

The Teacher's Notes—The War Behind All Wars, Lesson 1 Adult Bible Study Guide, 2024 2Q, "The Great Controversy"

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The Teacher's Notes



Sabbath School Lesson for March 30-April 5, 2024

Remember that Bible texts are hyperlinks to take you to the verses!

Overview of Lesson 1, The War Behind All Wars

Memory Text: *"And war broke out in heaven; Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer."* **Revelation 12:7, 8 NKJV**

Although intense conflicts of various kinds have been seen across the globe over the centuries, there have been several recent outbreaks of warfare in strategic places that have grabbed our attention in just the last few years and months.

Where and how did these atrocious acts of violence begin? The study of a great controversy between Christ and Satan helps us grapple with profound questions of good and evil. Looking at the origin of these horrific manifestations of hate and violent wars will illuminate our minds and direct us to a solution.

Revelation 12:7 shows us that through God that we will find the solution to the sin problem in which we are engulfed. God, who created Lucifer and later made him and his angels leave heaven, has the power and authority to provide a quick end to our suffering, if we patiently choose to be on His side of the great, universal controversy.

We will see through this week's study...

- **Sunday: War in Heaven**—What thought processes led Lucifer to rebel against God?
- **Monday: Lucifer Deceives; Christ Prevails**—What were Lucifer's lies, and why must we choose sides in the conflict?
- **Tuesday: Planet Earth Becomes Involved**—What results from rebelling against God have we seen on this earth?
- **Wednesday: Love Finds a Way**—In what way has God chosen to show us His love?
- **Thursday: Our High Priest**—What is Christ doing for us now as our High Priest?

Read chapters 29 and 30 of *The Great Controversy*, by Ellen G. White, for clarity on this topic.

An easy-to-read version in today's English, called *Love Under Fire*, is also available online at https://media2.egwwritings.org/pdf/en_LF.pdf

Sunday: War in Heaven

The first, recorded war strangely occurred in heaven (Revelation 12:7-9). **The dragon, or Satan, as prophecy calls him, started the conflict in heaven, when he openly spread lies about God's character.** It got so nasty there that **Lucifer and a third of the angels who sided with him had to leave heaven** and were cast down to earth (Revelation 12:4).

Make no mistake though. **God did not create this flawed, evil angel.** Ezekiel 28:12-15 describes him as created perfect in every way, a shining, beautiful, anointed angel. **He was perfect...until he chose not to be.**

Isaiah 14:12-14 helps us understand how Lucifer's thinking became antagonistic toward God. **He became so proud of himself that he thought he deserved more praise, or at least as much praise, as God's Son.** In other words, **the evil began in his heart**, and was spread to other angels as he shared with them his disgruntled thoughts about God.

Bible Verses:

Revelation 12:7-9

What kind of freedom was provided to God's created beings in heaven and on earth? And why were they given this freedom?

What happens when we choose not to follow God?

Ezekiel 28:12-15

Was Lucifer evil when God created him?

Isaiah 14:12-14

What was wrong with the way Lucifer thought about himself and God?

Monday: Lucifer Deceives; Christ Prevails

It's impossible for us to know just what the **conflict in heaven** looked like. Was it actual, **physical warfare**, or an **antagonistic battle with words and ideas**? Or perhaps a **combination** of both?

We do know that **deception was involved**. John 8:44 tells us that **the devil is a liar, and even the father of it**. In other words, lying started with him. **His pride led him to spread rumors about God's character**—that it was not fair that Christ, God's Son, was worshiped more than he was.

So many angels sided with Lucifer in believing these lies that **it became necessary for Christ to throw Lucifer and his supporters out of heaven** down to our earth. This sounds like a physical act, leading us to believe that **the struggle had developed to the point of being physical**. This is similar to how **our human wars progress**. **Hate and mistrust become so entrenched among people that it leads to blows, which may eventually escalate to full-scale war**.

Thankfully, **Christ seems to have had the upper hand**, even at the beginning of the conflict. **His character of love caused Him to spare Lucifer's life, and those who chose to follow him**. Choosing instead to banish them to earth.

We, too, must choose sides. **Will we follow Christ or His enemy, now called Satan**? The war rages on, especially here where Satan now resides.

Bible Verses:

Revelation 12:7-12

What does this passage say about Lucifer's power to deceive and Christ's power to prevail?

Genesis 2:15-17, Exodus 32:26, Joshua 24:15, 1 Kings 18:20, 21, and Revelation 22:17

Why has it always been important for us to choose sides in this great controversy?

