

The Great Controversy

The War Behind All Wars

Lesson #1 for April 6, 2024

Scriptures: Revelation 12:7-9; Ezekiel 28:12-15; Isaiah 14:12-14; Genesis 3:15; John 17:24-26.

1. What is “the war behind all wars”? Is that like “the war to end all wars”?

[From the Bible study guide=BSG:] If God is so good, why is the world so bad? **How can a God of love allow so much evil to exist?** Why do bad things happen to good people? In this week’s lesson, we will explore the age-long conflict between good and evil. **Beginning with Lucifer’s rebellion in heaven, we will examine the origin of evil and God’s long-suffering in dealing with the sin problem.**

God is a God of incredible love. His very nature is love (1 John 4:7, 8). All of His actions are loving (Jer. 31:3). Love can never be forced, coerced, or legislated. Ellen G. White states it well when she writes, “Only by love is love awakened.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 22[.1]. **To deny the power of choice is to destroy the ability to love, and to destroy the ability to love is to eradicate the possibility of being truly happy. God wins our allegiance by His love. He is dealing with the great controversy between good and evil in such a way that sin will never arise in the universe again. God’s purpose is to demonstrate before the entire universe that He has always acted in the best interests of His creatures.** Looking at the world through the lens of God’s love, in the light of the great controversy between good and evil, reassures each of us that right will triumph over wrong and will do so forever.—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Sabbath Afternoon, March 30.†§

2. Our lesson for this week focuses on several themes:

1. [BSG:] Evil and the cosmic conflict originated in a perfect heaven. They then spread to earth, taking root in the hearts and **minds of free moral agents**, who were created in the image of God.
2. **Sin and evil became manifest as rebellion against God.**
3. The only way to salvation, and to the end of the cosmic conflict, is through the Cross and through the mediation of Christ and His creative, restorative power.—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 13-14.††

3. For a much deeper understanding of the challenges of this lesson, read *The Great Controversy* by Ellen G. White chapters 29&30 (pages 492-510) which can be found at the following website: <https://m.egwwritings.org/en/book/132.2227?hl=Chapter%2029>

4. Can you imagine what it was like to have war in heaven? What kind of freedom does God allow that would make it possible to have war in the presence of an all-powerful God?

Revelation 12:7-9: ⁷ Then **war broke out in heaven**. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, who fought back with his angels; ⁸but **the dragon was defeated, and he and his angels were not allowed to stay in heaven any longer**. ⁹The huge **dragon** was thrown out—that ancient serpent, called the **Devil**, or **Satan**, that deceived the whole world. **He was thrown down to earth, and all his angels with him.**—American Bible Society. (1992). *The Holy Bible: The Good*

*News Translation** (2nd ed., Revelation 12:7-9). New York: American Bible Society [abbreviated as *Good News Bible*].[†]

5. We do not know what kind of weapons were used in that war. **Was it “just” a war of ideas?** Or, were there actually some physical weapons? What we do know is that at the end of that war, Satan and his followers were cast out of heaven. Were they physically thrown out?
6. What do we know about Satan and his thinking before his fall that could possibly have led him to make such a foolish decision?

Ezekiel 28:12-15: ¹² “Mortal man,” he said, “grieve for the fate that is waiting for the **king of Tyre**. Tell him what I, the Sovereign LORD, am saying: you were once an example of perfection. How wise and handsome you were! ¹³**You lived in Eden**, the garden of God, and wore gems of every kind: rubies and diamonds; topaz, beryl, carnelian, and jasper; sapphires, emeralds, and garnets. You had ornaments of gold. They were made for you on the day you were created. ¹⁴I put a terrifying angel there to guard you. You lived on my holy mountain and walked among sparkling gems. ¹⁵**Your conduct was perfect from the day you were created until you began to do evil.**”—*Good News Bible*.^{*†} [Compare Matthew 16:21-23.][‡]

