

## **Preparation for the End Time**

### **End-Time Deceptions**

Lesson #9 for June 2, 2018

Scriptures: Revelation 2:13,24;12:9;13:1-17; 2 Corinthians 11:13-15; Psalm 146:4; Genesis 1:1-2:3.

1. This lesson will focus on the fact that the truth is not with Satan. God is truth, (John 14:16) and all about His kingdom is truth. So, in order to misrepresent God and oppose God in every way possible, Satan has become the master of deception.
2. That practice of deception did not begin on this earth; it began in heaven.

Leaving his place in the immediate presence of God, Lucifer went forth to diffuse the spirit of discontent among the angels. Working with mysterious secrecy, and for a time concealing his real purpose under an appearance of reverence for God, he endeavored to excite dissatisfaction concerning the laws that governed heavenly beings, intimating that they imposed an unnecessary restraint. Since their natures were holy, he urged that the angels should obey the dictates of their own will. He sought to create sympathy for himself by representing that God had dealt unjustly with him in bestowing supreme honor upon Christ. He claimed that in aspiring to greater power and honor he was not aiming at self-exaltation, but was seeking to secure liberty for all the inhabitants of heaven, that by this means they might attain to a higher state of existence.—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*\* 495.2.

3. Being cast down to this earth, (Revelation 12:9) Satan immediately set about to deceive human beings. He was successful with Eve and Adam and with every human being that has lived since their time except Jesus. Satan has only become better at his deceptions.

**Matthew 24:5,11,23-24:** <sup>5</sup> “Many men, claiming to speak for me, will come and say, ‘I am the Messiah!’ and **they will deceive many people....** <sup>11</sup> “Then many false prophets will appear and **deceive many people....** <sup>23</sup> “Then, if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here is the Messiah!’ or ‘There he is!’—do not believe it. <sup>24</sup>For false Messiahs and false prophets will appear; they will perform great miracles and wonders **in order to deceive even God’s chosen people, if possible.**”—American Bible Society. (1992). *The Holy Bible: The Good News Translation*\* (2nd ed., Matthew 24:5,11,23-24). New York: American Bible Society. [Bold type is added.] See also Revelation 20:8.

4. There is only one way for us to be preserved against Satan’s deceptions; it is to know the truth forward and backward so we become partakers of the divine nature and know how to respond to each of Satan’s deceptions. So, what are his most effective deceptions?
5. Satan’s most successful deception is about himself. He has convinced many in the world to believe that he does not even exist. And what is his goal in doing so? If he can convince people—even presumably Christian people—that he does not exist, then, when he is able to perform miracles—as he will at the end—they cannot attribute those miracles to anyone except God. Thus, he will have managed to put himself in the place of God.
6. How many people in our world understand the great controversy? No doubt, it is less than 1%; and likely, it is far less than 1%. How many of them understand that this is not just a battle between good and evil; instead, it is a very specific attack against God, His character, and His government by Satan who wants to take God’s position.
7. What evidence is there from Scripture that Satan is real? See Job 1-2; **Zechariah 3:1-5**; Matthew 4:1-11; **2 Corinthians 11:14**; Revelation 2:13,24; 12:3,7-9,12,17; 13:2; 20:2,7,10.

8. The great controversy theme lies behind all of Scripture. If we fail to understand the reality of Satan and his devices, then we are going to miss many important points in the Bible. There would be no reason to fear Satan's deceptions if we believe that he is nothing more than an imaginary character with horns and a tail like some cartoon character.
9. In light of all this, we might become terribly frightened and discouraged. But, that is not necessary because John wrote:

**Revelation 12:11:** Our brothers and sisters won the victory over him by the blood of the Lamb and by the truth which they proclaimed; and they were willing to give up their lives and die.—*Good News Bible\** (Revelation 12:11).

