the final and critical stages of the great controversy. Satan is doing everything that he possibly can to confuse and mislead people. In order to deal with his misinformation campaign, we need to understand it.

1 Peter 3:15: But have reverence for Christ in your hearts, and honour him as Lord. **Be ready at all times to answer anyone who asks you to explain the hope you have in you.**—American Bible Society. (1992). *The Holy Bible: The Good News Translation** (2nd ed., 1 Peter 3:15). New York: American Bible Society [abbreviated as *Good News Bible*].[†]

4. Are we prepared to answer anyone that asks us a question about Satan's deceptions? If not, what can we do to resolve that problem?
5. Compare these words from Paul.

2 Timothy 4:1-3: ¹I solemnly urge you ²to preach the message, to insist upon proclaiming it (whether the time is right or not), to convince, reproach, and encourage, as you teach with all patience. ³**The time will come when people will not listen to sound doctrine, but will follow their own desires and will collect for themselves more and more teachers who will tell them what they are itching to hear.**—*Good News Bible*.^{*†}

6. We must remember that it is impossible to stamp out evil, especially Satan's misinformation, because he will respond by just adding more misinformation. We know that from history. The correct way to deal with him is to tell the truth. Truth will always win in the end. So, **the correct response to someone who believes an error is to lovingly present the truth. Sin cannot be stamped out; it must be crowded out with truth.**

[From the writings of Ellen G. White=EGW:] Christ Himself did not suppress one word of truth, but He spoke it always in love.... He was never rude, never needlessly spoke a severe word, never gave needless pain to a sensitive soul. He did not censure human weakness.—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages** 353.1.[‡]

7. So, which passages in the Bible are the “most contrary” regarding the immortality of the soul?
8. What about the story Jesus related regarding the rich man and Lazarus?

Luke 16:19-31: [Jesus said:] ¹⁹ “There was once a rich man who dressed in the most expensive clothes and lived in great luxury every day. ²⁰There was also a poor man named Lazarus, [not the Lazarus that Jesus raised from the dead] covered with sores, who used to be brought to the rich man’s door, ²¹hoping to eat the bits of food that fell from the rich man’s table. Even the dogs would come and lick his sores.

²² “The poor man died and was carried by the angels to sit beside Abraham at the feast in heaven. The rich man died and was buried, ²³and in Hades, where he was in great pain, he looked up and saw Abraham, far away, with Lazarus at his side. ²⁴So he called out, ‘Father Abraham! Take pity on me, and send Lazarus to dip his finger in some water and cool my tongue, because I am in great pain in this fire!’

²⁵ “But Abraham said, ‘Remember, my son, that in your lifetime you were given all the good things, while Lazarus got all the bad things. But now he is enjoying himself here, while you are in pain. ²⁶Besides all that, there is a deep pit lying between us, so that those who want to cross over from here to you cannot do so, nor can anyone cross over to us from where you are.’

²⁷The rich man said, ‘Then I beg you, father Abraham, send Lazarus to my father’s house, ²⁸where I have five brothers. Let him go and warn them so that they, at least, will not come to this place of pain.’

²⁹ **“Abraham said, ‘Your brothers have Moses and the prophets [the Bible] to warn them; your brothers should listen to what they say.’**

³⁰The rich man answered, ‘That is not enough, father Abraham! But if someone were to rise from death and go to them, then they would turn from their sins.’ ³¹But Abraham said, **‘If they will not listen to Moses and the prophets [the Bible], they will not be convinced even if someone were to rise from death.’**” —*Good News Bible*.*†‡

