

Rebellion and Redemption

Paul and the Rebellion

Lesson #10 for March 5, 2016

Scriptures: Romans 5:12-21; 1 Corinthians 3:12-17; 12:14-26; 15:12-18; Ephesians 6:11-17.

1. This lesson will look primarily at the writings of Paul and see what he told us of prime importance about the great controversy theme.
2. Read 1 Corinthians 4:9. Paul recognized that our little world is the lesson book of the universe. The entire universe is watching to see what God will do with this one rebellious spot in the universe. They are waiting to see what God will do with this mess!
3. Paul also recognized that Satan had become incredibly skilled at deception (2 Corinthians 11:14) and is willing to use even preternatural powers to deceive. (2 Thessalonians 2:19) *Preternatural* is a word we use to describe supernatural powers working on the side of evil.
4. What is Satan's primary goal in the great controversy? What was his goal when he started the rebellion in heaven? He did not know about humans yet. Satan is not satisfied just to get humans to sin; he wants to defeat and defame God in any way he can. He has been very successful at getting humans to sin. We are all sinners. (1 Kings 8:46; 2 Chronicles 6:36; Psalm 14:3; **Romans 3:10,23**; 5:12; **1 John 1:9-10**) But, since he has been ultimately defeated by the life and death of Jesus, he wants to delay the second coming as long as possible and take down with him as many people as he can.
5. So, this lesson will focus on what Jesus Christ has done for us. That is wonderful, good news; but, it is only a part of the great controversy.

6. **The plan of salvation involves the whole universe.**

Ephesians 1:8-10 (*GNB*): In all his wisdom and insight ⁹God did what he had purposed, and made known to us the secret plan he had already decided to complete by means of Christ. ¹⁰This plan, which God will complete when the time is right, is **to bring all creation together, everything in heaven and on earth, with Christ as head.** [Bold type is added.]

7. Ephesians 3:9-10 (*GNB*): God, who is the Creator of all things, kept his secret hidden through all the past ages, ¹⁰in order that at the present time, **by means of the church [that includes us!], the angelic rulers and powers in the heavenly world might learn of his wisdom in all its different forms.** [Bold type and content in brackets are added.]

The angels are learning about God from us!

8. Colossians 1:19-20 (*GNB*): ¹⁹For it was by God's own decision that the Son has in himself the full nature of God. ²⁰**Through the Son, then, God decided to bring the whole universe back to himself. God made peace through his Son's blood [His death on the cross] on the cross and so brought back to himself all things, both on earth and in heaven.** [Bold type and content in brackets are added.]

9. **Through the plan of salvation, a larger purpose is to be wrought out even than the salvation of man and the redemption of the earth.** Through the revelation of the character of God in Christ, the beneficence of the divine government would be manifested before the universe, the charge of Satan

refuted, the nature and result of sin made plain, and the perpetuity of the law fully demonstrated.—Ellen G. White, *The Signs of the Times*, February 13, 1893 par. 12; December 22, 1914 par. 4; *The Messenger* June 7, 1893 par. 5; *Bible Echoes* July 15, 1893 par. 3; *That I May Know Him* 366.4.

10. **But the plan of redemption had a yet broader and deeper purpose than the salvation of man. It was not for this alone that Christ came to the earth; it was not merely that the inhabitants of this little world might regard the law of God as it should be regarded; but it was to vindicate the character of God before the universe.** To this result of His great sacrifice—its influence upon the intelligences of other worlds, as well as upon man—the Saviour looked forward when just before His crucifixion He said: “Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all unto Me.” John 12:31,32. The act of Christ in dying for the salvation of man would not only make heaven accessible to men, but before all the universe it would justify God and His Son in their dealing with the rebellion of Satan. It would establish the perpetuity of the law of God and would reveal the nature and the results of sin.—Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets* 68.2-69.0 (1890); *Reflecting Christ* 50.3 (1985). [Bold type is added.]

Salvation means healing!