Tuesday: Planet Earth Becomes Involved

One has to wonder how our planet became involved with Satan's deceptions and the great controversy that has come of it. We know **Adam and Eve were created perfect, as was everything else God created**. After the creation of earth, God saw that it was "very good" (Genesis 1:31).

Like the angels, **the first pair were also endowed with freedom of choice. If their love was to be valid and meaningful, it could not be forced upon them. It must come from their heart**, the result of choosing to love God and follow His directions for a happy life, rather than Satan's lies.

Unfortunately, **Adam and Eve chose unwisely**, and not only went to a place they were warned not to go, but chose to believe Satan's lies about God. **Doubt and mistrust were cleverly implanted in every word the serpent spoke to Eve**. Eve first fell for the deception, and ate the forbidden fruit. Then Adam made a similar choice and chose Eve above God by eating the fruit as well.

This rebellion thus opened the door to all the heartache, suffering, disease, and death we have witnessed on earth. Such calamities result when we are absent from God's presence. And this is **what sin does—it separates us from God**.

Bible Verses:

Genesis 3:1-5

How did Satan, through the serpent, entice Eve to sin?

Romans 5:12, 3:23 and John 1:29

What has made us all sinners?

Who alone can take away our sin?

Wednesday: Love Finds a Way

It's fairly clear that **God and His Son had already devised a plan to redeem humanity**, should they decide to join Satan's forces. Shortly after Adam and Eve disobeyed God, **He revealed to them and the serpent what that plan was. See Genesis 3:15**.

Without giving much detail, **the mention of a Seed of the woman, who would fatally bruise the head of the serpent, gave them a glimmer of hope** for what looked like a very grim future. With their hearts so despondent, it was a promise they must have treasured and passed on to their children, who may have wondered who of them might be that Seed.

Many prophecies were given up to the time of the appearance of that Seed that match perfectly the life and death of **Jesus Christ. He was recognized clearly by His followers as that Seed of the woman** (Galatians 3:16).

It was at the cross that Satan's head was crushed. It was at Calvary that the Seed died for us, redeeming us by taking our punishment upon Himself. **Satan's attack on God's character was forever silenced by Jesus' heroic act of love** for fallen humanity.

Bible Verses:

Genesis 3:15, Isaiah 53:1-5, and Galatians 3:16

How did Jesus seem to fit the qualifications of the Seed?

Why is hope such a valued survival tool for men and women, facing trials and heartache?

Hebrews 2:9, Galatians 3:13, and 2 Corinthians 5:21

What did Christ's death do for us? What was its purpose?

Thursday: Our High Priest

Christ's work did not end at **the cross. It enhanced His work in the heavenly sanctuary, making Him more than qualified to intercede for us there as our High Priest** (Hebrews 4:15, 16 and 7:25). He was tempted on this earth, but did not sin. Through Him, we find mercy and grace to overcome our weaknesses.

Clothed in His righteousness, our guilt is erased. We stand before the universe as clearly and thoroughly forgiven. The grip of sin no longer holds us captive. We can overcome it through His sacrifice and intercessory work in the sanctuary.

With God's forgiveness, we are given comfort, peace, strength, and joy. No wonder the name of Jesus is declared to be "a name above every name" (Philippians 2:9). **We are free to call on Him for all our wants and needs.** He is ever ready to plead our case in the courts of heaven.

Bible Verses:

Hebrews 4:15, 16 and 7:25

What makes Jesus the perfect High Priest for us?

What does Jesus plead for us before God, and why is His name so important to us?

Friday: Final Thoughts

The themes explored in this week's lesson are based on specific chapters in "The Great Controversy", by Ellen White. Reading chapters 29 and 30 will help clarify these profound topics.

Chapter 30, "The Enmity Between Man and Satan", pp. 505-510, is an eye-opening description of what it means when God declared that enmity, or deep-seated hatred, would exist between man and Satan (Genesis 3:15). Without that enmity, showing us the horrific nature of what Satan asks us to do, we would be powerless to resist his temptations.

We may be born in sin (Psalm 51:5 and Ephesians 2:2, 3), but when we ask God to renew our hearts, our conscience is awakened as never before, and we are motivated to serve the true God of the universe, and not our own natural impulses. Thus, Satan, the tempter, "has no power to control the will or to force the soul to sin. He may distress, but he cannot contaminate. He can cause agony, but not defilement. The fact that Christ has conquered should inspire His followers with courage to fight manfully the battle against sin and Satan."

~*The Great Controversy*, p. 510

Next week, chapters 1 and 2 of "*The Great Controversy*" will be helpful in understanding this topic. Read the chapters, 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: The Central Issue—Love or Selfishness?

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

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