9. Should this parable/story be interpreted literally? When “the real” Lazarus was raised from the dead, (John 11) did it convince the religious leaders to change? No! they wanted to kill Lazarus as well as to kill Jesus! What was the purpose of Christ’s telling this parable?
10. **First of all, this parable clearly teaches that our eternal destiny is determined by what we do in this life; there is no second chance for salvation.** This “parable” was spoken to a population who were mostly heathen and who believed in “hell-fire.” There were no hospitals, and there were no public or national welfare programs in Jesus’s day. God entrusted riches to some human beings so they could use those riches for the benefit of their fellow humans by sharing to meet the needs of the poor.
11. During the last few months of His life on earth, Jesus was ministering to the people of Perea—on the “other side” or east side of the Jordan. The religious leaders in Judea and Galilee were trying to arrest Jesus and kill Him. The people of Samaria, Perea, and Decapolis were mostly non-Jews. They were of many nationalities including Greeks. Luke was the only Gospel writer who wrote about Jesus’s extensive ministry to those areas. (Luke 9:51-19:10) Ten of the most prominent cities in the area had been so influenced by Greek culture that they were considered Greek cities. Most of the people that Jesus was

speaking to at that time were pagan and had many pagan beliefs. Therefore, Jesus used one of their common beliefs as the framework for an important truth He wished to teach.

12. The rich man claimed to be a descendant of Abraham and depended on that for his salvation; he even prayed to Abraham. He spent his life on earth pleasing self. In the story when he was represented as ending up in “hell,” he realized his mistakes and asked at least for some additional warning to be sent to his brothers. In doing that, **he was implying that God had not provided sufficient warning to him!** Proof of the correctness of Abraham’s response to the rich man came a short time later when Lazarus of Bethany was indeed raised after being dead four days. (John 11:39) It only made the Jewish leaders angrier.
13. God has provided the truth to us through His Word. All the evidence we need is available from this inspired Source. We do not need miracles of any kind to establish our faith. Furthermore, most miracles can be easily counterfeited by the Devil.
14. **There are many things about this “parable” that show that it was not a true story!** Is it possible for people from heaven and “hell” to speak back and forth to each other? If so, what could there be that separates those two “locations” that would be impossible for even God to cross? Where is “hell” located? Where is heaven located? The only things that can separate us from God permanently are our own sinful choices and the character that develops as a result. This is not a physical barrier. Jesus was not suggesting that we should believe in the doctrine of “hell-fire.” He was using a common belief among the people to whom He was talking as a way of teaching some important truths. The idea that at the time of death, “souls” go directly to heaven or “hell” is in direct contradiction with the rest of Scripture.
15. There is an ancient story from Egypt that more or less parallels this story. Jesus may have been paraphrasing that story to teach a point. Remember that Jesus was speaking in an area of Perea on the east side of the Jordan, outside of Jewish territory. There were, of course, many Jews who lived there; but, it was basically a Greek-oriented area.

[EGW:] When the rich man solicited additional evidence for his brothers, he was plainly told that should this evidence be given, they would not be persuaded. **His request cast a reflection on God. It was as if the rich man had said, If you had more thoroughly warned me, I should not now be here.** Abraham in his answer to this request is represented as saying, Your brothers have been sufficiently warned. Light has been given them, but they would not see; truth has been presented to them, but they would not hear.—Ellen G. White, *Christ’s Object Lessons** 264.2-265.0.†‡ ***[While this story may have been appropriate for those people in the days of Jesus, why did it need to be recorded in the Bible for us to struggle with?*** Remember that Luke was Greek, and that may have influenced him to include this story. It would be helpful if we had the words of Jesus before and after He told this “parable.”]†

16. Could the spirits that some people claim live in the afterlife have eyes, fingers, and tongues which even feel thirst? Could heaven be a place of joy, peace, calmness, and

love if we are to be constantly exposed to the screams and pain of those living in a so-called hell? Is that the kind of heaven that you look forward to living in?

[From the Bible study guide=BSG:] We can be thankful that this parable does not represent reality. We serve a God who doesn't torture someone for eternity. Roy Gane lists **three major problems with an ever-burning hell**:

"1. Would God feed fruit from the tree of life to the wicked to keep them alive in hell? If so, this would contradict the biblical teaching that only those who are saved enjoy the right to this fruit (Rev. 22:14). Consider Genesis 3, where God barred sinful Adam and Eve from the tree of life precisely to prevent them from living forever (Rev. 22:22–24) [sic] [The correct reference is Genesis 3:22-24.], and as a result, they died (Gen. 5:5 regarding Adam's death). [**Why is God keeping Satan and all evil-doers alive?**]

"2. In Revelation 20, the 'lake of fire' that destroys the wicked covers a vast area on the surface of the earth around the New Jerusalem (Rev. 20:8–10). There is no indication in Revelation 21–22 that the molten 'lake' remains as a permanent feature of the new earth. [Does the New Jerusalem float on the surface of a lake of fire? All of this is based on the idea that Satan stated in the Garden of Eden, "You will certainly not die!"]