11. It was in order that the heavenly universe might see the conditions of the covenant of redemption that Christ bore the penalty in behalf of the human race. **The throne of Justice must be eternally and forever made secure, even tho the race be wiped out, and another creation populate the earth.** By the sacrifice Christ was about to make, all doubts would be forever settled, and the human race would be saved if they would return to their allegiance. Christ alone could restore honor to God’s government. The cross of Calvary would be looked upon by the unfallen worlds, by the heavenly universe, by Satanic agencies, by the fallen race, and every mouth would be stopped.... Who is able to describe the last scenes of Christ’s life on earth, His trial in the judgment hall, His crucifixion? **Who witnessed these scenes?—The heavenly universe, God the Father, Satan and his angels.**—Ellen G. White, *The Signs of the Times*, July 12, 1899 par 2; compare *LHU* 257.2 where the key words are omitted! [Bold type is added.]
12. If we only focus on what Jesus has done for me—and you too, of course—we are taking a self-centered approach to the plan of salvation/healing. We need to take a higher, broader, deeper look at the issues in the great controversy. If we can focus on doing what is right because it is right, not just for ourselves but for the kingdom of God and the entire universe, we will be joining Jesus who has already won the great controversy. (*COL* 97)
13. Read Hebrews 2:14-15. How does the faithfulness of Jesus ensure the ultimate demise of Satan? This is not an argument about who has the most power; the Devil admits that God does! (James 2:19) It is about who has been telling us the truth from the very beginning. Does sin lead to death? Or, doesn’t it? Satan will be completely defeated when everyone in the universe—including Satan himself—admits that God has been telling us the truth and that Satan has been the one lying to us. (Philippians 2:8-11; Romans 3:4)
14. Read Romans 5:12-21. Sin entered our world after the rebellion in heaven. (Revelation 12:7-

12) Without God's rescue plan, we all would die since we are all sinners and since sin separates us from God. (Isaiah 59:2) By His life and death, Jesus answered and defeated all of Satan's accusations and arguments against God. Thus, it is possible for us to be saved, that is, healed. By demonstrating to us the truth about God and revealing to us the truth about Satan, the life and death of Jesus give us a clear choice. Will we choose to live loving lives, with the help of the Holy Spirit, as best we can in harmony with the life of Jesus? Or, will we choose to be selfish and die as Jesus died—as a direct result of sin?

15. In what sense does or did Adam's sin cause us all to become sinners? Obviously, we are born in a sin-polluted world unlike the "births" of Adam and Eve. But, we have chosen to follow the sinful example of our ancestors. Thus, we share in their sinfulness and condemnation.
16. It is often suggested by Christians that Jesus won the great controversy by "paying the debt for our sins." What does it mean to say that Jesus *paid the debt/price for our sins*? To whom was it paid? Do we owe anything to the Devil? Does God? If we can be saved by having Jesus "pay the debt" for us, why didn't He just pay the debt for everyone? Or, did He?
17. It certainly was not fair that we lost paradise because of Adam. We had no part in his and Eve's bad choices. Yet, we ended up being born in sin. On the other hand, it is not fair that we receive a place in the kingdom of heaven. We had nothing to do with what Jesus accomplished 2000 years ago. Nevertheless, Christ died for us even in our sinful state. (Romans 5:8)

The church of Christ, enfeebled and defective as it may be, is the only object on earth on which He bestows His supreme Regard.—Ellen G. White, Melbourne, Australia, December 23, 1892; *General Conference Bulletin*, 1893, pp. 408, 409. Read again before the General Conference in session, February 26, 1899; *TM* 15.1; *IHP* 284.2. See Matthew 5:13-16.

18. Read 1 Corinthians 3. Paul clearly believed that God is ultimately responsible for the growth and maturity of the church. Different pastors and different church members may serve different roles in that process; but, God is ultimately responsible.
19. Read 1 Corinthians 3:12-15 and Matthew 7:24-27. These verses make it very clear that we need not only to hear but also to obey God's word, building our spiritual temples on the Rock of Jesus Christ. This is not a discussion about our individual health or well-being. It is a discussion about how the church as a body is supposed to grow. So, how can we be sure that we are correctly representing God—and not just ourselves or the church—in everything we say and do? Compare Ephesians 2:20.
20. Read 1 Corinthians 12:12-26. Paul made a very good case by using the human body as an example. Each of us may be given different skills or talents; but, each of us can play a role in the building up of God's body, the church. A body that consists of nothing but an eye or an ear or a foot would be useless as far as we understand it.
21. Read 1 Corinthians 12:8-18. What important skills do you have that you can use to help build up God's church? Do you recognize skills that others in your church family have that could be useful in building up the church?
22. God is the One who gives us spiritual gifts. We are not allowed to pick which gift/gifts we would like to have or what gift/gifts God should give us. But, if we use our gifts or talents as God intends, they will multiply.
23. Some people suffer with what we call an autoimmune disease. An autoimmune disease

occurs when one organ or part of the body fights against another part of the body. It is usually the immune system fighting against one of the solid organs. These diseases can be very difficult to treat. It is the same way when a part of the church body attacks another part of the church body in one way or another.

