

In the Crucible with Christ

Christ in the Crucible

Lesson #13 for September 24, 2022

Scriptures: Luke 2:7,22-24; 22:41-44; Matthew 2:1-18; 27:46,51-52; John 8:58-59; Romans 6:23; Titus 1:2.

1. If we believe that God can see the future and knows the end from the beginning, we need to realize that when Adam and Eve sinned, God already knew what would happen when He came to this earth. Was it worth the risk? Love, the very foundation of God's government, is impossible without freedom. See the handout entitled "Love" on Theox.org in the "General Topics" section of the "Teacher's Guides."
https://www.theox.org/images/uploads/bbk/KHart_BTGG_PDF_Gnrl_Love_16.pdf
2. Our freedom was so important to God that He was willing to die for it!
3. Jesus, as a human being, twice died. He first died in the garden of Gethsemane; then, He died on Calvary because of separation from His Father, the only Source of life. The universe watched on both occasions as the Father withdrew His beams of light and love from Jesus to demonstrate the full and complete results of sin. In the garden of Gethsemane, an angel was sent to resuscitate Jesus when He fell dying to the ground.
[From the writings of Ellen G. White=EGW:] Having made the decision, **He [Jesus] fell dying to the ground** from which He had partially risen. Where now were His disciples, to place their hands tenderly beneath the head of their fainting Master, and bathe that brow, marred indeed more than the sons of men? The Saviour trod the wine press alone, and of the people there was none with Him. [The entire universe—good and evil—was watching!]
But God suffered with His Son. Angels beheld the Saviour's agony. They saw their Lord enclosed by legions of satanic forces, His nature weighed down with a shuddering, mysterious dread. There was silence in heaven. No harp was touched. Could mortals have viewed the amazement of the angelic host as in silent grief they **watched the Father separating His beams of light, love, and glory from His beloved Son**, they would better understand how offensive in His sight is sin.—Ellen G. White, *Desire of Ages** 693.1-2.†† ["God's wrath" "was being demonstrated" on His Son!][‡]
4. It is commonly believed by millions of Christians that Christ came to this world solely to "pay the price" for sin—our sins. **There is much more to what Christ did.**
5. God hates sin because of what He knows it does to His children. So, He chose to make this ultimate demonstration of the results of sin, to teach us all how serious sin is.
6. Early in the history of Christianity, it was believed that Satan was a kind of vandal who managed to take control of humans by getting Adam and Eve to agree to his lies in the Garden of Eden. Thus, he took them as hostages into his kingdom.
7. People thought that in response, God decided to negotiate with the Devil to get humans back again. God offered to give the Devil the soul of His Son, Jesus Christ, as a "ransom" in exchange for the souls of all humans.
8. The Devil has wanted most of all to take the place of Jesus Christ; and so, he accepted God's offer. But, what Satan did not realize was that he could not keep control of Jesus Christ; Jesus escaped from him. In effect, according to this anciently-believed "Ransom Theory," God won the great controversy by tricking the Devil!

9. This theory was fairly popular in the days when groups like the Vandals from North Africa would suddenly attack a city and take whatever they could grab including the sons of wealthy people and demand a high ransom price from those people to get their sons back.
10. From His birth, Jesus lived in poverty and risked the possibility of being destroyed or killed. **The Devil would have done anything God allowed to get rid of Jesus Christ.** Luke 2:7,22-24 (Leviticus 12:6-8) and Matthew 2:1-18 tell us very clearly that Jesus was born into a poor family. Herod, the leader of the Jewish nation at the time, tried to kill Him while He was still an infant. In effect, Jesus was in a crucible for His entire life! Because of Satan's attacks, God felt it was necessary to assign two guardian angels to protect Jesus.

[EGW:] **These angels were well acquainted with the words of Jesus to his disciples, for they had been with him in the capacity of guardian angels, through all the scenes of his life, and had witnessed his trial and crucifixion.**—Ellen G. White, *Spirit of Prophecy*,* vol. 3, 199.2.†‡

11. Jesus could have chosen to be born anywhere and into any family. But, He chose to live in the home of a poor family in Nazareth which had such a bad reputation that it was despised by the people who lived around it. (John 1:46) With the exception of Adam and Eve before the fall, Jesus was/is the only person who has lived a sinless life on this earth.
12. Try to imagine how He felt, in His sinless purity, as He watched even His own family members commit sins and do evil.
13. Notice these words from Ellen White:

[EGW:] Every sin, every discord, every defiling lust that transgression had brought, was torture to His spirit.—Ellen G. White, *Desire of Ages** 111.4.‡

[EGW:] **Jesus was placed where His character would be tested.** It was necessary for Him to be constantly on guard in order to preserve His purity. He was subject to all the conflicts which we have to meet, that He might be an example to us in childhood, youth, and manhood.