10. Read 2 Corinthians 11:13-15; 2 Thessalonians 2:9-10; Revelation 12:9; 20:10. Clearly, Satan's main *modus operandi* is deceit. And he works through any human being who is willing to be used and who claims that s/he is a "prophet" or even "christ" even though, in reality, s/he is a false prophet or false christ! But, the truth is, Satan has been thrown out of heaven along with all his supporters. Eventually, along with them, Satan will be thrown into the lake of fire! We must not be deceived by him. Remember that the final deception before the second coming of Christ will be when Satan himself claims to be Christ and appears, working miracles, etc.
11. There are two major deceptions that Satan has promoted since his first encounters with the human race. One is the idea that we do not die because of sin (Genesis 3:1-4) and, based on that, the teaching of the immortality of the soul. To get us to ignore the story of creation, Satan has instituted Sunday sacredness which turns us away from observing the seventh-day Sabbath, the first memorial of creation, and opens the way for teachings on evolution, etc.

Through the two great errors, **the immortality of the soul** and **Sunday sacredness**, Satan will bring the people under his deceptions. While the former lays the foundation of spiritualism, the latter creates a bond of sympathy with Rome. **The Protestants of the United States will be foremost in stretching their hands across the gulf to grasp the hand of spiritualism; they will reach over the abyss to clasp hands with the Roman power; and under the influence of this threefold union, this country will follow in the steps of Rome in trampling on the rights of conscience.**—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy\** 588.1. [Bold type is added.]

12. Incredible as it may seem and contrary to all evidence from Scripture, these two great errors have swept over our world, especially among Christian groups!
13. Review some of the passages in the Bible that teach us the truth about the nature of man and the state of the dead. Read Ecclesiastes 9:5-6,10; Psalm 115:17; Psalm 146:4; and 1 Corinthians 15:16-18. These passages make it very clear that when we die, our loves, our hates, and our passions die with us. There is no knowledge in the grave. All our plans end. More than that, if men go to heaven or hell immediately upon death, then the resurrection of Christ becomes a falsehood. He should never have been actually dead! Daniel 12:2; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; and John 5:28-29 make it clear that there will be a resurrection and that people will be raised to life—some to eternal life but others to eternal destruction.
14. One of the great recent expansions on Satan's lies are teachings about near-death experiences (NDEs). Hundreds of examples of people who have had their heart stop and their breathing stop but then who have been resuscitated through the efforts of hard-working medical teams, tell of experiences such as floating in the air above their beds or perhaps even seeing someone—maybe even Jesus Himself or some relative who has passed on—welcoming them into the next world. Where do these ideas come from? There is considerable evidence that these thoughts happen as the level of oxygen in the brain deteriorates. The brain is inclined to think crazy things under those circumstances. But, we know that all such

experiences are directly opposed to the truth as taught in Scripture.

