

The Great Controversy Described in Scripture

1. The Bible teaches that there are other beings in the universe besides humans, including:
God (Father, Holy Spirit, and Christ). God in His three forms existed before this earth was created. See Genesis 1:1-2; Psalms 90:2; John 1:1-3; 17:24; Hebrews 1:8-10; 1 Peter 1:20; Ephesians 1:4-5; Colossians 1:15-17.
Angels. There are more than 300 references to angels in the *King James Version*. See Psalms 91:11; Hebrews 1:4-2:2; Exodus 23:23; 1 Chronicles 21:16; 2 Samuel 24:16-17.
Satan/Devil. There are approximately 200 references to Satan/Devil in the *King James Version*. See Isaiah 14:12-15; Ezekiel 28:13; Revelation 12:7-12; Genesis 3:1-4.
Other Beings. See Job 1:6; 2:1; 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 1:8-10; 3:8-10; Colossians 1:19-20.
2. Satan wanted to take the place of God.
See Isaiah 14:12-15; Ezekiel 28:12-19; Matthew 4:8-9.
3. God has said that sin (which began with Satan) will lead to death.
See Genesis 2:17; Romans 6:23.
4. Satan has accused God of being a liar.
See Genesis 3:1-5; Job 1:6-12; Job 2:1-6.
5. Sometime before this earth was created, war arose in heaven.
See Revelation 12:1-12; Ezekiel 28:12-16.
6. Satan and his followers were excluded from heaven.
See Luke 10:18; John 8:44; John 12:31; Colossians 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 and was present in the Garden of Eden to tempt Adam and Eve; he now tempts us.
See Revelation 12:7-12; 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.
See Job 1&2; Matthew 4:8-9; 1 Kings 22; 2 Chronicles 18; John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11; 2 Corinthians 4:4; Ephesians 2:1-2; 6:16; 1 John 5:19.
9. Satan claims that because we have sinned, we are his. Therefore, he claims that he has the right to destroy us.
See Zechariah 3:1-5; Jude 9.
10. God promised to demonstrate the truthfulness of what He has said—that the consequence of sin is death.
See Genesis 3:15; Romans 3:1-4, 25-27.
11. The entire rest of the universe is watching us to see what is going to happen.
See 1 Corinthians 4:9; 1 Peter 5:8-9; Ephesians 1:7-10; 3:9-10; Colossians 1:19-20; James 4:7.

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.

See Romans 8:3; 3:4.

13. Christ died not only for humans but also for sinless angels. They were the first ones to hear Satan's accusations against God.

See Ephesians 1:7-10; 3:7-10; Colossians 1:19-20; John 12:32 (GNB).

14. God needs to clear His "name" or reputation in order to win the great controversy. (See handout at Theox.org associated with Ezekiel: "**For My Own Name's Sake.**")

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

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

Ezekiel 20:8-9: ⁸ [God said:] "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) [Bold type and content in brackets are added.]

In the wilderness: Read Ezekiel 20:10-12 about how God cared for the Israelites in the wilderness, then note:

Ezekiel 20:13-14: ¹³ [God said:] "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....** (GNB). [Bold type and content in brackets are added.] (See Exodus 32:7-14.)

The second generation in the wilderness: Read Ezekiel 20:15-20 about how God tried to teach and lead the next generation, then note:

Ezekiel 20:21-22: ²¹ [God said:] "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....** (GNB) [Bold type and content in brackets are added.]

After the Babylonian captivity: Read Ezekiel 20:37-42 about how God said He would lead them back after the captivity to the promised land, then note:

Ezekiel 20:43-44: ⁴³ [God said:] "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) [Bold type and content in brackets are added.]

15. 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 own 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; 20:20) We need to understand His character and as much as possible about Him and not just the right name by which to refer to Him. If the Sabbath is not being used for that purpose, then, as far as God is concerned, we are profaning it. (Ezekiel 20:13-21)

In Ezekiel 36 after all of Israel was in captivity, God explained the situation further.

Ezekiel 36:20-36: ²⁰ [God said:] “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) [Bold type and content in brackets are added.]

16. This is why Ezekiel repeated 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 the handout on Theox.org associated with Ezekiel: “**For My Own Name’s Sake.**”)
17. Isaiah also realized and stated that God’s reputation was the key issue in Scripture.

Isaiah 48:11:

11 [God said:] “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) [Bold type and content in brackets are added.]

18. Daniel recognized that God must do something for His own reputation. See Daniel 9:14-19.
19. Thus, we see that there has been a continuous war going on in our universe since before this earth was created. Lucifer, originally one of God’s foremost angels, began to have rebellious ideas in heaven while in the very presence of God. 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”—probably a war of ideas and not one to see who had the most force or power—began in heaven. Finally, Lucifer—then 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)

20. 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 on this earth to discover and understand the fact that He has won this “great controversy” over His character and government, a conflict over what type of God He is and what He is like. He is waiting for a time when enough of us have “gotten the message” so that through the gift of the empowering Holy Spirit, we 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; then, this world will once again be a peaceful, safe place to live with our loving and trustworthy God for the rest of eternity.

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