Satan was unwearied in his efforts to overcome the Child of Nazareth. From His earliest years Jesus was guarded by heavenly angels, yet His life was one long struggle against the powers of darkness. **That there should be upon the earth one life free from the defilement of evil was an offense and a perplexity to the prince of darkness. He left no means untried to ensnare Jesus.** No child of humanity will ever be called to live a holy life amid so fierce a conflict with temptation as was our Saviour.—Ellen G. White, *Desire of Ages** 71.1-2.†‡ [Can you imagine what a challenge this was for Satan?][‡]

[EGW:] **Jesus worked to relieve every case of suffering that He saw.** He had little money to give, but He often denied Himself of food in order to relieve those who appeared more needy than He. His brothers felt that His influence went far to counteract theirs. He possessed a tact which none of them had, or desired to have. When they spoke harshly to poor, degraded beings, Jesus sought out these very ones, and spoke to them words of encouragement. To those who were in need He would give a cup of cold water, and would quietly place His own meal in their hands. As He relieved

their sufferings, the truths He taught were associated with His acts of mercy, and were thus riveted in the memory.—Ellen G. White, *Desire of Ages** 87.1.^{††} [How could the same people later want to kill Him? Luke 4:16-30][†] [EGW:] Yet through childhood, youth, and manhood, Jesus walked alone. In His purity and His faithfulness, He trod the wine press alone, and of the people there was none with Him. He carried the awful weight of responsibility for the salvation of men. He knew that unless there was a decided change in the principles and purposes of the human race, all would be lost. This was the burden of His soul, and none could appreciate the weight that rested upon Him. Filled with intense purpose, He carried out the design of His life that He Himself should be the light of men.—Ellen G. White, *Desire of Ages** 92.2.[‡]

14. How do we feel and how do we respond when we observe sin taking place around us? Is it possible for us to avoid exposure to sin? How can we minimize our exposure to sin?
15. Throughout His life, Jesus was misunderstood, misinterpreted, and despised. The religious leaders in His day were relentless in their attempts to discredit Him or even to arrest Him and kill Him.

Matthew 12:22-24: ²² Then some people brought to Jesus a man who was blind and could not talk because he had a demon. Jesus healed the man, so that he was able to talk and see. ²³The crowds were all amazed at what Jesus had done. **“Could he be the Son of David?” they asked.**

²⁴ When the Pharisees heard this, they replied, “He drives out demons only because their ruler Beelzebul gives him power to do so.”—American Bible Society. (1992). *The Holy Bible: The Good News Translation** (2nd ed., Matthew 12:22-24). New York: American Bible Society [abbreviated as *Good News Bible*].^{††}

16. What did the people think when they heard the Pharisees claiming that Jesus drove out demons by the power of other demons?
17. When He went back to preach in His hometown synagogue, Jesus referred to His own healing of the Syrian leper and Elijah being sent to Zarephath in the territory of Sidon. Then, the people became so angry they wanted to kill Him. Those people were not Jews!
18. When Jesus relieved and forgave the sins of the woman taken in adultery and then faced off with the Sanhedrin, He made several bold statements, claiming, in fact, that He was God. When Jesus said, “I Am,” He was claiming to be God as He did three times that day.

John 8:58-59: ⁵⁸ “I am telling you the truth,” Jesus replied. “Before Abraham was born, ‘I Am’.” [sic]

⁵⁹ **Then they picked up stones to throw at him,** but Jesus hid himself and left the Temple.—*Good News Bible*.^{*††}

19. Almost from the beginning of His ministry when Jesus cleansed the temple for the first time, the Jewish religious leaders wanted to kill Him.

[EGW:] In these words His meaning was twofold. He referred not only to the destruction of the Jewish temple and worship, but to His own death,—the destruction of the temple of His body. This the Jews were already plotting. As the priests and rulers returned to the temple, **they had proposed to kill**

Jesus, and thus rid themselves of the troubler.—Ellen G. White, *Desire of Ages** 164.3.†† [He was only six months into His ministry!]*†

20. But, referring to the time during that final week of His life on this earth, we read:

Matthew 23:37: [Jesus said:] “Jerusalem, Jerusalem! You kill the prophets and stone the messengers God has sent you! How many times have I wanted to put my arms round all your people, just as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you would not let me!”—*Good News Bible*.*†

21. What would cause Jesus to make a statement like that? Was He feeling bad for Himself because of what He knew was coming? Or, was He truly sorrowful for the consequences it would have on those to whom He was speaking?

