

The Great Controversy in Scripture

1. The Bible teaches that there are other beings in the universe besides humans:
 - A. God (and Christ) existed before this earth was created:** Ps. 90:2; Jn 1:1-3; Jn 17:24; Heb 1:8-10; 1 Pet 1:20; Eph 1:4, 5; Col. 1:15-17
 - B. Angels** - More than 300 references in the *King James Version*: Psalms 91:11; Hebrews 1:4-2:2; Exodus 23:23; 1 Chronicles 21:16; 2 Samuel 24:16-17
 - C. Satan/Devil** - Ezekiel 28:13; Revelation 12:7-12; Genesis 3:1-4; Approximately 200 references in *King James Version*; See handout on **Satan**.
 - D. Other Beings:** Job 1:6; Job 2:1; Job 38:4-7; Daniel 9:21; Acts 12:7; Hebrews 13:2; compare Revelation 22:16; 2 Peter 1:19; 1 Corinthians 4:9; Ephesians 1:9-10; 3:9-10; Colossians 1:19-20
2. Satan wanted to take the place of God:
Isaiah 14:12-14; Ezekiel 28:11-15; Matthew 4:8-9
3. God has said that sin (which began with Satan) will lead to death:
Genesis 2:17; Romans 6:23
4. Satan has accused God of being a liar:
Genesis 3:1-5; Job 1:6-12; Job 2:1-6
5. Sometime before this earth was created, war arose in heaven:
Revelation 12:1-12; Ezekiel 28:12-16
6. Satan and his followers were excluded from heaven:
Luke 10:18; John 8:44; John 12:31; Col. 2:15; 2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6; Revelation 12:7-12
7. When Satan lost his battle to overthrow God in heaven, he came to this earth to tempt us:
Revelation 12:7-10; Genesis 3:1-4; Ezekiel 28:12-16
8. Satan claims to be the master of this world. He claims that this world belongs to him:
Job 1 & 2; Matthew 4:8,9; 1 Kings 22; 2 Chronicles 18; John 12:31; John 14:30; John 16:11; 2 Cor. 4:4; Eph. 2:1,2; Eph. 6:16; 1 John 5:19
9. Satan claims that we are his because we have sinned and he has the right to destroy us:
Zechariah 3:1-5; Jude 9
10. God promised to demonstrate the truthfulness of his statement in Genesis 2:17:
Genesis 3:15; Romans 3:1-4; Romans 3:25-27
11. The whole rest of the universe is watching us to see what is going to happen:
1 Corinthians 4:9; Ephesians 1:7-10; Eph. 3:9-10; Colossians 1:19-20
12. Christ promised that he would deal with the sin problem. In order to do that he must deal with Satan's lies as well as our misbehavior:
Romans 8:3; Romans 3:4
13. Christ died for sinless angels too, because they were the first ones to hear Satan's accusations against God:
Ephesians 1:7-10; Eph. 3:7-10; Colossians 1:19-20; John 12:32 (*GNB*)
14. God needs to clear his own name in order to win in the great controversy: (See handout Ezekiel #3: ***For My Own Name's Sake.***)

15. Ezekiel 20 and 36 are very instructive chapters. They should be read carefully and the implications considered. Please note this particular theme:

In Egypt: Read Ezekiel 20:4-7 about how God tried to help Israel in Egypt, then note:

Ezekiel 20:8,9: ⁸ “But they defied me and refused to listen. They did not throw away their disgusting idols or give up the Egyptian gods. I was ready to let them feel the full force of my anger there in Egypt. ⁹ But I did not, since **that would have brought dishonor to my name**, for in the presence of the people among whom they were living I had announced to Israel that I was going to lead them out of Egypt... (GNB)

In the wilderness: Read Eze 20:10-12, then note:

Ezekiel 20:13-14: ¹³ “But even in the desert they defied me. They broke my laws and rejected my commands, which bring life to anyone who obeys them. They completely profaned the Sabbath. I was ready to let them feel the force of my anger there in the desert and to destroy them. ¹⁴ But I did not, since **that would have brought dishonor to my name among the nations which had seen me lead Israel out of Egypt...** (See Exodus 32:7-14)

The second generation in the wilderness: Read Eze. 20:15-20, then note:

Ezekiel 20:21-22: ²¹ “But that generation also defied me. They broke my laws and did not keep my commands, which bring life to anyone who obeys them. They profaned the Sabbath. I was ready to let them feel the force of my anger there in the desert and to kill them all. ²² But I did not, **since that would have brought dishonor to my name among the nations which had seen me bring Israel out of Egypt...**

After the Babylonian captivity: Read Eze. 20:37-42, then note:

Ezekiel 20:43-44: ⁴³ “Then you will remember all the disgraceful things you did and how you defiled yourselves. You will be disgusted with yourselves because of all the evil things you did. ⁴⁴ **When I act to protect my honor, you Israelites will know that I am the LORD, because I do not deal with you as your wicked, evil actions deserve.**’ The Sovereign LORD has spoken.” (GNB)

Right throughout Israelite history God has had to act, not primarily for the “salvation” of his people but for the honor of his own name! The great controversy is not so much about how God saves you and me but about how God answers Satan’s accusations against his character and government.

Note especially that the purpose of the Sabbath is to remind us of this particular very important truth. The Sabbath is to be a time when we get to know our God and are reminded of our relationship with him. (Ezekiel 20:12; Eze. 20:20) We need to understand his character and as much about him as possible and not just the right name by which to refer to him. If the Sabbath is not being used for this purpose, then as far as God is concerned we are profaning it. (Ezekiel 20:13-21)

In Ezekiel 36 after all of Israel is in captivity, he explains further:

Ezekiel 36:20-22: ²⁰ **Wherever they went, they brought disgrace on my holy name, because people would say, “These are the people of the LORD, but they had to leave his land.”** ²¹ **That made me concerned for my holy name, since the Israelites brought disgrace on it**

everywhere they went.

²² Now then, give the Israelites the message that I, the Sovereign LORD, have for them: **What I am going to do is not for the sake of you Israelites, but for the sake of my holy name**, which you have disgraced in every country where you have gone. ²³ When I demonstrate to the nations the holiness of my great name—the name you disgraced among them—**then they will know that I am the LORD...** ⁽²⁸⁾ You will be my people, and I will be your God... ³² Israel, I want you to know that **I am not doing all this for your sake...** ³⁶ Then the neighboring nations that have survived will know that I, the LORD, rebuild ruined cities and replant waste fields. I, The LORD, have promised that I would do this—and I will. (GNB)

This is why Ezekiel repeats the phrase “Then they will know that I am the LORD” or “for my own name’s sake” or something similar at least 46 times in his book. (See handout Ezekiel #3: “**For My Own Name’s Sake**”)

Isaiah also realized and stated that God’s reputation was the key issue in Scripture:

Isaiah 48:11:

What I do is done **for my own sake—**
I will not let my name be dishonored
or let anyone else share the glory
that should be mine and mine alone.” (GNB)

Daniel 9:14-19: Daniel recognized that God must do something for his own reputation.

Summary: There has been a continuous war going on in our universe since before this earth was created. Lucifer, one of God’s foremost angels, began to have rebellious ideas in heaven. After some time he managed to get more than one-third of the angels to side with him against our wonderful Father-Creator-God. Thus “war” began in heaven. Finally, Lucifer, now turned into God’s “adversary” or “Satan”, was excluded from heaven and came down to our earth to cause trouble here. He convinced our first parents to join him in rebellion. From that day to this, we have been surrounded and controlled by sin. Down through the years Satan has been quite successful in convincing most of us that God is really a lying tyrant whose behavior is often “severe, exacting, revengeful, arbitrary” “stern”, “harsh”, “inflexible”, “unforgiving” and “implacable”—“One to be feared, dreaded and even hated”. (*Signs of the Times*, January 20, 1890; *Bible Training School*, November 1, 1908; *Review and Herald*, November 17, 1891; *Christian Education* 73; EW 218; GC 534-536)

Jesus Christ was born into this sinful, rebellious world to fully and finally answer Satan’s charges—he came to “deal with sin”. (Romans 3:25-27; Romans 8:3) Now God is waiting for us here on this earth to discover and understand the fact that he has won this “great controversy”. He is waiting for a time when enough of us have “gotten the message” so that through the gift of the empowering Holy Spirit they can spread this truth throughout the world just before he returns in glory to redeem his faithful, trustworthy friends. Sin and those who refuse to separate themselves from sin will come to a final end and this world will once again be a peaceful, safe place to live for the rest of eternity.

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