15. Another great deception which Satan has foisted on the world in recent centuries is the idea of evolution. It was difficult for Satan to try to convince people that God was not the Creator—and therefore, that the Sabbath did not need to be celebrated because of that event—until someone came up with the idea that there might be another possible explanation for origins. Thus, Darwinian evolution has swept through the scientific world. Those who believe in Darwinian evolution are, in essence, saying that we do not need a divine Creator; we evolved from a one-celled organism that somehow came together in that mud of the primordial world. This, of course, is fully contradicted by the teachings of Genesis 1-11.
16. So, why are these ideas so readily accepted by much of the so-called cultured, intelligent world? There are several reasons why evolution has become popular. For one, those who believe in evolution have done away with the idea that God will one day come back and judge them for their beliefs and actions. They hate such an idea of judgment.
17. Scientifically, we know that small changes can take place in organisms from the tiny cell to human beings as a result of the environment, including diet, ionizing radiation, etc. These micro-evolutionary changes must never be confused with macro evolution in which it is said that lizards become birds, and birds become mammals, etc. While it is true that God has been around for more than 3 to 4 billion years—and we do not know for sure when He created our lump of rock and water that we call earth—and if we believe in Scripture, we must accept the truth that the world, as we know it, was created in very recent times—no more than a few thousand years ago. If we believe Satan's deception of Darwinian evolution, then there is certainly no reason to celebrate the seventh-day Sabbath as a memorial of creation.
18. In order to be as clever a counterfeiter as possible, one person needs to be able to re-create an image that looks very much like the original. Thus, in order to imitate God, Satan has come up with a counterfeit trinity. Read Revelation 12:17; 13:1-17. In these passages following the brief telling of the great controversy story in Revelation 12, we have the positive identification of the dragon as being Satan himself. Then, we see this dragon producing a beast which comes up out of the sea. Based on Revelation 17:15, we believe that a beast coming out of the sea means that it arises among nations and peoples in well-populated areas. Satan has always wanted to take the place of God the Father or God the Son; and so, exercising his power, the dragon is a fit counterfeit for the Father.
19. So, what are the characteristics of the sea beast which he created? Read Revelation 13:2-5. This sea beast gets its authority from the dragon just as Jesus got His authority—while living on this earth—from the Father. (See Matthew 28:18.) Furthermore, this sea beast received a deadly wound like Jesus and then was restored to life. (See Revelation 13:3.) Additionally, he is described as exerting his authority for three and one-half years—in this case three and one-half prophetic years—but mimicking the three-and-one-half-year ministry of Jesus Christ on this earth.
20. Read Revelation 13:11-17. Then, there is another beast described as coming up out of the earth. If the beast coming out of the sea means that it arises from among a large number of people, then a beast coming out of the earth would suggested it arises in a place where the population is either nonexistent or very sparse. And while this beast arises looking like a lamb, it ends up speaking like the dragon. Then, we find that this land beast promotes the interests of the sea beast and, ultimately, of the dragon itself, just as the Holy Spirit glorifies not Himself but Jesus and the Father. (John 16:13-14; Acts 2:3; Revelation 13:13)

At the end, the land beast performs a counterfeit of Pentecost! For what purpose? To prove to the world that the counterfeit trinity is the true God.—Jon Paulien, *What the Bible Says About the End-Time* (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1998), p. 111.—[as quoted in *Adult Sabbath*

*School Bible Study Guide\** for Thursday, May 31].

21. Satan's trinity is the father of lies, (John 8:44) the son of perdition, (2 Thessalonians 2:3) and the evil spirit! (Acts 19:15-16)
22. So, we have seen that Satan has promulgated his deceptions through teaching: 1) The immortality of the soul leading to the awful doctrine of an eternally-burning hell, 2) Sunday sacredness leading to the theory of evolution and the rejection of a six-day creation week celebrated by the seventh-day Sabbath, and 3) Follows up these deceptions with false christs and false prophets.
23. And what do we know about the origin of the teachings of evolution? Charles Darwin wrote his book in 1844. That was a momentous year. But, he still had a lot of doubts about what he had written and did not print or publish it until 1859 when another person was preparing to publish a similar work. While the Great Disappointment of 1844 among advent believers led to a further researching of Scripture and the discovery of the seventh-day Sabbath, Darwin's ideas have covered our world far more extensively than have the teachings of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. It is too bad that Darwin did not know and recognize these words from Ellen White:

Although the earth was blighted with the curse, nature was still to be man's lesson book. It could not now represent goodness only; for evil was everywhere present, marring earth and sea and air with its defiling touch. Where once was written only the character of God, the knowledge of good, was now written also the character of Satan, the knowledge of evil. From nature, which now revealed the knowledge of good and evil, man was continually to receive warning as to the results of sin.—Ellen G. White, *Education\** 26.2 (1903); *CG\** 46.1; *CC\** 19.2; *BLJ\** 41.6.