Isaiah 14:12-14: ¹² “**King of Babylonia**, bright morning star [Lucifer], **you have fallen from heaven!** In the past you conquered nations, but now you have been thrown to the ground. ¹³You were determined to climb up to heaven and to place your throne above the highest stars. You thought you would sit like a king on that mountain in the north where the gods assemble. ¹⁴**You said you would climb to the tops of the clouds and be like the Almighty.**”—*Good News Bible*.^{*†}

7. Lucifer is described as being the leader of the angels. He was a very intelligent and wonderful angel, standing beside the throne of God. *Lucifer* means *light bearer*. It was his duty “to carry” or communicate messages from God to other beings in the universe. But, he began to covet the position of Jesus Christ. This thinking grew until, eventually, he led open rebellion against Christ.
8. Ellen White suggested that God gave Lucifer multiple opportunities to return to his original position and give up his rebellious attitudes. However, Lucifer refused.

[From the writings of Ellen G. White=EGW:] **The heavenly councils pleaded with Lucifer.** The Son of God presented before him the greatness, the goodness, and the justice of the Creator, and the sacred, unchanging nature of His law. God Himself had established the order of heaven; and in departing from it, Lucifer would dishonor his Maker, and bring ruin upon himself. But the warning, given in infinite love and mercy, only aroused a spirit of resistance.—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy** 494.2-495.0.^{†‡} [What does this teach us about God’s character?][‡]

9. For us, looking back at the history of the great controversy at that point, it is almost impossible for us to imagine how Lucifer could have made such a foolish choice. And even more amazing, how did he convince one-third of the angels to follow him? (Revelation 12:4)
10. We do not know how long this buildup of evil lasted in heaven. What we do realize is that **every single angel had to make a choice: Would he remain faithful to God and to Jesus Christ? Or, would he choose to follow Lucifer.** Lucifer claimed that angels were being deprived of freedom. He thought they needed to be allowed to make their own choices. To the angels it seemed like he was going to offer greater freedom. That was selfishness, not love.

11. In the near future, everyone living on this earth will be required to make a choice also: **To decide for or against Christ.** On what basis would you make such a choice? Search the Bible!
12. We know very little about what happened before Adam and Eve sinned. What we do know is found in a few verses early in Genesis.

Genesis 2:15-17: ¹⁵ Then the LORD God placed the man in the **Garden of Eden** to cultivate it and guard it. ¹⁶He said to him, **“You may eat the fruit of any tree in the garden, ¹⁷except the tree that gives knowledge of what is good and what is bad. You must not eat the fruit of that tree; if you do, you will die the same day.”**—*Good News Bible*.*†

Genesis 3:1-5: ¹ Now the snake was the most cunning animal that the LORD God had made. The snake asked the woman, “Did God really tell you not to eat fruit from any tree in the garden?” [Satan implied God had forbidden eating from every tree!] ² “We may eat the fruit of any tree in the garden,” the woman answered, ³ “except the tree in the middle of it. God told us not to eat the fruit of that tree or even touch it; if we do, we will die.” [How did God explain *death* to Adam and Eve?] ⁴ **The snake replied, “That’s not true; you will not die.** ⁵God said that, because he knows that when you eat it you will be like God [footnote: or *the gods*] and know what is good and what is bad.”—*Good News Bible*.*†§

13. This was not the only time in the Bible when spiritual leaders challenged their followers to make choices. See Exodus 32:26; Joshua 24:15; 1 Kings 18:20-21; and Revelation 22:17.
14. God created us to love Him. But, **in order to love, we must have freedom.** God did not create robots. See the handout “Love” under “Teachers Guides” then “General Topics” on our website: https://www.theox.org/images/uploads/bbk/KHart_BTGG_PDF_Gnrl_Love_16.pdf. We are required to make moral choices. We were intended to be living and acting in God’s image.