"3. Those who are thrown into the 'lake of fire' suffer the 'second death,' which is the last death (Rev. 20:14, 15; Rev. 21:8). Therefore, they die; they do not go on living eternally in infernal misery."—Roy E. Gane, "At-one-ment Forever in God's New Heaven and New Earth," *Salvation: Contours of Adventist Soteriology*, pp. 255, 256.—[as quoted in *Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 120-121].^{†‡§}

17. Could you be happy in heaven if you knew that you had a loved one, maybe even a child, who was suffering in "hell" and if you were able to see him/her or even talk to him/her?
18. Notice this comment from a non-Adventist author.

[BSG:] This story was probably "**a parable which made use of current Jewish thinking and is not intended to teach anything about the state of the dead.**"—G. E. Ladd, "Eschatology," in *The New Bible Dictionary*, edited by J. D. Douglas (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1962), p. 388.—[as quoted in *Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Sunday, November 20].^{†‡§}

19. Once again, we ask, what was the purpose of this parable? Clearly, 1) Our current financial or social status is not a determinant of our future rewards! And 2) The eternal destiny of each person is decided in this life. It cannot be reversed in the afterlife in one way or another.
20. It seems clear that Jesus told the story of the rich man and Lazarus in order to demonstrate the seriousness of the choices that we make while we are still alive on this earth. **This was not intended to be an informational story. The choices we make in this life will determine our status in the future life.**

21. It is interesting to notice that Jesus named the poor beggar, Lazarus. Amazingly, sometime later, He literally raised His friend Lazarus back to life and it still did not convince the Jewish leaders to believe in Him. In fact, they were even more determined to kill Him. The Sadducees even wanted to kill Lazarus because they did not believe that it was possible to rise from the dead! The resurrection of Lazarus had many witnesses, and they lived close to Jerusalem and could speak against that belief of the Sadducees.

[EGW:] The Sadducees denied the existence of angels, the resurrection of the dead, and the doctrine of a future life, with its rewards and punishments. On all these points they differed with the Pharisees. Between the two parties the resurrection was especially a subject of controversy.—Ellen G. White, *Desire of Ages** 603.2.†

There are no hints in the context of the story of the rich man and Lazarus that Jesus intended to talk about the state of the dead.

22. Many of the Jews believed that if one was rich, that was a proof of the fact that God was blessing him and that, thus, he must be a good person. That idea is still very prevalent even today. The Pharisees and the Sadducees loved to make that claim because they were rich. They often became rich by using evil means to cheat the poor.

[BSG:] **The details of the story also disprove the idea of its being a literal description of a burning hell.** First of all, it would be impossible for someone who is burning alive to feel refreshed by his tongue being cooled by a finger that was dipped in water. Additionally, the close distance between heaven and “hell” would make it impossible for anyone to enjoy his time in heaven if he could, at any point, have a conversation with a loved one right beside him, who is burning for eternity. The promise from the book of Revelation that there will be no more pain, sorrow, and tears in heaven would never be realized (*Rev. 21:4*).—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 120.†§

23. What did Isaiah say that might help us to understand the truth about the rich man and Lazarus?

Isaiah 66:22-24: ²² “Just as the new earth and the new heavens will endure by my power, so your descendants and your name will endure. ²³On every New Moon Festival and every Sabbath, people of every nation will come to worship me here in Jerusalem,” says the LORD. ²⁴ **“As they leave, they will see the dead bodies of those who have rebelled against me. The worms that eat them will never die, and the fire that burns them will never be put out. The sight of them will be disgusting to the whole human race.”**—*Good News Bible*.*†

24. It is important to notice that this passage is clearly not a parable because it seems to describe actual events in heaven. There is one very important difference: The worms and the fires in Isaiah’s description are all consuming **dead bodies!** This is obviously a picture suggested by the continuously burning trash dump outside of ancient Jerusalem which was called *Gehenna*, from which we derive our word *hell*.