24. Read Ephesians 6:11-17. What are the weapons that Satan uses? He uses lies and deception. It can only be defeated by knowing the truth. Can we defeat him by using our own power? Never! Only by Bible study, prayer, and witnessing can we gain the spiritual weapons from the Holy Spirit which will enable us to overcome Satan.

None but those who have fortified the mind with the truths of the Bible will stand through the last great [594] conflict. To every soul will come the searching test: Shall I obey God rather than men? The decisive hour is even now at hand. Are our feet planted on the rock of God's immutable word? Are we prepared to stand firm in defense of the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus?—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy* 593.2. [Bold type is added.]

25. After reading the passage in Ephesians 6, do you feel comfortable that you are wearing and using all parts of the Christian's armor? Look briefly at a military uniform as discussed in Ephesians 6. The *belt of truth* is used to hold several of the pieces of armor in place. Jesus spoke frequently about the truth. (John 1:14,17; 4:24; 8:32; 14:6) The righteousness that Paul spoke about in Ephesians 6:14—if understood in the context of its Old Testament usage—refers to upholding justice for everyone including the poor, the widows, and the orphans. We all need protection from Satan's deceptions; that is the role of the shield of faith. If by faith we have a close relationship with Jesus Christ, we will be protected from the Devil's deceptions. A counterfeit can only be discovered by knowing the truth.
26. How do you understand the role of the sword of the Spirit? Is a sword a weapon of self-defense? Or, a weapon for attacking the enemy? Consider how Jesus used Scripture. (Matthew 4:4,7,10)
27. Paul spoke about the ultimate enemy—death. Remember that he stated plainly that sin pays its wage: death. (Romans 6:23) But, in 1 Corinthians 15:1-18, Paul made it very clear that he believed absolutely in the resurrection of the dead. He said that if Jesus has not been raised from the dead, then our hope is gone. But, he was certain that Jesus did rise from the dead; and thus, we have hope. (1 Thessalonians 4:13-17)
28. From the moment Jesus arrived as an infant on planet earth, Satan's number one goal was to get Him to sin. When he failed to accomplish that, he determined to make life so difficult for Jesus that He would give up and go back to heaven without finishing His mission on this earth. Failing that, Satan and his angels did everything they could to prevent Jesus from rising from the dead. But, they failed in that final goal as well.

When Jesus was laid in the grave, Satan triumphed. He dared to hope that the Saviour would not take up His life again. He claimed the Lord's body, and set his guard about the tomb, seeking to hold Christ a prisoner. He was bitterly angry when his angels fled at the approach of the heavenly messenger. When he saw Christ come forth in triumph, he knew that his kingdom would have an end, and that he must finally die.—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages* 782.4.

29. In 1 Corinthians 15:52-53, Paul concluded his discussion, assuring us that one day we corruptible and mortal beings might actually be able to accept from God the incorruption and immortality that God was originally planning for us. Although Adam was at first designed to

live forever, the human race soon deteriorated to the point of living only for a relatively short time. Soon, however, we will have the opportunity to inherit eternal life in a world even better than the one that Adam received in the beginning.

Not only man but the earth had by sin come under the power of the wicked one, and was to be restored by the plan of redemption. At his creation Adam was placed in dominion over the earth. But by yielding to temptation, he was brought under the power of Satan. "Of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage." 2 Peter 2:19. When man became Satan's captive, the dominion which he held, passed to his conqueror. Thus Satan became "the god of this world." 2 Corinthians 4:4. He had usurped that dominion over the earth which had been originally given to Adam. But Christ, by His sacrifice paying the penalty of sin, would not only redeem man, but recover the dominion which he had forfeited. All that was lost by the first Adam will be restored by the second.—Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets* 67.1. Compare *Signs of the Times*, November 4, 1908, par 9.