[BSG:] When God created the earth, He created it perfect. The Bible says that He “saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good” (*Gen. 1:31, NKJV*). There was no stain of sin or evil anywhere. But **He gave Adam and Eve the same freedom of choice He had given to Lucifer. He didn’t want robots on earth any more than He wanted robots in heaven.**—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Tuesday, April 2.†§

15. Unfortunately, as we know, Satan was cast down to this earth as recorded in Revelation 12:7-9. He was given a position in the Garden of Eden at the tree of knowledge of good and evil.
16. Many Christians regard that tree of knowledge of good and evil as an opportunity for God to test Adam and Eve. That, in fact, is not a correct or complete representation of the facts.
17. The tree was **not** placed in the garden primarily to test or tempt Adam and Eve. **It was placed there as protection by limiting the access that Satan would have to our first parents.** Satan could not follow them wherever they went, trying to tempt them at every corner. The great controversy had already started in heaven, and God knew what Satan was capable of doing!

[EGW:] The tree of knowledge had been made a test of their obedience and their love to God. The Lord had seen fit to lay upon them but one prohibition as to the use of all that was in the garden; but if they should disregard His will in this particular, they would incur the guilt of transgression. **Satan was not to follow**

them with continual temptations; he could have access to them only at the forbidden tree. Should they attempt to investigate its nature, they would be exposed to his wiles. They were admonished to give careful heed to the warning which God had sent them and to be content with the instruction which He had seen fit to impart.—Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets** 53.3.† [Stay away!][†]

18. When Eve made the mistake of wandering close to the tree of knowledge, she was engaged in conversation by what appeared to be a snake. Almost immediately, the “snake” **said that what God had told them was a lie.** See Genesis 3:4-5 as above in Item #12.
19. Eve started that first sin by trusting the creature in the tree, taking the fruit, eating, and then giving it to Adam. He followed her example, setting a pattern for every human being who has lived on this earth except Jesus.

Romans 3:23: Everyone has sinned and is far away from God’s saving presence.—*Good News Bible*.*

[BSG:] **At its very core, sin is rebellion against God. Sin separates us from God.** Since God is the Source of life, separation from God leads to death. It also leads to worry, anxiety, sickness, and disease. The suffering in our world is ultimately the result of living on a sin-ravaged planet. This certainly does not mean that every time we suffer, we have sinned. It does mean that every one of us is affected by living on this planet.—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Tuesday, April 2.†

Isaiah 59:2: It is because of your sins that he doesn’t hear you. **It is your sins that separate you from God** when you try to worship him.—*Good News Bible*.*†

20. To Adam and Eve when they were cast out of the garden, things must have seemed hopeless. But, right then, God made a promise to them.

Genesis 3:15: “I will make you [Satan] and the woman hate each other; her offspring and yours will always be enemies. Her offspring will crush your head, and you will bite her offspring’s heel.”—*Good News Bible*.*†

21. We do not know how much explanation God or the angels gave Adam and Eve at that point. What we do know is found in Galatians 3:16.

Galatians 3:16: Now, God made his promises to Abraham and to his descendant. The scripture does not use the plural “descendants”, [sic] meaning many people, but the singular “descendant”, [sic] meaning one person only, namely, Christ.—*Good News Bible*.*†

22. All through the history of our world up to the time of Christ, people wondered what that promise involved. Was it true what God had said about sin leading to death? Is it true that God really loves us? **The life and death of Jesus give us the answers. The life and death of Jesus give us a choice. We can either live lives as near as possible to the life that He lived; or, we will die the death that He died, separated from His Father, the only Source of life!**

[EGW:] But now [on the cross] with the terrible weight of guilt He bears, He cannot see the Father’s reconciling face. **The withdrawal of the divine countenance from the Saviour in this hour of supreme anguish pierced His heart with a sorrow that can never be fully understood by man. So great was this agony that His physical pain was hardly felt.** [Do we feel like that when we sin?]

