

The Teacher's Notes—Light Shines in the Darkness, Lesson 3 Adult Bible Study Guide, 2024 2Q, "The Great Controversy"

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The Teacher's Notes



Sabbath School Lesson for April 13-19, 2024

Overview of Lesson 3, Light Shines in the Darkness

Memory Text: *“Then Jesus said to them, ‘A little while longer the light is with you. Walk while you have the light, lest darkness overtake you; he who walks in darkness does not know where he is going.’ ”* **John 12:35 NKJV**

There’s an expression that’s used to describe two very different things. We say they are as “different as night and day”. As we soon discover in looking at the attributes of good and evil, they, too, are as different as night and day. But, thankfully, as Jesus has told us, the light of God is bright enough to guide us out of our spiritual darkness.

Darkness often overtakes us gradually. Even nature’s change from day to nighttime may be a slow process, allowing us some hours before the full darkness arrives.

In the same way, sin can seep into our lives unknowingly until we suddenly find ourselves totally in darkness, because we listened to the dark messages of God’s enemy, Satan.

In addition to the following topics we explore this week, **read chapter 3 of *The Great Controversy***, called “An Era of Spiritual Darkness”.

- **Sunday: Compromise, Satan’s Subtle Strategy**—Knowing God through the Scriptures, aided by the Holy Spirit, is key to avoiding Satan’s cunning deceptions.
- **Monday: Savage Wolves**—Heresies, deviations from the truth, cause persecution from within the church.
- **Tuesday: Safeguarded by the Word**—The truth in God’s word builds us up and sanctifies us.
- **Wednesday: Human Reasoning Apart From Scripture**—Human reasoning through science, or even theologians, can’t always be relied on to show us the truth about God.
- **Thursday: Battle for the Mind**—Satan’s principal work is to blind or darken our minds, so we will worship him rather than the Creator of light.

Sunday: Compromise—Satan’s Subtle Strategy

Jesus defined **Himself as “the way, the truth, and the life”** (John 14:6). He also identified **Satan as a murderer and a liar** (John 8:44). We must choose between an all-knowing, loving God—or Satan, the father of deceitful lies and power-grabbing selfishness.

But the choice is not as cut and dry as we might hope. **Satan uses subtle compromises with the truth that lead us to doubt our confidence in God’s word**, and to ultimately abandon our loyalty to God. In the Garden of Eden, Satan used the serpent to persuade Adam and Eve to disobey God’s clear instructions. **He has had centuries now to perfect his deceitful strategies and keep his agenda hidden** from unsuspecting members of the human race, including those in the church.

The Great Controversy, p. 51, points out that **the post-apostolic church**, for hundreds of years, prohibited the distribution and reading of the Bible, causing most of the laity to **accept the pope when he declared himself viceregent of God on earth and gained “authority over church and state”**.

We are witnessing **today many countries combining church and state, in order to push their apostasies and distorted views of the Bible—combining them, of course, with some truth**. These unholy alliances between church and governments can only lead to a renewed persecution and death for many of the faithful. Revelation 13:11-18 reveals how this happens in a powerful way at the end of time.

Bible Verses:

John 14:6 and 8:44

How does the darkness differ from the light?

Why are so many deceived into following Satan’s lies?

John 8:32 and 17:17

How do the Scriptures protect us from spiritual darkness?

Monday: Savage Wolves

The apostle Paul warned the churches to **be wary of wolves**, who like Jesus predicted in Matthew 7:15, would come into the flock **in sheep’s clothing. These were actually savage wolves**, Paul declared, **who would speak perverse, wrong things** to draw the sheep to themselves (Acts 20:27-32).

It’s startling to think that our greatest danger, **our most unbearable persecution, comes from within the church**. But this is just how it has happened in the past. Look at the Dark and Middle Ages and you will find that the Roman church was indeed capable of such atrocities.

As a matter of fact, **Paul, in his time, perceived that the “mystery of lawlessness”, otherwise known as the Anti-Christ, the “man of sin”, was already at work** (2 Thessalonians 2:7-12). **Satan was working to secure his supremacy through pagan and then papal Rome**. Even in Paul’s day, compromising doctrines were being formulated by Satan and his cohorts to draw people away from the truth of God’s word.

Those **perverse doctrines included bowing down to graven images (idol worship), the immortality of the soul with the dead immediately being transported to heaven or hell, and the transfer of seventh-day Sabbath worship to another day, namely Sunday**. These

compromising measures were justified as a way to include pagans and secure the power of the church leaders.

Bible Verses:

Acts 20:27-32

How were the churches warned about future apostasy and persecution from within the church?

2 Thessalonians 2:7-12

How can we avoid the strong delusions that will assault God's true believers?

Tuesday: Safeguarded by the Word

The best way to be protected from “savage wolves”, as Paul calls them, is to immerse ourselves in God’s word, the Bible. It is through the Scriptures that God’s love and will for our lives is most clearly revealed. In addition, **it exposes Satan’s strategies and goals**, giving us ample information and warning about his deceitfully subtle lies.