[EGW:] It was because of his innocence that he [Christ] felt so keenly the assaults of Satan.—Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages*,* Book 3, 129.1.†

22. What should we learn from His example? Satan is alive and well. He did everything he could to destroy Jesus; but, he failed. **If we are striving to be like Jesus, what can we expect from Satan?** He knows that he only has a short time left! (1 Peter 5:8; Revelation 12:12)

23. The story of what happened to Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane and then, later, on Calvary is beyond human comprehension!

24. We do not know exactly how Jesus as a human being learned about the role He had in the universe before He was born. He was taught by His Father and by the angels, and, no doubt, that is how He learned about what had preceded His time on this earth.

Ephesians 1:1-4: From Paul, who by God’s will is an apostle of Christ Jesus—

To God’s people in Ephesus, who are faithful in their life in union with Christ Jesus:

² May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you grace and peace.

³ Let us give thanks to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! For in our union with Christ he has blessed us by giving us every spiritual blessing in the heavenly world. **⁴Even before the world was made, God had already chosen us to be his through our union with Christ, so that we would be holy and without fault before him.**

Because of his love....—*Good News Bible*.*†

2 Timothy 1:8-9: ⁸ Do not be ashamed, then, of witnessing for our Lord; nor be ashamed of me, a prisoner for Christ’s sake. Instead, take your part in suffering for the Good News, as God gives you the strength to do it. ⁹He saved us and called us to be his own people, not because of what we have done, but because of his own purpose and grace. **He gave us this grace by means of Christ Jesus before the beginning of time.**—*Good News Bible*.*† [Did God know in advance the entire life of Jesus?]*†

Titus 1:1-2: From Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ.

I was chosen and sent to help the faith of God’s chosen people and to lead them to the truth taught by our religion, ²which is based on the hope for eternal life. **God, who does not lie, promised us this life before the beginning of time.**—*Good News Bible*.*†

25. What do we know about the actual experience of Jesus Christ in the garden of Gethsemane?

Matthew 26:39: He went a little farther on, threw himself face downwards on the ground, and prayed, “My Father, if it is possible, take this cup of suffering from me! Yet not what I want, but what you want.”—*Good News Bible*.*

Mark 14:33-36: ³³He took Peter, James, and John with him. Distress and anguish came over him, ³⁴and he said to them, “The sorrow in my heart is so great that it almost crushes me. Stay here and keep watch.”

³⁵ He went a little farther on, threw himself on the ground, and prayed that, if possible, he might not have to go through that time of suffering. ³⁶“Father,” he prayed, “my Father! All things are possible for you. Take this cup of suffering away from me. Yet not what I want, but what you want.”—*Good News Bible*.*

Luke 22:41-44: ⁴¹ Then he went off from them about the distance of a stone’s throw and knelt down and prayed. ⁴² “Father,” he said, “if you will, take this cup of suffering away from me. Not my will, however, but your will be done.” ⁴³**An angel from heaven appeared to him and strengthened him.** ⁴⁴In great anguish he prayed even more fervently; **his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground.** [Footnote: Some manuscripts do not have verses 43-44.]—*Good News Bible*.*††

[EGW:] He went a little distance from them—not so far but that they could both see and hear Him—and fell prostrate upon the ground. **He felt that by sin He was being separated from His Father. The gulf was so broad, so black, so deep, that His spirit shuddered before it. This agony He must not exert His divine power to escape. As man He must suffer the consequences of man’s sin. As man He must endure the wrath of God against transgression. [Notice what “the wrath of God” did.]**

Christ was now standing in a different attitude from that in which He had ever stood before. His suffering can best be described in the words of the prophet, “Awake, O sword, against My shepherd, and against the man that is My fellow, saith the Lord of hosts.” Zechariah 13:7. As the substitute and surety for sinful man, Christ was suffering under divine justice. He saw what justice meant. Hitherto He had been as an intercessor for others; now He longed to have an intercessor for Himself.—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages** 686.3-4.††

[EGW:] He has left the courts of heaven, where all is purity, happiness, and glory, to save the one lost sheep, the one world that has fallen by transgression. And He will not turn from His mission. He will become the propitiation of a race that has willed to sin. His prayer now breathes only submission: “If this cup may not pass away from Me, except I drink it, Thy will be done.”