25. Another passage in Scripture that has led to some believing in the immortality of the soul is found in Luke 23:43.

Luke 23:43: Jesus answered him, “Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise.”—*The New International Version*.^{*} (2011). (Luke 23:43). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

26. It is important to compare this passage with John 20:17 and John 14:1-3.

John 20:17: “Do not hold on to me,” Jesus told her, “because **I have not yet gone back up to the Father**. But go to my brothers and tell them that I am returning to him who is my Father and their Father, my God and their God.”—*Good News Bible*.^{*†} [This happened on Sunday, clearly not the same day as the crucifixion and death of Jesus; so, Jesus had not been to heaven even by Sunday; His conversation with the thief on the cross was on Friday. Even after having their legs broken, the thieves may not have even been dead by Sunday!][‡]

John 14:1-3: “Do not be worried and upset,” Jesus told them. “Believe in God and believe also in me. ²There are many rooms in my Father’s house, and I am going to prepare a place for you. I would not tell you this if it were not so. ³**And after I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to myself, so that you will be where I am.**”—*Good News Bible*.^{*†}

27. Could Jesus have seen the thief on the cross in heaven on Friday or even on Saturday if He had not even been to heaven prior to the encounter on Sunday as mentioned in John 20:17 as we just read? Would it be fair for Jesus to take the thief to heaven on that same day as the crucifixion, Friday, when He told His disciples that they would be taken to heaven only at the second coming? According to biblical and Jewish reckoning, that Friday ended at sunset. And what happened to the thieves before sunset? Their legs were broken because they were still alive. They may not have died for several days even though they were taken down from their crosses. Could that thief have been taken to heaven while his body was still alive on this earth?

John 19:31-35: ³¹ Then the Jewish authorities asked Pilate to allow them to break the legs of the men who had been crucified, and to take the bodies down from the crosses. They requested this because it was Friday, and they did not want the bodies to stay on the crosses on the Sabbath, since the coming Sabbath was especially holy. ³²**So the soldiers went and broke the legs of the first man and then of the other man who had been crucified with Jesus.** ³³**But when they came to Jesus, they saw that he was already dead, so they did not break his legs.** ³⁴One of the soldiers, however, plunged his spear into Jesus’ side, and at once blood and water poured out. ³⁵(The one who saw this happen has spoken of it, so that you also may believe. What he said is true, and he knows that he speaks the truth.)—*Good News Bible*.^{*†}

28. The Greek language as it was written in New Testament times often did not have any separation between words, and there was no punctuation. So, the question regarding Luke 23:43 is whether the comma should be before the word *today*, or after it. That

decision is made by the translators; how they placed the comma depended on their personal beliefs!

29. Unfortunately, most of the people who have translated our English Bibles believe in an immortal soul; and so, they put the comma before the word *today*. The rest of the Bible, the context, and the comparison from other passages by Luke suggest that the comma should be after the word *today*.

30. What did Paul mean when he wrote Philippians 1:21-24 and 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18? What did he have in mind when he expected to be “with Christ” or “with the Lord”?

Philippians 1:21-24: ²¹For what is life? To me, it is Christ. Death, then, will bring more. ²²But if by continuing to live I can do more worthwhile work, then I am not sure which I should choose. ²³I am pulled in two directions. I want very much to leave this life and **be with Christ**, which is a far better thing; ²⁴but for your sake it is much more important that I remain alive.—*Good News Bible*.^{*†}

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18: ¹³ Our brothers and sisters, we want you to know the truth about those who have died, so that you will not be sad, as are those who have no hope. ¹⁴**We believe that Jesus died and rose again, and so we believe that God will take back with Jesus those who have died believing in him.**

¹⁵ **What we are teaching you now is the Lord’s teaching: we who are alive on the day the Lord comes will not go ahead of those who have died.** ¹⁶**There will be the shout of command, the archangel’s voice, the sound of God’s trumpet, and the Lord himself will come down from heaven. Those who have died believing in Christ will rise to life first;** ¹⁷**then we who are living at that time will be gathered up along with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will always be with the Lord.** ¹⁸**So then, encourage one another with these words.**—*Good News Bible*.^{*†}

