

God's Love and Justice Rules of Engagement

Lesson #10 for March 8, 2025

Scriptures: Daniel 10:1-14; Revelation 13:1-8; Job 1:1-12; 2:1-7; John 12:31; 14:30; Mark 6:5; 9:29; 1 John 3:8.

1. In this study we will review examples of three major themes regarding Satan's role on this earth as opposed to God's overall rule of the universe.
 1. [From the Bible study guide=BSG:] Satan is an illegitimate and temporary "ruler." God granted Satan limited and temporary rulership after sin entered this world, but this rulership is not a legitimate authority. Although God has limited His own activity to eliminate evil in this world, **Jesus has overcome the devil. Christ's victory over temptation in the wilderness and the defeat of Satan on the cross indicate that Satan's rulership is illegitimate and temporary.**
 2. Satan slanders [God and His government] and makes captives under his "rulership." Despite the fact that Satan is an illegitimate and temporary ruler, human beings can become lawful captives of his rulership. Our human will is inclined to follow Satan's suggestions, unless Christ dwells in us, guiding our desires and lives. [We are born selfish; we naturally follow Satan's ways.]
 3. Satan is limited in his "rulership." Satan has room and time to "rule," but he is limited by God in this "rulership." **In the unfolding of human history, transcendent powers of goodness oppose evil, and the prayers of believers are an effective resource against them.**—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 132.†‡
2. So, to whose side do we want to belong?
3. To begin our study, consider what Ellen White wrote about God's relationship with the Devil.

[From the writings of Ellen G. White=EGW:] **God could have destroyed Satan and his sympathizers as easily as one can cast a pebble to the earth; but He did not do this. Rebellion was not to be overcome by force.** Compelling power is found only under Satan's government. The Lord's principles are not of this order. His authority rests upon goodness, mercy, and love; and the presentation of these principles is the means to be used. God's government is moral, and truth and love are to be the prevailing power.—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages** 759.1.†‡

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4. **Satan is only alive today because God, the only Source of life for any living being, sustains his life and will continue to do so until the issues in the great controversy are firmly settled. However, in order to establish forever the fairness of His government, God actually allowed a war to take place in heaven itself. (See Revelation 12:7-9.)**
5. Since Satan was an angel who led many other angels to follow him in rebellion against God, what was the attitude of the loyal angels about God's government?
6. **There were times when even the angels in heaven thought that God should destroy the entire human race. However, God had a very different plan; He did not use force; He sent His Son!**

[EGW:] 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 [though] 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.** In making His infinite sacrifice Christ would exalt and honor the law. He would make known the exalted character of God's government, which could not in any way be changed to meet man in his sinful condition.

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. 2-3.†† [The primary audience!]‡
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[EGW:] Before Christ's first advent, the sin of refusing to conform to God's law had become widespread. Apparently Satan's power was growing; his warfare against heaven was becoming more and more determined. **A crisis had been reached. With intense interest God's movements were watched by the heavenly angels. Would He come forth from His place to punish the inhabitants of the world for their iniquity? Would He send fire or flood to destroy them? All heaven waited the bidding of their Commander to pour out the vials of wrath upon a rebellious world. One word from Him, one sign, and the world would have been destroyed. The worlds unfallen would have said, "Amen. Thou art righteous, O God, because Thou hast exterminated rebellion."**—Ellen G. White, *The Signs of the Times*,* August 27, 1902, par. 4; *Reflecting Christ**€ 58.4.†† Compare *The Youth's Instructor*, July 29, 1897, par. 8; *That I May Know Him* 19.3.

[\[https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p820.18277&index=0\]](https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p820.18277&index=0)‡

[Also read Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages** 22.1.