Having made the decision, He fell dying to the ground from which He had partially risen. [Jesus would have died right there in the garden of Gethsemane if that angel had not come to strengthen Him. The entire

universe except for those on this earth saw that sin, causing separation from God, leads to death.] Where now were His disciples, to place their hands tenderly beneath the head of their fainting Master, and bathe that brow, marred indeed more than the sons of men? The Saviour trod the wine press alone, and of the people there was none with Him.

But God suffered with His Son. Angels beheld the Saviour's agony. They saw their Lord enclosed by legions of satanic forces, His nature weighed down with a shuddering, mysterious dread. There was silence in heaven. No harp was touched. **Could mortals have viewed the amazement of the angelic host as in silent grief they watched the Father separating His beams of light, love, and glory from His beloved Son, they would better understand how offensive in His sight is sin.** [This was "God's wrath!"] **The worlds unfallen and the heavenly angels had watched with intense interest as the conflict drew to its close. Satan and his confederacy of evil, the legions of apostasy, watched intently this great crisis in the work of redemption. The powers of good and evil waited to see what answer would come to Christ's thrice-repeated prayer. Angels had longed to bring relief to the divine sufferer, but this might not be. No way of escape was found for the Son of God. In this awful crisis, when everything was at stake, when the mysterious cup trembled in the hand of the sufferer, the heavens opened, a light shone forth amid the stormy darkness of the crisis hour, and the mighty angel who stands in God's presence, occupying the position from which Satan fell, came to the side of Christ. The angel came not to take the cup from Christ's hand, but to strengthen Him to drink it, with the assurance of the Father's love. He came to give power to the divine-human suppliant. He pointed Him to the open heavens, telling Him of the souls that would be saved as the result of His sufferings. He assured Him that His Father is greater and more powerful than Satan, that His death would result in the utter discomfiture of Satan, and that the kingdom of this world would be given to the saints of the Most High. He told Him that He would see of the travail of His soul, and be satisfied, for He would see a multitude of the human race saved, eternally saved.**—Ellen G. White, *Desire of Ages** 690.3-693.3.††

26. God had warned us as human beings through Adam and Eve's experience in the Garden of Eden, that sin would lead to death. (Genesis 2:17) But, no one up to that point in time had ever died. How did God try to explain the seriousness of His warning to Adam and Eve? God understood that the only way He would be able to make clear how serious sin was would be to come Himself and to die the "second death" which is a result of sin.

[EGW:] Upon Christ as our substitute and surety was laid the iniquity of us all. **He was counted a transgressor, that He might redeem us from the condemnation of the law. The guilt of every descendant of Adam was pressing upon His heart. The wrath of God against sin, the terrible manifestation of His displeasure because of iniquity, filled the soul of His Son with consternation.** All His life Christ had been publishing to a fallen world the good news of the Father's mercy and pardoning love.

Salvation for the chief of sinners was His theme. **But now with the terrible weight of guilt [for our sins] He bears, He cannot see the Father's reconciling face. The withdrawal of the divine countenance from the Saviour in this hour of supreme anguish pierced His heart with a sorrow that can never be fully understood by man. So great was this agony that His physical pain was hardly felt.** [God's withdrawal is/was His wrath.]

Satan with his fierce temptations wrung the heart of Jesus. The Saviour could not see through the portals of the tomb. Hope did not present to Him His coming forth from the grave a conqueror, or tell Him of the Father's acceptance of the sacrifice. He feared that sin was so offensive to God that Their separation was to be eternal. Christ felt the anguish which the sinner will feel when mercy shall no longer plead for the guilty race. It was the sense of sin, bringing the Father's wrath upon Him as man's substitute, that made the cup He drank so bitter, and broke the heart of the Son of God.—Ellen G. White, *Desire of Ages** 753.1-2.†‡

Isaiah 59:2: It is because of your sins that he doesn't hear you. It is your sins that separate you from God when you try to worship him.—*Good News Bible*.*

[From the Bible study guide=BSG:] Death by crucifixion was one of the harshest punishments the Romans meted out to anyone. It was considered the worst way to die. Thus, how horrific for anyone to be killed that way, in particular the Son of God! Jesus, we must always remember, came in human flesh like ours. Between the beatings, the scourgings, the nails hammered into His hands and feet, and the harrowing weight of His own body tearing at the wounds, the physical pain must have been unbearable. This was harsh, even for the worst of criminals; how unfair, then, that Jesus, innocent of everything, should face such a fate.—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Wednesday, September 21.‡