30. Think what it is like to live in a world of death dominated by Satan himself. As we approach the end of this world's history, God will gradually withdraw His restraining powers and allow Satan to have even more control. That will be a scary time to be alive. But, it will also be an exciting time for those who understand the final outcome of the great controversy.

Enfeebled and defective, needing constantly to be warned and counseled, the church is nevertheless the object of Christ's supreme regard. He is making experiments of grace on human hearts, and is effecting such transformations of character that angels are amazed, and express their joy in songs of praise. They rejoice to think that sinful, erring human beings can be so transformed.—Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol 7, 16.4 (1902); "The Signal of Advance," *RH*, January 20, 1903, par. 13. [Bold type is added.]

31. Do these various metaphors such as the church building, the human body, etc. help us to understand how we can better relate to other members of the church to which we belong? Does the hope of the resurrection help you to survive your daily struggles against evil? What can we do on a day-by-day basis that demonstrates that we are clearly on God's side in the great controversy? Do we live day-by-day as if we really believe that Satan is a defeated foe?

Isaiah 25:8 (GNB): The Sovereign LORD will destroy death for ever! He will wipe away the tears from everyone's eyes and take away the disgrace his people have suffered throughout the world. The LORD himself has spoken!

1 Corinthians 15:54-55 (GNB): So when this takes place, and the mortal has been changed into the immortal, then the scripture will come true: "Death is destroyed; victory is complete!"

"Where, Death, is your victory?

Where, Death, is your power to hurt?"

32. Clearly, this lesson teaches that the church needs to work toward unity—but not uniformity. We cannot all have the same talents or be exactly alike. But, we should rejoice in our differences so long as we are all pulling in the same direction.

33. When we place our trust in Jesus and allow the Holy Spirit to have access to our minds and lives on a regular basis, we will be transformed over time to become more and more like

Jesus Himself. (GC 555)

Christ and His righteousness—let this be our platform, the very life of our faith. That which he taught, we are to teach. His commission to his followers is: “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” “and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.”—Ellen G. White, *The Review and Herald*, August 31, 1905 par. 15; *Ev* 190.2.

34. Having a right relationship with God and being changed on a day-by-day basis to become more like Him is the very essence of our message.

Several have written to me, inquiring if the message of justification by faith is the third angel’s message, and I have answered, “It is the third angel’s message in verity.”—Ellen G. White, *The Review and Herald*, April 1, 1890 par. 8; *Ev* 190.3; *1SM* 372; *LDE* 199.4.

35. How do you understand the differences between the first Adam and the second Adam who is Jesus Christ? (Romans 5:12-14) Would it be true in your thinking that if Christ is not planning to come back again to take His friends home with Him, there was no reason for Him to come the first time?
36. Satan and his evil host recognize that they are in a battle for their very existence. If a group of us develop the kind of faith relationship with Jesus Christ that characterized the first disciples on the day of Pentecost and receive the latter rain, Satan’s doom is sealed. Does Satan really understand and accept the idea that he is a defeated foe? Or, after 2000 years, does he think he is doing pretty well? Do his angels understand and accept that they are defeated foes? What do they say to each other about that problem of theirs?
37. Satan certainly is not happy to see Christians of different backgrounds and different ideas working together in unity. He is constantly determined to sow discord, division, tensions, prejudices, and even hatred among church members.
38. In that context, what is the essential unity that God is looking for among us? Could the Seventh-day Adventist Church as a worldwide organization with people from hundreds of different cultures and languages ever present a unified front?
39. Is it really important that we belong to a church organization? Or, is it only necessary that we study our Bibles, pray, and witness when we have an opportunity? Did Paul consider it important to join a church group? What is the primary reason for belonging to a church group? Isn’t it God’s plan that we learn from each other? If we cannot manage to live in harmony with a small group of people with whom we associate in our own churches, how can we expect to live in harmony with people from all ages and all the different cultures and languages who have ever lived?
40. Seventh-day Adventists believe in a final resurrection of the righteous and, ultimately, after the millennium, a resurrection of the wicked. We do not believe that people go directly to heaven, hell, or purgatory at the time of death. Do you believe that our position is more accurate and better represents God in the great controversy than the position of our Christian friends?
41. Do you look forward to the resurrection? Or, would you prefer to live through the final events of this earth’s history and be translated without tasting death?

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