[https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p130.35&index=0\]](https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p130.35&index=0)‡

[BSG:] A powerful narrative that reveals the nature of the cosmic conflict can be found in 1 Kings 18:19–40, **Elijah on Mount Carmel**, where the Lord exposes the so-called "gods of the nations." Yet, there is more behind the scenes about these "gods" than that they are mere figments of pagan imagination. Behind the "gods" that the nations surrounding Israel thought they were worshiping was, actually, something else [the Devil himself].—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Sabbath Afternoon, March 1.††

7. **Apart from God Himself/Themselves, the *Elohim* of the Old Testament are nothing more than imaginary beings, representing the Devil himself!**

[BSG:] **Behind the false "gods" of the nations, then, were actually demons in disguise. This means, then, that all of the texts of Scripture dealing with idolatry and the foreign gods are "cosmic conflict" texts.**

With this background, the cosmic conflict theme is better understood. And this truth has massive implications for understanding more about the nature of this conflict and how it sheds light on the problem of evil.—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Sabbath Afternoon, March 1.[†]

8. Another very interesting story that might guide us in understanding the relationship between Satan himself and the heavenly angels under God’s guidance is found in Daniel 10:1-14.

Daniel 10:1-14: ¹ (In the third year that Cyrus was emperor of Persia, a message was revealed to **Daniel, who is also called Belteshazzar**. The message was true but extremely hard to understand. It was explained to him in a vision.)...

⁷ **I was the only one who saw the vision.** Those who were with me did not see anything, but **they were terrified and ran and hid**.... ⁹When I heard his voice, I fell to the ground unconscious and lay there face downwards. ¹⁰Then a hand took hold of me and raised me to my hands and knees; I was still trembling.

¹¹ **The angel said to me, “Daniel, God loves you. Stand up and listen carefully to what I am going to say. I have been sent to you.” When he had said this, I stood up, still trembling.**

¹² Then he said, “Daniel, don’t be afraid. God has heard your prayers ever since the first day you decided to humble yourself in order to gain understanding. I have come in answer to your prayer. ¹³**The angel prince of the kingdom of Persia opposed me for 21 days.** Then **Michael, one of the chief angels**, came to help me, because I had been left there alone in Persia. ¹⁴I have come to make you understand what will happen to your people in the future. **This is a vision about the future.**”—American Bible Society. (1992). *The Holy Bible: The Good News Translation** (2nd ed., Daniel 10:1-14). New York: American Bible Society [abbreviated as *Good News Bible*].[†] [Who was that evil force?][‡]

9. **How could it be that an angel sent by God could be “withstood” for three weeks? Being all-powerful, God possessed the power to respond to Daniel immediately—that is, had He chosen to. If He exercised His power to do so, God could have made an angel appear to Daniel right away. Yet, the angel sent by God was withstood by the “prince of the kingdom of Persia” for three entire weeks. What was going on?**

[EGW:] For three weeks Gabriel wrestled with the powers of darkness, seeking to counteract the influences at work on the mind of Cyrus; **and before the contest closed, Christ Himself came to Gabriel’s aid. “The prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days,” Gabriel declares; “but, lo, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me; and I remained there with the kings of Persia.”** Daniel 10:13. All that heaven could do in behalf of the people of God was done. The victory was finally gained; **the forces of the enemy were held in check** all the days of Cyrus, and all the days of his son Cambyses, who reigned about seven and a half years.—Ellen G. White, *Prophets and Kings** 571.2-572.0.[†] [Italic type is added for emphasis.][‡] [God’s side had to come to “level the playing field” to counteract Satan so that Cyrus could make a free decision about the Jews without Satan’s evil, over-riding pressure.][‡]

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[BSG:] In order for such a conflict to transpire, God must not be exercising all of His power. **The enemy must be afforded some genuine freedom and power that is not removed capriciously but is restricted by some parameters known to both parties (the details of which are not revealed to us).** It seems **there must be parameters in the cosmic conflict that even God’s angels are operating within, which ... will be referred to as the “rules of engagement.”**

In a certain sense, understanding these limits might not be hard if we grasp the idea, already talked about, that God works only by love, and that love, not coercion, is the foundation of His government. **This idea, that God works only through the principles emanating from love, can help us better understand the great controversy [over God’s character and government].**—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Sunday, March 2.†‡

10. **It is interesting to note in light of this story that Gabriel was the one who took Lucifer’s place when Lucifer was cast out of heaven.** We can be sure that Satan did everything he could to exert his power over Gabriel! Read Ellen G. White, *The Review and Herald*, February 8, 1881, par. 21. (<https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p821.3705&index=0>)
11. There was another time recorded when Satan opposed Gabriel along with the second guardian angel of Jesus. The two of them came to the tomb of Jesus to call Him to take His life back again. And that time, with the full glory of God expressed at the tomb, Satan and his entire group of angels who were doing everything they could to keep the grave of Jesus shut, could only scatter before the glory of those two angels. Those two angels were able to roll back the tombstone and call Jesus. Then, He came forth from the grave using His own power.