Satan with his fierce temptations wrung the heart of Jesus. The Saviour could not see through the portals of the tomb. Hope did not present to Him His coming forth from the grave a conqueror, or tell Him of the Father's acceptance of the sacrifice. He feared that sin was so offensive to God that Their separation was to be eternal. **Christ felt the anguish which the sinner will feel when mercy shall no longer plead for the guilty race.** It was the sense of sin, bringing the Father's wrath upon Him as man's substitute, that made the cup He drank so bitter, and broke the heart of the Son of God.—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages** 753.1-2.†‡

23. Who could have imagined God's answer to the sin problem? Try to imagine Jesus, the Creator of the entire universe, coming down, entering into the womb of a human mother, and being born as a helpless baby Boy to live that incredible life and die that awful death. What does that tell us about His love for us? Before He left heaven, Jesus knew what was going to happen!
24. One of the greatest trials that Jesus endured was the misunderstanding and misrepresentations of the Pharisees and Sadducees. They were sure that a poor Rabbi from Galilee could not possibly be the promised Messiah!
25. God said that sin leads to death! (Genesis 2:17) Satan said that it does not. (Genesis 3:4) On the cross, Jesus died the "second death" which is the death that is a direct result of sin, which no one else in history has died, in order to prove the truth of His words in Genesis 2 about sin causing death. God was proven to have told the truth; Satan was proven to be the liar.
26. At the end of the prophecy of 2300 days described in Daniel 8:14, Jesus took up an important new work. That work is described in Zechariah 3:1-5 and Daniel 7:9-10.

Zechariah 3:1-5: ¹ In another vision the LORD showed me the High Priest Joshua standing before the angel of the LORD. And **there beside Joshua stood Satan, ready to bring an accusation against him.** ²**The angel of the LORD said to Satan, "May the LORD condemn you, Satan! May the LORD, who loves Jerusalem, condemn you. This man is like a stick snatched from the fire."**

³ Joshua was standing there, wearing filthy clothes. ⁴The angel said to his heavenly attendants, "Take away the filthy clothes this man is wearing." Then he said to Joshua, "I have taken away your sin and will give you new clothes to wear."

⁵ He commanded the attendants to put a clean turban on Joshua's head. They did so, and then they put the new clothes on him while the angel of the LORD stood there.—*Good News Bible*.*† [Only God could condemn Satan or forgive sins.]‡

Daniel 7:9-10: ⁹ While I was looking, thrones were put in place. One who had been living for ever [*sic-Br*] sat down on one of the thrones. His clothes were white as snow, and his hair was like pure wool. His throne, mounted on fiery wheels, was blazing with fire, ¹⁰and a stream of fire was pouring out from it. There were many thousands of people there to serve him, and **millions of people stood before him. The court began its session, and the books were opened.**—*Good News Bible*.*†‡

27. No one could say that Christ does not understand our situation. He was tempted in every way.

Hebrews 4:15-16: ¹⁵ Our High Priest is not one who cannot feel sympathy for our weaknesses. On the contrary, we have a High Priest who was tempted in every way that we are, but did not sin. ¹⁶Let us have confidence, then, and approach God's throne, where there is grace. There we will receive mercy and find grace to

help us just when we need it.—*Good News Bible*.*

28. As incredible as it may seem, Jesus went back to heaven and told those inhabitants of heaven that His greatest wish was to bring some of us there to live with them for the rest of eternity.

John 17:24-26: ²⁴ “Father! You have given them to me, and I want them to be with me where I am, so that they may see my glory, the glory you gave me; **for you loved me before the world was made.** ²⁵ Righteous Father! The world does not know you, but I know you, and these know that you sent me. ²⁶ **I made you known to them,** and I will continue to do so, in order that the love you have for me may be in them, and so that I also may be in them.”—*Good News Bible*.*†

[EGW:] When the great sacrifice had been consummated, Christ ascended on high, refusing the adoration of angels until He had presented the request: “I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am.” John 17:24. Then with inexpressible love and power came forth the answer from the Father’s throne: “Let all the angels of God worship Him.” Hebrews 1:6. Not a stain rested upon Jesus. His humiliation ended, His sacrifice completed, there was given unto Him a name that is above every name. [Philippians 2:10-11]—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy** 501.3-502.0.‡

29. Why do you think Jesus was willing to come and die for us? Why would He think we are so valuable to Him in the great controversy over God’s character and government?