24. Are we as Seventh-day Adventists prepared to give a clear and convincing argument against Darwinian evolution? Do we have the scientific evidence? Do we have the biblical evidence?
25. So, why do so many Christians reject the idea of a literal Satan? What would you say to a person who has had a near-death experience? Does belief in either of these two ideas make one more open to the deceptions of Satan?
26. Read 2 Corinthians 11:14. How successful has Satan been in spreading his false ideas? Satan loves to use excitement and emotional appeals to promote his ideas. He must do that because the truth is not on his side. So, in order to be safe, we must carefully study and make sure that all our ideas are based on solid evidence.

God never asks us to believe, without giving sufficient evidence upon which to base our faith. His existence, His character, the truthfulness of His word, are all established by testimony that appeals to our reason; and this testimony is abundant. Yet God has never removed the possibility of doubt. Our faith must rest upon evidence, not demonstration. Those who wish to doubt will have opportunity; while those who really desire to know the truth will find plenty of evidence on which to rest their faith.—Ellen G. White, *Steps to Christ\** 105.2.

27. If a Christian friend asked you for the evidence that Satan is a literal being, could you produce it? Satan's claims that we are naturally immortal and just pass from one existence into another existence has led, of course, to the ideas of the immortality of the soul and an eternally-burning hell. To buttress his arguments, he has managed to convince many through the ideas of evolution to set aside God's claims as our Creator.
28. For those who choose to believe in Scripture, Satan has produced his own trinity: The dragon, the sea beast, and the land beast.

29. Think of what is happening in our world today. Excitement and fanaticism are popular trends. But, we have been warned.

There is constant danger of allowing something to come into our midst that we may regard as the workings of the Holy Spirit, but that in reality is the fruit of a spirit of fanaticism. So long as we allow the enemy of truth to lead us into a wrong way, we cannot hope to reach the honest in heart with the third angel's message. We are to be sanctified through obedience to the truth. **I am afraid of anything that would have a tendency to turn the mind away from the solid evidences of the truth as revealed in God's Word. I am afraid of it; I am afraid of it. We must bring our minds within the bounds of reason, lest the enemy so come in as to set everything in a disorderly way. There are persons of an excitable temperament who are easily led into fanaticism; and should we allow anything to come into our churches that would lead such persons into error, we would soon see these errors carried to extreme lengths, and then because of the course of these disorderly elements, a stigma would rest upon the whole body of Seventh-day Adventists.**—Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages*,\* book 2, 43.2. [Bold type is added.]

30. Having been warned about Satan's deceptions, we must have our feet solidly planted on the truth. Our only safety is in knowing Bible truth.

**Ephesians 6:12-16:** <sup>12</sup>For we are not fighting against human beings but against the wicked spiritual forces in the heavenly world, the rulers, authorities, and cosmic powers of this dark age. <sup>13</sup>So put on God's armour now! Then when the evil day comes, you will be able to resist the enemy's attacks; and after fighting to the end, you will still hold your ground.

<sup>14</sup> So stand ready, with **truth** as a belt tight round your waist, with **righteousness** as your breastplate, <sup>15</sup>and as your shoes the **readiness to announce the Good News of peace**. <sup>16</sup>At all times carry **faith** as a shield; for with it you will be able to put out all the burning arrows shot by the Evil One. And accept **salvation** as a helmet, and **the word of God** as the sword which the Spirit gives you.—*Good News Bible*\* (Ephesians 6:12-16). [Bold type is added.]

31. From the beginning of his rebellion in heaven, Satan's ultimate goal has been to put himself in God's place and get as many people as possible to worship him. He will continually try to convince us that we do not really need God and that we can selfishly follow Satan's plans for our lives and do even better than we could following God!
32. In the great controversy, Satan has failed in his attempts to discredit God in the eyes of the onlooking universe. So, he turned his full attention to misrepresenting God to human beings through every conceivable means of deception. Are we prepared for this?
33. Satan's theology is quite amazing. He has propagated incredible falsehoods, claiming that they are true. In our handout entitled "The Final End of Sin and Sinners," we have put together from the Bible and from the writings of Ellen White two brief summaries of some of Satan's teachings and accusations against God.