[EGW:] When Jesus was laid in the grave, Satan triumphed. He dared to hope that the Saviour [*sic-Br*] 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 [Gabriel].** 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.†‡

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[EGW:] When the voice of the mighty angel [Gabriel] was heard at Christ’s tomb, saying, Thy Father calls Thee, **the Saviour [*sic-Br*] came forth from the grave by the life that was in Himself.** Now was proved the truth of His words, “I lay down My life, that I might take it again....” John 10:17, 18; 2:19.

Over the rent sepulcher of Joseph, Christ had proclaimed in triumph, “I am the resurrection, and the life.” These words could be spoken only by the Deity. **All created beings [including Lucifer/Satan] live by the will and power of God. They are dependent recipients of the life of God.** From the highest seraph to the humblest animate being, all are replenished from the Source of life. Only He who is one with God could say, I have power to lay down My life, and I have power to take it again. In His divinity, Christ possessed the power to break the bonds of death.—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages** 785.2-3.†‡

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[EGW:] **When the mighty angel [Gabriel] came down to the tomb, he was joined by another, who with his company had been keeping guard over the Lord's body. As the angel from heaven rolled away the stone, the other entered the tomb, and unbound the wrappings from the body of Jesus.**—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages** 789.3.††

[\[https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p130.3889&index=0\]](https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p130.3889&index=0)‡

[EGW:] These angels were of the company that had been waiting in a shining cloud to escort Jesus to His heavenly home. **The most exalted of the angel throng, they were the two who had come to the tomb at Christ's resurrection, and they had been with Him throughout His life on earth.**—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages** 832.1.††

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12. This suggests that the angel Gabriel, the most exalted of the heavenly host along with another unnamed angel, were the ones who came to the tomb of Jesus, and the ones who had been His guardian angels throughout His life! They protected Jesus for His whole life!

13. ***In light of what we have seen so far, how is it that love can wage war in heaven?***

14. The book of Revelation is particularly useful in understanding the role of Satan described as a great red dragon. Revelation 12:9 describes him; but Revelation 13:1-8 suggest that near the end of time, he will apparently deceive almost the entire world!

Revelation 12:9: The 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.—*Good News Bible*.*

15. How effective has Satan been in convincing humans to accept his lies? What will be the result in the end?

Revelation 13:3-8: ^{3b}The whole earth was amazed and followed the beast. ⁴Everyone worshipped the dragon because he had given his authority to the beast. They worshipped the beast also, saying, “Who is like the beast? Who can fight against it?”...

⁷It [the beast] was allowed to fight against God's people and to defeat them, and it was given authority over every tribe, nation, language, and race. ⁸All people living on earth will worship it, except those whose names were written before the creation of the world in the book of the living which belongs to the Lamb that was killed.—*Good News Bible*.*††

16. As we already have discovered, Revelation 12:7-12 describes the war that began in heaven right next to God's throne. In Revelation 13, the dragon/Satan is described as giving his power to two different earthly powers. Apart from deceiving almost the entire world, he finally will make it clear what he wants to do.

Revelation 13:15: The second beast was allowed to breathe life into the image of the first beast, so that the image could talk and **put to death all those who would not worship it.**—*Good News Bible*.*†

17. ***There is nothing that Satan would like more than to destroy all of God's faithful people so that he could claim that this world belongs to him and to his followers!*** Satan is desperate to keep God's final, end-time people from forming because if they do form, it will be another giant step toward the end for him. Thus, he will do everything that he can to

deceive, confuse, and destroy God's faithful people. But, while Satan is determined to destroy God's people, God has promised to protect them from death as He did Job. So, the final conflict will be over the faithfulness and lives of God's people! Who will we follow?

18. However, as we discover by reading through the book of Revelation, ultimately, God's side will win; evil will be permanently destroyed.