[EGW:] In the banishment of Satan from heaven, God declared His justice and maintained the honor of His throne. But when man had sinned through yielding to the deceptions of this apostate spirit, God gave an evidence of His love by yielding up His only-begotten Son to die for the fallen race. **In the atonement the character of God is revealed.** The mighty argument of the cross demonstrates to the whole universe that the course of sin which Lucifer had chosen was in no wise chargeable upon the government of God.—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy** 500.4-501.0.†‡

[EGW:] The cross of Calvary, while it declares the law immutable, proclaims to the universe that the wages of sin is death. In the Saviour’s expiring cry, “It is finished,” the death knell of Satan was rung. **The great controversy which had been so long in progress was then decided, and the final eradication of evil was made certain.** The Son of God passed through the portals of the tomb, that “through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.” Hebrews 2:14.—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy** 503.3.†‡

30. This information that we have studied should raise several very important questions in your mind:

1. [BSG:] If God knew that Lucifer was going to rebel, why did He give him the power of choice in the first place? **Or when Lucifer rebelled, why didn’t God just annihilate him immediately?** What kind of reaction might the unfallen universe have had if God had immediately wiped Lucifer out? [See *Desire of Ages* 758-759.] Why is the concept of the universe’s interest in the plan of salvation (*1 Pet. 1:12, Rev. 5:13, Rev. 16:7*) so important to understanding the great controversy?
2. **What reason or reasons can you think of for Christ’s death on the cross?** Was it only to reveal the character of God? Was it to pay the ransom price for sin?

If so, to whom was the ransom paid? Share your thoughts and give biblical reasons for them.

3. **When we use the term “the great controversy,” what do we mean?** Discuss the various aspects of the great controversy and how this week’s lesson applies to your own life.
4. What Bible texts talk about the reality of the great controversy? (*See, for instance, Job 1, 2; Eph. 6:12.*)—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Friday, April 5.^{†§}

31. What do we know about the great controversy? First of all, we know that the great controversy was started by a created being, Lucifer, who became Satan in heaven itself.
32. Good and evil cannot coexist throughout eternity. If evil were to be victorious, it would sooner or later destroy the entire universe. God’s plan, the loving plan, must eliminate evil.
33. Before Satan rebelled in heaven, there was perfect peace and harmony throughout the universe. Peace and harmony will be restored once the great controversy is over and all traces of sin and sinners are gone. However, the “museum of sin” and the record of what God has done to preserve love and freedom in the universe will be preserved forever. (*Great Controversy* 499)
34. If sin leads to death as God has said, it must be completely and totally eliminated.
35. Seventh-day Adventists have a unique understanding of the great controversy. It is spelled out in our **fundamental belief 8**.

[BSG:] All humanity is now involved in a **great controversy between Christ and Satan regarding the character of God, His law, and His sovereignty over the universe**. This conflict originated in heaven when a created being, endowed with freedom of choice, in self-exaltation became Satan, God’s adversary, and led into rebellion a portion of the angels. He introduced the spirit of rebellion into this world when he led Adam and Eve into sin. This human sin resulted in the distortion of the image of God in humanity, the disordering of the created world, and its eventual devastation at the time of the global flood, as presented in the historical account of Genesis 1–11. Observed by the whole creation, this world became the arena of the universal conflict, out of which the God of love will ultimately be vindicated. To assist His people in this controversy, Christ sends the Holy Spirit and the loyal angels to guide, protect, and sustain them in the way of salvation. [(Gen. 3; 6-8; Job 1:6-12; Isa. 14:12-14; Ezek. 28:12-18; Rom. 1:19-32; 3:4; 5:12-21; 8:19-22; 1 Cor. 4:9; Heb. 1:14; 1 Peter 5:8; 2 Peter 3:6; Rev. 12:4-9.)]—**Fundamental Belief 8, “The Great Controversy,”** <https://www.adventist.org/the-great-controversy/>. [Bible texts at the end are on the website but are not in the Bible study guide.]—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 14.[†]