[BSG:] Paul was driven with the passion to live “in Christ” now (*2 Cor. 5:17*) and “with Christ” after His second coming (*see 1 Thess. 4:17*). For the apostle, not even death could break the assurance of belonging to his Savior and Lord. As he said in the epistle to the Romans, “neither death nor life” can “separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (*Rom. 8:38, 39, NKJV*). “For if we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. Therefore, whether we live or die, we are the Lord’s” (*Rom. 14:8, NKJV*).—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*^{*} for Tuesday, November 22.^{‡§}

31. From a careful look at these passages, it is clear that Jesus was talking about taking the saints back with Him to heaven at His second coming. But, that should not prevent us from having a close relationship with Him, even today. See 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 as quoted in item #30 just above.

32. Most of us would recognize that Paul had a very close relationship with Jesus Christ. Second Timothy 4:8 clearly states that he was looking forward to the victory prize that

“the Lord, the righteous judge” would give him on *that day*, that is, at the second coming. These were some of the last words Paul wrote.

33. Review passages like 1 Corinthians 9:27 and 2 Corinthians 11:21-33. If you had lived a life like Paul’s, could you at least sometimes have longed for leaving this life and being in heaven? No wonder he sometimes wished that he could just die and finally be with the Lord.
34. Another passage in Scripture that has puzzled many and has led to some strange ideas is found in 1 Peter 3:13-20.

1 Peter 3:13-20: ¹³ Who will harm you if you are eager to do what is good? ¹⁴But even if you should suffer for doing what is right, how happy you are! Do not be afraid of anyone, and do not worry. ¹⁵But have reverence for Christ in your hearts, and honour him as Lord. Be ready at all times to answer anyone who asks you to explain the hope you have in you, ¹⁶but do it with gentleness and respect. Keep your conscience clear, so that when you are insulted, those who speak evil of your good conduct as followers of Christ will be ashamed of what they say. ¹⁷For it is better to suffer for doing good, if this should be God’s will, than for doing evil. ¹⁸For Christ died for sins once and for all, a good man on behalf of sinners, in order to lead you to God. **He was put to death physically, but made alive spiritually, ¹⁹and in his spiritual existence he went and preached to the imprisoned spirits.** ²⁰These were the spirits of those who had not obeyed God when he waited patiently during the days that Noah was building his boat. The few people in the boat—eight in all—were saved by the water.—*Good News Bible*.*†

35. It is interesting to notice that because of the way the Greek is written in verse 19 of this passage, some scholars believe it should read, “In which Enoch went and preached....”
36. If Jesus had somehow “in his spiritual existence,” (1 Peter 3:19, *GNB**) apart from His body, traveled to “hell” to preach to the disembodied spirits of the antediluvians, why didn’t He also preach to the other sinners who were there—if there is a hell and if people are there? This does not make any sense!
37. Of course, all of these ideas are contradicted by numerous passages in the Bible. See Job 14:10-12; Psalm 146:4; Ecclesiastes 9:5,10; 1 Corinthians 15:16-18; and 1 Thessalonians 4:13-15. **All of these passages make it very clear that when someone dies, his thoughts perish.** That person will not have another thought until the day of his resurrection. That resurrection will take place either at the second coming (for the righteous) or the third coming (for the wicked).
38. How does this passage fit with Jude 6?

Jude 6 [1:6]: Remember the angels who did not stay within the limits of their proper authority, but abandoned their own dwelling place: they are bound with eternal chains in the darkness below, where God is keeping them for **that great Day** on which they will be condemned.—*Good News Bible*.*††

39. We do know that God inspired Noah back in his day.

Hebrews 11:7: It was faith that made Noah hear God’s warnings about things in the future that he could not see. He obeyed God and built a boat in which

he and his family were saved. As a result, the world was condemned, and Noah received from God the righteousness that comes by faith.—*Good News Bible*.*

2 Peter 2:5: God did not spare the ancient world, but brought the flood on the world of godless people; the only ones he saved were Noah, who preached righteousness, and seven other people.—*Good News Bible*.*

40. Another somewhat confusing passage is found in Revelation 6:9-11. Many Christians refuse to read the book of Revelation because they believe that it is too confusing. Are there really souls gathered under an altar somewhere in heaven? And can they cry out to God?