Revelation 17:13-14: ¹³ "These ten all have the same purpose, and they give their power and authority to the beast. ¹⁴They will fight against the Lamb; but the Lamb, together with his called, chosen, and faithful followers, will defeat them, because he is Lord of lords and King of kings."—*Good News Bible*.*

19. As we live in the final days of this world's history, it is very important for us to recognize that the Devil himself knows that he has only a little time left. (Revelation 12:12-14)

20. Turning to a different part of our story, **look at the case of Job**. Read **Job 1:1-12** and **2:1-8**.

21. These familiar passages describe Satan, attending the council of heaven and God challenging him regarding God's faithful servant, Job. Satan was given permission to do anything he could to Job except to "touch" his body. Later, in a second session of the council, Satan was given permission to inflict pain and trouble on Job's body itself but not to kill Job. However, Job still did not turn against God.

[BSG:] Many significant details can be gleaned from these verses [in Job 1&2].

First, there appears to be some kind of **heavenly council scene**, not merely a dialogue between God and Satan; **other celestial beings are involved**.

Second, there is **some existing dispute**, signaled by the fact that God asks whether Satan has considered Job. Considered Job for what? The question makes sense in the context of a larger, ongoing dispute.

Third, while God declares Job blameless, upright, and God-fearing, **Satan claims that Job appears to fear God only because God protects him. This amounts to slander against both Job's character and God's** (*compare with Rev. 12:10, Zechariah 3*).—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Tuesday, March 4.^{†‡§}

Revelation 12:10: 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."—*Good News Bible*.*

22. **Read Zechariah 3:1-10** regarding the encounter of Joshua the high priest, Satan the accuser, and God in the judgment as we have discussed several times recently.

[Continuing from BSG:] **Fourth**, Satan alleges that God's protection of Job (the hedge) is unfair and makes it impossible for Satan to prove his allegations. **This indicates some existing limits on Satan (rules of engagement), and that Satan has apparently tried to harm Job**.

God responds to Satan's accusation before the heavenly council by allowing Satan to put his theory to the test, but only within limits. He first grants Satan power over "all that he has," but prohibits personal harm to Job (*Job 1:12, NKJV*). Later, after Satan claims that Job cares only about himself, God allows Satan to afflict Job personally, but Satan must spare his life (*Job 2:3-6*).—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Tuesday, March 4.^{†‡§}

23. ***The “Job experience” is what will take place in the lives of God’s faithful people in the final days of this world’s history.***

24. The Devil will try to bring the seven last plagues against God’s faithful people because, then, he will be desperate. But, God will protect His people.

[EGW:] The “time of trouble, such as never was,” is soon to open upon us; and we shall need an experience which we do not now possess and which many are too indolent [lazy or apathetic] to obtain. **It is often the case that trouble is greater in anticipation than in reality; but this is not true of the crisis before us. The most vivid presentation cannot reach the magnitude of the ordeal.** In that time of trial, every soul must stand for himself before God. “Though Noah, Daniel, and Job” were in the land, “as I live, saith the Lord God, they shall deliver neither son nor daughter; they shall but deliver their own souls by their righteousness.” Ezekiel 14:20....

Satan could find nothing in the Son of God that would enable him to gain the victory. He had kept His Father’s commandments, and there was no sin in Him that Satan could use to his advantage. This is the condition in which those must be found who shall stand in the time of trouble.

It is in this life that we are to separate sin from us, through faith in the atoning blood of Christ. Our precious Saviour [*sic-Br*] invites us to join ourselves to Him, to unite our weakness to His strength, our ignorance to His wisdom, our unworthiness to His merits. God’s providence is the school in which we are to learn the meekness and lowliness of Jesus.—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy** 622.4-623.2.††

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25. Job had to trust God despite everything that his senses could perceive. And it must have seemed to him that God had abandoned him. But, Job knew God better.

26. So, what do we know about the temporary “ruler” of this world?

[BSG:] Within the cosmic conflict, Satan and his cohorts are temporarily granted significant jurisdiction in this world, limited according to some kind of rules of engagement.