27. But, the truth goes much deeper than those words. As we just read above in Item #26:

[EGW:] **The withdrawal of the divine countenance from the Saviour** in this hour of supreme anguish pierced His heart with a sorrow that can never be fully understood by man. **So great was this agony that His physical pain was hardly felt.**—Ellen G. White, *Desire of Ages** 753.1.†‡

28. **His greatest pain was caused by the fact that He could not feel the presence of His Father because sin was separating Him from His Father! Do we feel pain when we sin and choose to separate from God?**

29. God did certain other things at the time of Christ's death so that the people would begin to realize that His was not just the death of an innocent man. Great darkness covered the land for about three hours. The curtain hanging in the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. There was a great earthquake, and rocks split apart. The graves of some of God's faithful people from the past broke open; after Jesus rose from death, those faithful people from the past went into the city where many people saw them. (See Matthew 27:45; 51-52; and Mark 15:38.)

30. What was the worst thing that happened to Jesus Christ at the time of His crucifixion? He had already been beaten and scourged. He was wearing a crown of thorns. He was forced

to try to carry His cross which He was unable to do, and He fell. He was crucified with nails through His hands and feet. But, Christ's greatest suffering was much more than that. The suffering of Christ was to demonstrate the full effects of sin. No one had ever died that death before or ever has died that death since then. Seeing what happened to Christ, how can we continue to sin as if it were a minor matter?

31. At times, we may feel that we suffer because we are Christians. But, how can our suffering be compared to the suffering of Christ?

Acts 14:22: They strengthened the believers and encouraged them to remain true to the faith. "We must pass through many troubles to enter the Kingdom of God," they taught.—*Good News Bible*.*

Philippians 1:29: For you have been given the privilege of serving Christ, not only by believing in him, but also by suffering for him.—*Good News Bible*.*

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

[BSG:] Christ, our Lord, has suffered more than any of us ever could. At the cross, He "has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows" (*Isa. 53:4, NKJV*); what we know only as individuals, He suffered for us all corporately. He who was sinless became "sin for us" (*2 Cor. 5:21*), suffering in a way that we, as sinful creatures, couldn't begin to imagine.—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Thursday, September 22.†§

Isaiah 53:4: "But he endured the suffering that should have been ours, the pain that we should have borne.

All the while we thought that his suffering was punishment sent by God."—*Good News Bible*.*†

32. What is implied by that last sentence? Compare Romans 6:23 as below in Item #33.

2 Corinthians 5:21: **Christ was without sin, but for our sake God made him share our sin in order that in union with him we might share the righteousness of God.**—*Good News Bible*.*†

33. Incredible as it may seem, Christ was willing to go through all of that to save us.

John 10:28: [Jesus said:] "I give them eternal life, and they shall never die. No one can snatch them away from me."—*Good News Bible*.*‡

Romans 6:23: For sin pays its wage—death; but **God's free gift is eternal life in union with Christ Jesus our Lord.**—*Good News Bible*.*†

1 John 2:25: **And this is what Christ himself promised to give us—eternal life.**—*Good News Bible*.*† [Compare John 17:3.]‡

34. What was the real cause of Christ's suffering in those final hours of His life on this earth? That was Satan's final chance to try to get Jesus to give up His whole purpose for coming to this earth. It was not God's will that Jesus should be tortured and beaten and crowned with thorns; those were all acts of Satan. What troubled Christ most of all was the fact that He could not feel His connection to the Father through that experience. He felt like His Father had abandoned Him. (*Matthew 27:46*) That, of course, was not true; but, God needed to **demonstrate to the entire universe what the full consequences of sin are.**

35. Jesus is the only being so far who has died the second death, a death that results directly from sin. We can choose to: (1) Live a life attempting to follow the pattern Jesus set for

us and live forever; or (2) Live a life of selfishness, following the pattern of Satan, and we will die the death that Jesus died, separated from God, the only Source of life.

36. Jesus had some idea of what was coming when He went to be baptized by John. He did not receive baptism because He was a sinner; instead, He did it as an example for us. Receiving baptism is to be a recognition of the fact that we have set aside our sinful lives of the past, burying that life in the waters of baptism, and rising to a new life in Christ.

[EGW:] Jesus did not receive baptism as a confession of guilt on His own account. He identified Himself with sinners, taking the steps that we are to take, and doing the work that we must do. His life of suffering and patient endurance after His baptism was also an example to us.