**"It was Satan who originated the doctrine of eternal torment,"**<sup>2</sup> ("an eternally burning hell"<sup>1,6</sup>) based on his doctrine of **"the immortality of the soul."**<sup>3</sup> It was Satan's hope that men, believing these **"misrepresentations,"**<sup>2</sup> would come to regard this **"eternal torment"**<sup>2,3,5</sup> as God's **"punishment for sin."**<sup>2</sup> **"The appalling views of God"**<sup>4</sup> that would result would lead **"millions"**<sup>5</sup>

into skepticism,<sup>5</sup> “infidelity,”<sup>1,2</sup> “atheism,”<sup>1,3</sup> “rebellion”<sup>2</sup> and even “universalism.”<sup>1</sup> “Fear of punishment”<sup>75</sup> and misunderstanding of God’s “justice”<sup>3,68</sup> would eventually “dethrone human reason.”<sup>2</sup>

... Satan represents God as “severe, exacting, revengeful, and arbitrary,”<sup>9</sup> “One who plunges all those into hell who do not please Him.”<sup>3</sup> While sinners are thought to “suffer unutterable anguish”<sup>3</sup> in flames, “He [God] is represented as looking down upon them with satisfaction”<sup>3</sup> as they eternally “feel His wrath”<sup>3</sup> (vengeance<sup>40</sup>; 2Thessalonians 1:8) The whole field of religion is thought of as being totally irrational, even “repugnant,”<sup>4</sup> because people cannot logically understand how God could be, by nature, love, and at the same time “for the sins of a brief earthly life they are to suffer torture as long as God shall live.”<sup>4</sup> “It would be against His character of benevolence and love, to plunge into eternal torments the beings whom He had created.”<sup>3b</sup>—“The Final End of Sin and Sinners.” [www.Theox.org](http://www.Theox.org)

34. If you want to find where these references came from, see the original handout. So, just to review, what is Satan’s goal? He wants you to feel comfortable with him, to think that he is not dangerous, and, ultimately, to put himself in the place of God in your mind. Could you allow that to happen?
35. Once again, read Revelation 12:9; 20:10. Do you want to join Satan in the lake of fire? Or, would you prefer to reject his deceptive ideas?
36. Read Hebrews 11:1: “To have faith is to be sure of the things we hope for, to be certain of the things we cannot see.”—*Good News Bible*.\*
37. Are we certain of these truths that we have reviewed in this lesson? Are we clear on the deceptions of Satan and how to deal with them?

The idea of evolution is very old, having tempted the ancient pagan Egyptians to observe that the baby beetle seemed to have emerged from the dung by itself, and thus, all life was believed to have emerged by itself. The beetle was thus called *kheper*, meaning “evolving,” which became the name of the creator god Khepri, whose name captures the evolutionist concept. Khepri means “he who is coming into being by himself, the self-evolver.” The psalmist warns us against this self-deception when he says, “It is [God] who has made us, and not we ourselves” (*Ps. 100:3, NKJV*).—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*\* 122. [Content in brackets is that way in the *Bible Study Guide*.\*]

38. Read Genesis 2:17 and Genesis 3:1-4. The very first recorded argument between God and the Devil was over the question of whether sin leads to death. Satan’s claim that it does not lead to death has led to his deceptions about the immortality of the soul and an eternally-burning hell. Whose side are we going to choose to be on?
39. A careful reading of the book of Revelation will reveal clearly the two sides in the great controversy. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are presented as the true Godhead. Satan as the dragon supporting his sea beast and land beast are presented as the counterfeit trinity. Now that we know the truth, are we going to be deceived also?
40. Is it important for us to think about what happens to people after they die? Is it clear in our minds that near-death experiences are not a revelation from God to those who are dying? We are living in the final days of this earth’s history. We must not allow ourselves to be deceived.

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