36. There is more about the origin of sin in the doctrines of Seventh-day Adventists.

[BSG:] The biblical teaching of humanity’s fall into sin is also present in fundamental belief 7:

Man and woman were made in the image of God with individuality, the power and freedom to think and to do. Though created free beings, each is an indivisible unity of body, mind, and spirit, dependent upon God for life and breath and all else. When our first parents disobeyed God, they denied their dependence upon Him

and fell from their high position. The image of God in them was marred and they became subject to death. Their descendants share this fallen nature and its consequences. They are born with weaknesses and tendencies to evil. But God in Christ reconciled the world to Himself and by His Spirit restores in penitent mortals the image of their Maker. Created for the glory of God, they are called to love Him and one another, and to care for their environment. [(Gen. 1:26-28; 2:7, 15; 3; Ps. 8:4-8; 51:5, 10; 58:3; Jer. 17:9; Acts 17:24-28; Rom. 5:12-17; 2 Cor. 5:19, 20; Eph. 2:3; 1 Thess. 5:23; 1 John 3:4; 4:7, 8, 11, 20.)]—Fundamental belief 7, “Nature of Humanity,” [https:// www.adventist.org/nature-of-humanity/](https://www.adventist.org/nature-of-humanity/) [Bible texts at the end are on the website but are not in the Bible study guide.].—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 15.‡

37. Seventh-day Adventists believe the stories expressed in Genesis 1 to 11 to be historically true and accurate and that the events described to have occurred in the Garden of Eden were real.

[EGW:] The Bible is its own expositor. Scripture is to be compared with scripture. The student should learn to view the word as a whole, and to see the relation of its parts. He should gain a knowledge of its grand central theme, of God’s original purpose for the world, of the rise of the great controversy, and of the work of redemption. He should understand the nature of the **two principles that are contending for supremacy**, and should learn to trace their working through the records of history and prophecy, to the great consummation. He should see how this controversy enters into every phase of human experience; how in every act of life he himself reveals the one or the other of the two antagonistic motives; and how, whether he will or not, he is even now deciding upon which side of the controversy he will be found.—Ellen G. White, *Education** 190.2.†‡

38. Seventh-day Adventists believe that the great controversy is woven throughout the entire Bible. It affects many Christian doctrines, including:

1. [BSG:] The teaching of Creation as an expression of God’s love, freedom, and power
2. The origin of human nature, its present condition, and its final destiny
3. The fall of humanity from its original righteousness and communion with God
4. God’s actions of salvation, as manifested in the incarnation, ministry, death, resurrection, ascension, and mediatorial ministry of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary, as well as in His second coming
5. God’s redemptive plan of justification, sanctification, and the promise of future glorification for the human race
6. God’s constitution of His people throughout all periods of human history, culminating in the calling out of an end-time remnant from among the Protestant churches to proclaim His final invitation of mercy to humanity
7. The pre-Advent, millennial, and executive judgments of God, climaxing in the end of evil and in the restoration of all things.—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 16.‡

[BSG:] The great controversy is historical in nature. Because traditional Christianity integrated Greek philosophical presuppositions and concepts, such as the

immaterial, timeless, spaceless nature of heaven, many Christians interpret biblical references to the cosmic conflict and of the fall of humans into sin, as allegories or theological myths. However, **the Adventist historical-grammatical interpretation of the Bible presents God as personally and historically involved in the history of humanity's fall into sin and in the history of salvation.** God, Lucifer, the angels—both rebellious and righteous—Adam and Eve, and their fall into sin **are all real historical characters and events.** **Jesus referred to Satan as a literal, historical person,** one whom Jesus knew from before the start of this earth's history, and who was the originator of evil and sin. Jesus once explained to the Pharisees that they were neither the children of Abraham (*John 8:39, 40*) nor the children of God (*John 8:41, 42*), but rather were of their father “the devil” who “was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies” (*John 8:44, NIV*).—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 16.^{†‡§}

John 8:39-44: ³⁹ They answered him, “**Our father is Abraham.**”

“If you really were Abraham’s children,” Jesus replied, “you would do the same things that he did. ⁴⁰All I have ever done is to tell you the truth I heard from God, yet you are trying to kill me. Abraham did nothing like this! ⁴¹You are doing what your father did.”