Upon coming up out of the water, Jesus bowed in prayer on the river bank. A new and important era was opening before Him. He was now, upon a wider stage, entering on the conflict of His life. Though He was the Prince of Peace, His coming must be as the unsheathing of a sword.... No one upon earth had understood Him, and during His ministry He must still walk alone....

As one with us, He must bear the burden of our guilt and woe. The Sinless One must feel the shame of sin....

Alone He must tread the path; alone He must bear the burden. Upon Him who had laid off His glory and accepted the weakness of humanity the redemption of the world must rest.—Ellen G. White, *Desire of Ages** 111.2-5.‡

Romans 6:3-4: ³For surely you know that when we were baptized into union with Christ Jesus, we were baptized into union with his death. ⁴By our baptism, then, we were buried with him and shared his death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from death by the glorious power of the Father, so also we might live a new life.—*Good News Bible*.*

See 2 Corinthians 5:21. [See #32 above. Jesus was treated **as if** He was a sinner.]‡

37. When we are baptized, how many of us really understand that **baptism means death to sin**, and it is only meaningful if we actually live a new life with less and less sin controlling us in the future.
38. In his book *The Cross of Christ*, John R. W. Stott (1921-2011), the famous Anglican theologian, compared the death of Jesus to the death of Socrates. Socrates lived from 470-399 B.C. He was condemned to death because he was encouraging the youth of Athens to reject the gods of the city. Socrates was forced to drink a cup of poisonous hemlock. Socrates took the cup and gladly drink it all. See Plato, *Phaedo*, in *Euthyphro, Apology, Crito, Phaedo, Phaedrus*, translated by Harold North Fowler (London: Harvard University Press, 2005), pages 393–403.
39. How does that death contrast with the death of Jesus? Jesus in imagination held up the cup of suffering in the garden of Gethsemane. He realized how serious that cup was, representing a total separation from His Father, thus, causing His death. It was so distressing to Jesus that He sweat great drops of blood. (Luke 22:42-44)
40. Scott concluded correctly that Jesus was pained drinking that cup of suffering; but, it was not the physical pain that He was experiencing that was the issue.

41. **Ellen White made it very clear that the greatest suffering that Jesus experienced was caused by His separation from His Father. That was worse than any or all of His physical suffering! That separation was what caused His death!**

42. The death Socrates died was a death with which the world is familiar. Christian martyrs who died in the flames likely suffered more physical pain. But, no one else has died the death that Jesus died.

[EGW:] As He [Jesus] neared Gethsemane, He became strangely silent. He had often visited this spot for meditation and prayer; but never with a heart so full of sorrow as upon this night of His last agony. Throughout His life on earth He had walked in the light of God's presence. When in conflict with men who were inspired by the very spirit of Satan, He could say, "He that sent Me is with Me: the Father hath not left Me alone; for I do always those things that please Him." John 8:29. **But now He seemed to be shut out from the light of God's sustaining presence.** Now He was numbered with the transgressors. The guilt of fallen humanity He must bear. Upon Him who knew no sin must be laid the iniquity of us all. **So dreadful does sin appear to Him, so great is the weight of guilt which He must bear, that He is tempted to fear it will shut Him out forever from His Father's love. Feeling how terrible is the wrath of God against transgression, He exclaims, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death."** [Matthew 26:38, KJV*]—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages** 685.2 [1898].^{†‡}

43. So, what have we learned from this lesson?

44. Jesus suffered more than any other human being has ever suffered. His suffering was not only the physical suffering that we know about but also that suffering was exceeded to a great extent by the fact that He was experiencing excruciating mental pain because He felt that His Father was withdrawing His beams of light and love and glory. **He was being separated from His Father "by sin."** As human beings, we cannot even comprehend what that means. Jesus went through that separation twice, dying twice, as we have seen.

45. Jesus, in effect, went through the death experience twice: (1) The entire onlooking universe was watching as He fell, dying to the ground in the garden of Gethsemane before a single human hand had touched Him. If the angel had not come to strengthen Him, He would have died right there. But, we as human beings would not have understood what caused His death. We would perhaps have thought He had a heart attack or maybe a stroke. (2) So, it was necessary for Jesus to be strengthened to go out and go through all those experiences that we know about: The trials, the beatings, and finally, the crucifixion. And then, being separated from His Father, and once again, finally dying that second death as He cried: "My God, my God, why did you abandon me?" (Matthew 27:46, GNB*)

46. Learning about all this and picturing it in our minds, have we become deathly afraid of sin? Isn't that what God intends?

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