Revelation 6:9-11: ⁹ Then the Lamb broke open the fifth seal. I saw **underneath the altar the souls** of those who had been killed because they had proclaimed God's word and had been faithful in their witnessing. ¹⁰**They shouted in a loud voice**, "Almighty Lord, holy and true! How long will it be until you judge the people on earth and punish them for killing us?" ¹¹Each of them was given a white robe, and they were told to rest a little while longer, until the complete number of their fellow-servants and fellow-Christians had been killed, as they had been.—*Good News Bible*.*†

41. The first thing to notice about this passage is that it refers to blood instead of incense. So, it must refer to the altar "outside" in the courtyard and not the altar of incense inside the tabernacle. It was around that outside altar on which the blood of sacrifices was sprinkled.

[BSG:] **The "souls" under the altar also are symbolic.** By taking them literally, one would have to conclude that the martyrs are not fully happy in heaven, for they are still crying out for vengeance. This hardly sounds as if they are enjoying the reward of salvation. The desire for vengeance can make your life miserable. But your death, as well?—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Thursday, November 24.††

42. Notice what the Bible says about the sprinkling of the blood in Revelation 8:1-6 and Revelation 4:18,30,34.

[From the *SDA Bible Commentary*:] **There are no white, red, black, or pale horses there [in heaven] with warlike riders. Jesus does not appear there in the form of a lamb with a bleeding knife wound. The four beasts do not represent actual winged creatures of the animal characteristics noted.... Likewise, there are no "souls" lying at the base of an altar in heaven. The whole scene was a pictorial and symbolic representation.**—Nichol, F. D. (Ed.). (1980). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, 778. Review and Herald Publishing Association. [From the comment on *souls* in Revelation 6:9]††

43. Notice also this comment from George E. Ladd, a non-Adventist commentator, regarding Revelation 6:9-11.

[BSG:] "In the present instance [*Rev. 6:9–11*], the altar is clearly the altar of sacrifice where sacrificial blood was poured. The fact that John saw the souls of the martyrs *under the altar* has nothing to do with the state of the dead or their situation in the intermediate state; **it is merely a vivid way of**

picturing the fact that they had been martyred in the name of their God.—*A Commentary on the Revelation of John* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1972), p. 103.—[as quoted in *Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Thursday, November 24].^{†‡§} [Brackets in the paragraph are in the source; brackets in the introduction are added.]^{†‡}

44. Try to imagine times when people were willing to die for their beliefs! Can you think of any people living today who are willing to do that? How does that compare with the very flexible religion of many “post-moderns” in our day? Is there anything for which people today would be willing to die? Are all truths only relative or culturally determined? Were people who died because of what they believed foolish?

45. Regarding the souls that seemed to be crying out under the altar, for what are/were they crying out? Are/were they looking for revenge? Or, for legal justice?

[BSG:] “God is asked to conduct a legal process leading to a verdict that will vindicate his martyred saints.”—Joel N. Musvosvi, *Vengeance in the Apocalypse*, Andrews University Seminary Doctoral Dissertation Series 17 (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1993), p. 232.—[as quoted in *Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 121].^{†§}

46. In Revelation 6:9-11 the slain martyrs are instructed to rest a while. The word *rest* is *anapauo* in Greek and is sometimes even translated as *to die*. In Revelation 20:4, it says they will come to life to reign with Christ for a thousand years.

[BSG:] **They were not living souls/spirits already, or that statement would be unnecessary. Thus, the description of their “resting” for a little while longer, when combined with the idea of “sleep,” used throughout the Bible for death, leads the reader to understand that the beheaded saints were to stay in their graves a little longer; that is, until the second coming of Christ.**—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 122.^{†‡}

47. In this lesson we have considered several challenging passages of Scripture. However, **none of them is that difficult to understand, given the context of all of Scripture and our understanding of the great controversy.** Does this lesson help you to understand how you could respond to someone who comes with one of these passages as his or her defense of their belief in the immortality of the soul?

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