The middle chapter of the Bible is Psalm 117. It’s also the shortest chapter, just two verses that praise God for His mercy and truth. It is shortly followed by the longest chapter, **Psalm 119, where we find repeated references to the importance of God’s Word.** See Psalm 119:105, 116, 130, 133, and 160.

The New Testament supports the value of God’s word, as our eyes are more fully opened to God’s Son, the embodiment of that word (John 1:1, 14). **It is through His Word that we are forgiven, sanctified, and at last glorified** on Resurrection Morning, when the Lord, with a shout, takes us to be with Him in heaven (Matthew 5:20, Acts 17:17, and 1 Thessalonians 4:16).

Bible Verses:

Psalm 119:105, 116, 130, 133, and 160

What can God’s word do for us and how fully can we trust it?

John 17:15-17 and Acts 20:32

In what way does God’s word sanctify us, or make us holy?

2 Timothy 3:16, 17

How much of the Bible should we study, and for what reasons?

Wednesday: Human Reasoning Apart From Scripture

Human reasoning alone can never be depended on to show us divine truths in God's word. **Even scientists and Bible scholars should not be the final word. Each of us needs God's Holy Spirit to teach us spiritual things.**

Our reasoning should not be neglected, however. **It takes both the revelation of God and our own mental reasoning and renewed conscience to determine right from wrong.**

Our human hearts and consciences will often lead us astray. Proverbs 16:25 supports this. "There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death." Israel experienced the turmoil of having everyone doing "what was right in his own eyes" (Judges 21:25). And Isaiah 53:6 compares us to stray sheep, who "have turned, everyone, to his own way".

In order to prevent these unhappy circumstances, **we must place our trust in God's word, as revealed by our own study of Scriptures, aided by the Holy Spirit of God.**

Bible Verses:

Proverbs 16:25, Judges 21:25, and Isaiah 53:6

Why should we not rely only on ourselves to determine what morality and truth are?

Why are both human reasoning (sometimes aided by the "experts") and divine revelation the best combination for knowing God more fully?

Thursday: Battle for the Mind

Simply put, **Satan strives to win us to his side by darkening our minds so we won't see the Light of God**—namely, Jesus (John 8:12). He does this **by keeping us from studying the Bible, by making us worry about the things of this life, and by encouraging us to be selfish and have pride** in ourselves.

But, God has warned us about the devil's distractions. Paul says in 2 Timothy 2:15 to **"study to show thyself approved unto God"** (KJV). In addition, Jesus tells us **not to worry about what we shall eat, drink, or wear** (Matthew 6:31). And, of course, there's the old proverb that reminds us that **pride goes before a fall** (Proverbs 16:18).

The battle for our minds is real, but so was our Savior's perfect life and sacrifice. We have Him to thank for our life, and for the new life He offers us through His saving grace. It says in John 1:14 that the **light of His glory was full of grace and truth. He alone can show us the way out of our dark world.** Indeed, Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life (John 14:6).

Bible Verses:

2 Corinthians 4:3-6

How are eyes blinded by Satan? How are they opened by God?

Romans 12:2, 2 Corinthians 3:14, and Philippians 2:5, 4:7, 8

What can we learn about the battle for our minds in these verses?

John 1:4, 5, 9, and 14

How does the Light of Jesus redeem, transform, and motivate us to be better people?

Matthew 5:14, 16

Why is it important to reflect His light to others?

Friday: Final Thoughts

Some Christians seem to think that all compromise is bad—that it leads to an endorsement of others who are not living according to God’s word. This is, of course, a valid concern in some settings. But perhaps, there is a place for some compromise when it leads to establishing ways to live in peace with our family and neighbors. Politics, also, seems to work best when parties negotiate and find solutions that are acceptable to both sides. We are, after all, called to live peaceably with each other, avoiding anger and bitter strife (Romans 12:18, Hebrews 12:14, and Ephesians 4:31, 32).

Although compromise can provide ways to reduce conflict and enable us to coexist with others, we must guard against alliances that harmfully endanger our relationship with God. We must at all times recognize God as our Creator, Provider, and Lawgiver. There are some points of His Law that we must not compromise. For example, things that lead us away from God’s blessed day of rest should not be negotiable. The Sabbath Commandment, placed in the center of the Ten, only one out of two Commandments that is not worded as a “Thou shalt not”, stands out as the Commandment that most defines who God is and how and when we should worship Him.

Satan has had centuries to fine-tune his ability to disguise his agenda and get us to worship him. Therefore, we must be ever watchful about establishing relationships with other Christian groups that preach only parts of God’s Law. Mixing truth with error has always been part of Satan’s deceptive strategy.

Next week, chapters 4-6 of “*The Great Controversy*” will be helpful in understanding our new topic. Read them, along with the lesson, if you can.

“*The Great Controversy*” in today’s English, called “*Love Under Fire*”, is also available online at https://media2.egwwritings.org/pdf/en_LF.pdf

Next Week: Standing for the Truth

***To read the Sabbath School Lesson Quarterly and see more resources for its study,
go to***

<https://www.sabbath.school/>