“**God himself is the only Father we have,**” they answered, “and we are his true children.”

⁴² Jesus said to them, “If God really were your Father, you would love me, because **I came from God and now I am here. I did not come on my own authority, but he sent me.** ⁴³Why do you not understand what I say? It is because you cannot bear to listen to my message. ⁴⁴**You are the children of your father, the Devil,** and you want to follow your father’s desires. From the very beginning he was a murderer and has never been on the side of truth, because there is no truth in him. When he tells a lie, he is only doing what is natural to him, because he is a liar and **the father of all lies.**”—*Good News Bible.*^{*†} [Imagine the looks on their faces!][‡]

39. While Revelation 12 is presented in apocalyptic prose, it clearly refers to historical events.

War broke out in heaven. The Devil was cast to this earth. Jesus was born, and the Devil did everything he could to destroy Him. But, God preserved Him and took Him to heaven. God also has preserved His faithful people down through the history of our world. The following verses show that all of the events from Satan’s rebellion in heaven until the final events involving the Christian church all mention and in some cases are prophesied as truly historical events.

Revelation 12:5-6,10,17-18: ⁵Then she gave birth to a son, who will rule over all nations with an iron rod. But the child was snatched away and taken to God and his throne.

⁶The woman fled to the desert, to a place God had prepared for her, where she will be taken care of for 1,260 days....

¹⁰ Then I heard a loud voice in heaven saying, “Now God’s salvation has come! Now God has shown his power as King! Now his Messiah has shown his authority! For the one who stood before our God and accused our brothers and sisters day and night has been thrown out of heaven....”

¹⁷The dragon was furious with the woman and went off to fight against the rest of her descendants, all those who obey God's commandments and are faithful to the truth revealed by Jesus. ¹⁸And the dragon stood on the seashore.—*Good News Bible*.*

40. These verses in Revelation 12 refer to the persecution of the church which has now occurred.

Revelation 12:1,6,11,13-15: ¹Then a great and mysterious sight appeared in the sky. There was a woman, whose dress was the sun and who had the moon under her feet and a crown of twelve stars on her head....

⁶ The woman fled to the desert, to a place God had prepared for her, where she will be taken care of for 1,260 days....

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....

¹³ When the dragon realized that he had been thrown down to the earth, he began to pursue the woman who had given birth to the boy. ¹⁴She was given the two wings of a large eagle in order to fly to her place in the desert, where she will be taken care of for three and a half years, safe from the dragon's attack. ¹⁵And then from his mouth the dragon poured out a flood of water after the woman, so that it would carry her away.—*Good News Bible*.*

41. Consider these questions raised in the teachers Bible study guide:

1. [BSG:] What do people in your culture think of the apparent existence of the conflict between good and evil, both in our world and in human society? How do they understand the origin of evil? Do they believe evil will ever end? Why, or why not? Have they already given up on any hope for the termination of evil? If so, why? Perhaps they think evil is here to stay, or is even necessary to keep some sort of balance in the universe and in history. If so, explain why they may feel this way. How can you share with them the biblical perspective on evil?
2. In what way do the various theories about the origin of the conflict between good and evil affect the understanding of human morality and responsibility? Take, for instance, the theory of evolution. How does this theory impact our understanding of the origin of evil and, consequently, our understanding of human morality? What other theories regarding the origin of evil can you think of, besides evolution, that are prevalent in your culture?
3. Think of ways to describe and explain to the people around you the Adventist doctrine of the origin of evil, of the great controversy, and of the biblical hope. How can you share these Bible truths with your friends, neighbors, and colleagues from other Christian denominations or from other religions, philosophies, or worldviews? What elements would you include in the outline of your description of the great controversy?—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 17.‡

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Last Modified: March 3, 2024

Email: Info@theox.org