These rules of engagement limit not only the actions of the enemy—the devil and his cohorts—but they also limit God’s action to eliminate or mitigate the evil that (temporarily) falls within the jurisdiction of the enemy. Because the Lord will never break His promises, to the extent He has agreed to the rules of engagement—thus affording some limited and temporary rulership to the devil—God has morally limited His future course of action (without lessening His raw power).—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Wednesday.‡

27. **Read John 12:31, John 14:30, John 16:11, 2 Corinthians 4:4, and Luke 4:6. What do these texts teach about the rulership of the enemy in this world?**

[BSG:] The New Testament sets forth a clash of kingdoms, the kingdoms of light and darkness, with the darkness coming from Satan and his rebellion. Part of Christ’s mission was to defeat the kingdom of Satan: “For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil” (1 John 3:8, NKJV).—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Wednesday.‡§

1 John 3:8: Whoever continues to sin belongs to the Devil, because the Devil has sinned from the very beginning. The Son of God appeared for this very reason, to destroy what the Devil had done.—*Good News Bible*.*

[Continuing from BSG:] Nevertheless, there are “rules” that limit what God can do while remaining true to the principles behind His government. These limits include at least (1) the granting of free will to creatures and (2) the covenantal rules of engagement, which we are not privy to, at least now. Such impediments and limitations on divine action have significant implications for God’s moral ability to reduce and/or immediately eliminate evil in this world. Thus, we see continued evil and suffering, which can indeed cause many people to question either God’s existence or His goodness. However, once the background of the great controversy is understood, and the limits God has placed on how He will deal with evil, we can to some degree better understand why things are as they are—at least until the final triumph of God over evil.

How does the fact that Jesus calls Satan the “ruler” of this world help, at least somewhat, our understanding of the evil that exists in the world now? How comforting to know that it is, indeed, only a temporal [and temporary] rule!—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Wednesday, March 5.‡

28. In the New Testament, once again, we discover some important points.

[BSG:] **Satan Is an Illegitimate and Temporary “Ruler.”**

In the synoptic Gospels, the focus of the antagonism between Satan and Jesus is the temptation in the wilderness (*Matt. 4:1–11; Mark 1:12, 13; Luke 4:1–13*). Among the three synoptics, Luke gives additional details in the third temptation about Satan’s alleged authority. Showing to Jesus “all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time” (*Luke 4:5, NKJV*), the devil offered to Him “ ‘all this authority . . . and their glory; for this has been delivered to me, and I give it to whomever I wish’ ” (*Luke 4:6, NKJV*).—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 132-133.‡§

Luke 4:1-13: ¹ Jesus returned from the Jordan full of the Holy Spirit and was **led by the Spirit into the desert**, ²**where he was tempted by the Devil for forty days**. In all that time he ate nothing, so that he was hungry when it was over.

³ The **Devil said to him, “If you are God’s Son**, order this stone to turn into bread.”

⁴ But Jesus answered, “The scripture says, ‘Human beings cannot live on bread alone.’ ”

⁵ Then the Devil took him up and showed him in a second all the kingdoms of the world. ⁶ “I will give you all this power and all this wealth,” the Devil told him. “It has all been handed over to me, and I can give it to anyone I choose. ⁷All this will be yours, then, if you worship me.”

⁸ Jesus answered, “The scripture says, ‘Worship the Lord your God and serve only him!’ ”

⁹ Then the Devil took him to Jerusalem and set him on the highest point of the Temple, and said to him, “**If you are God’s Son**, throw yourself down from here. ¹⁰For the scripture says, ‘God will order his angels to take good care of you.’ ¹¹It also says, ‘They will hold you up with their hands so that not even your

feet will be hurt on the stones.’ ”

¹² But Jesus answered, “The scripture says, ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’ ”

¹³ **When the Devil finished tempting Jesus in every way, he left him for a while.**—*Good News Bible*.^{*†}

[BSG:] It is debatable whether Satan really had the authority he claimed to have and, if so, how he had acquired it. To be sure, after sin entered the world, “God grants Satan considerable freedom to exercise his baneful influence throughout the world.”—Sydney H. T. Page, *Powers of Evil: A Biblical Study of Satan and Demons* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1995), p. 98. However, this freedom is different from saying that Satan has legitimate authority in the world. In fact, by rejecting Satan’s offering, Jesus does not recognize the legitimacy of such authority.—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*^{*} 133.^{‡§}

[BSG:] In the Gospel of John, the antagonism between Satan and Jesus is particularly highlighted in the references to “the ruler [prince] of this world” (*John 12:31, NKJV; John 14:30, NKJV; John 16:11, NKJV*). In John 12:31–33, Jesus emphasizes the judgment of the world and the casting out of its ruler/prince, with particular reference to His death. In John 14:30, Jesus points out in the context of His farewell discourse to the disciples that “ ‘the ruler [prince] of this world is coming’ ” (*NKJV*). Jesus, underscoring the antagonism of this statement, adds, “And he has nothing in Me” (*NKJV*). The statement probably has in view the coming of Judas Iscariot, who is the agent by which “the devil himself precipitates Jesus’ death.” However, the Cross is not the triumph of the devil, but surprisingly his overthrow (see D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John, The Pillar New Testament Commentary* [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991], p. 508).—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*^{*} 133.^{‡Ω§}

29. So, what limits and rules have we seen?

[BSG:] **The cosmic conflict is primarily a dispute over God’s character, caused by the devil’s slanderous allegations against God’s goodness, justice, and government.** It is a kind of cosmic covenant lawsuit.

Such a conflict cannot be settled by sheer power but, instead, requires demonstration.

If serious allegations are brought against a person in power, the best (and maybe only) way to defeat the allegations would be **to allow for a free, fair, and open investigation**. If the allegations threaten the entire government (of love), they cannot simply be swept under the rug.

What does all this mean for understanding the cosmic conflict and relating to the problem of evil? If God makes a promise, would He ever break it? Of course not. Insofar as God agrees to rules of engagement, His future action would be (morally) limited. As such, evil will fall within the temporary domain of the kingdom of darkness.—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*^{*} for Thursday, March 6.^{†‡}

30. So, we have seen that Satan seems to be a legitimate ruler over human beings in some

situations. Human beings tend to want to be like him. That is selfishness.

31. But, as we noted in the Gospel of John, Satan's rulership of this world will come to an end. Jesus conquered him at the cross. By His prayer as recorded in John 17, we know that despite all that Satan does against God's followers, ultimately, Satan will be defeated.
32. Do we recognize that the death of Christ on the cross and His resurrection and ascension are proof that, ultimately, Satan will be defeated? He will continue to accuse believers in God until the very end. But, 2000 years ago, Jesus put the first nails in Satan's coffin!
33. Satan is limited in his "rulership."

[BSG:] We learn, in Daniel 10, about the limits of the evil power. According to this chapter, "the unfolding of human history is not determined solely by the decisions made by human beings, for there is an unseen dimension of reality that must also be taken into account. In particular, there are malevolent forces in the universe that exercise a baneful influence in the sociopolitical realm, especially where God's people are concerned. Nevertheless, the power of these evil agencies is limited, for transcendent powers of goodness oppose them, and the faithful prayers of believers are also effective against them. However antagonistic the forces of evil may be towards the will of God, they cannot prevent it from being accomplished."—*Powers of Evil: A Biblical Study of Satan and Demons*, p. 64.

Ellen G. White affirms the existence of a similar cosmic conflict regarding the life of every person, and she also highlights the importance of prayer in this context. In the chapter "The Power of Satan" in *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, she underscores that "God alone can limit the power of Satan" (Page 341) and that she "saw evil angels contending for souls, and angels of God resisting them. The conflict was severe" (Page 345). However, she adds, "It is not the work of good angels to control the minds of men against their will. If they yield to the enemy, and make no effort to resist him, then the angels of God can do but little more than hold in check the host of Satan, that they shall not destroy, until further light be given to those in peril, to move them to arouse and look to heaven for help" (Page 345). In this context, she stresses that "**the great Commander in heaven and earth has limited Satan's power**" while, at the same time, **she highlights the importance of prayer**, because "our Savior listens to the earnest prayer of faith, and sends a reinforcement of those angels that excel in strength to deliver him" (Page 346).—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 135.†‡§

34. ***Do we want to be Satan's lawful captives? How much control can he have over us? None at all unless we allow it! Why does God allow this temporary rulership? Do we clearly understand the reality of Satan as a real being and the influence he can have over human beings?***

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Email: Info@theox.org