



## The Sanctuary Lesson 12 4Q 2013

### The Cosmic Conflict Over God's Character

I want to start out by giving kudos to the editors for including this topic. I am happy they are acknowledging that the character of God is THE Central issue in the Cosmic Conflict.

Some guidelines I like to use for determining the truth about God's character:

- Jesus is God in human flesh. Therefore, Jesus is the clearest picture of God and God's character. Jesus said "If you've seen me you've seen the Father." So, if we have some idea about God that is not true in the life of Jesus then we need to rethink that view.
- God is love – every other aspect of His character is an expression of love. Thus, it is a distortion to say, "God is not only loving, He is also just."
  - This is a classic distortion from the imperial legal proponents. When we say "loving" instead of "love" we have diminished God. God is more than loving, He is love! This means every action, including God's "justice" is an outworking of love.
  - So, when we understand the reality of God's character, statements like, "God is not only loving, He is also just" are realized to be nonsense. It would be like saying "God is not only Creator He is the one who made us." Of course God is just because love always does what is right and that is what is just.
- God's law is an expression of His character of love, which is the principle of giving. Any doctrine which has God acting contrary to His character of love would be false.
- Love requires genuine freedom. Therefore, God never uses coercion. Any doctrine which has God in the role of coercing would be a lie.
- God is the source of all truth. Any doctrine which has God using deceit would be a lie.
- God is the source of life. Any doctrine which has God as the source of death, i.e. inflicting death, would be a lie. (We are speaking of death as defined by God in the Bible, not as we humans define death. Thus, we are speaking of the death that is the wages of sin, not the death which the righteous also experience.)
- We must use the integrative evidence based approach, which requires our understanding of God to include the entire inspired record, so we don't use select passages while refusing to deal with others. But more, our understanding requires the inspired text to harmonize with God's laws of nature/science and our experience.
- God is infinite and we are finite, so we must always remain open to advance, and change our views with new insights. We never want to "arrive" at a position that we refuse to reevaluate, if new evidence is presented.

With these guidelines in mind let's examine our lesson

#### SABBATH

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The first sentence of the second paragraph states, “Central to this controversy is the sanctuary...” thoughts about this?

How is this true?

If we use the Bible and understand that the true sanctuary, the heavenly sanctuary, the sanctuary not built by human hands, but built in Eden by God, is the sanctuary of the human soul, the living being, both individually, but also corporately, then we understand why the sanctuary is central – because.....

What is the central issue in the war?

2Cor 10:3-5... which means the war is fought where? In our minds. Note, it is not fought in a building made out of brick and mortar in heaven. It is fought in the Spirit Temple.

Further, Satan is the father of lies. Where do lies have their power? In the minds of intelligent beings. He isn't writing graffiti on the walls of a heavenly building.

Further, where does Satan want to sit enthroned, in an empty building made out of brick, or in the hearts of intelligent beings to be most loved and cherished? In other words, from where did Satan want to dethrone God – a physical chair, or the hearts of His intelligent beings?

God's weapons are Truth, Love and Freedom – where do they have power? In the mind of intelligent beings. So, yes the sanctuary is central, because the sanctuary is you and me and God is working to heal us, while Satan is trying to destroy us.

## SUNDAY

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Revolt in heaven – let's consider this.

If you were an angel in heaven, no carnal nature, never seen sin, you know God personally, you have spent eons with Jesus, what could Lucifer do to get you to rebel?

- Tempt you with gold, drugs, alcohol, sex, grand theft, embezzlement etc.?
- Did Satan allege he was more powerful than God and challenge him to arm-wrestling contest?
- What strategy could Satan use?

He attacked God's character – how? Through alleging God was arbitrary, a God who made up rules and used His power to dictate His way. In other words, Satan alleged God's was a dictator, and therefore created rules that had no intrinsic value, but required external enforcement, such as judging and punishing. Thus, Satan put God in the role of being a judge and executioner, just like much of Christianity does today.

I thought we could review some historical documents, how our church viewed this message over 100 years ago. The first chapter of *Patriarchs and Prophets*, entitled, *Why Was Sin Permitted* and then



*Desire of Ages, It is Finished.* Let's examine portions, and take note throughout how what is being described is Satan's attempt to make God appear to be a dictator, but God's true character is love.

"God is love." 1 John 4:16. His nature, His law, is love. It ever has been; it ever will be. "The high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity," whose "ways are everlasting," changeth not. With Him "is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." Isaiah 57:15; Habakkuk 3:6; James 1:17. {PP 33.1}

- What is the first and last and always central truth about God?
- What is God's law?
- How long has it been so?
- How long will it be so?
- Does God ever change from love?
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Then, as we progress through this conflict between Christ and Satan, centering on God's character, you can be certain that any representation of God that is other than love is a lie. If you do this analysis you will be amazed at how deeply the lie has penetrated all of Christianity, including our own church.

Every manifestation of creative power is an expression of infinite love. The sovereignty of God involves fullness of blessing to all created beings... The history of the great conflict between good and evil, from the time it first began in heaven to the final overthrow of rebellion and the total eradication of sin, is also a demonstration of God's unchanging love. {PP 33.3}

What do all of God's actions reveal? Love.

So, if we read some story in Scripture and don't see love, what does that mean? We are misunderstanding something.

If we hear that God is not only loving but just, we know the infection is working to erode our conception of God's character of love. All God's actions are demonstrations of love!

The Sovereign of the universe was not alone in His work of beneficence. He had an associate--a co-worker who could appreciate His purposes, and could share His joy in giving happiness to created beings. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God." John 1:1, 2. Christ, the Word, the only begotten of God, was one with the eternal Father--one in nature, in character, in purpose--the only being that could enter into all the counsels and purposes of God. "His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." Isaiah 9:6. His "goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting." Micah 5:2. And the Son of God declares concerning Himself: "The Lord possessed Me in the beginning of His way, before His works of old. I was set up from everlasting. . . . When He appointed the foundations of the earth: then I was by Him, as one brought up with Him: and I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him." Proverbs 8:22-30.... {PP 34.1}



Who was with the Father from the beginning?

One of the attacks on God's character is an attack on the Trinity. It has resurfaced again, and making the rounds again that there is no Trinity. That Christ is not fully God. This argument is an attack on God's character of love, why? Because love cannot exist in isolation, love by definition needs an object an other to pour itself upon. A singularity is not love, a plurality is love. God is love, thus the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, together, make up the Godhead, all loving each other.

**The law of love being the foundation of the government of God, the happiness of all intelligent beings depends upon their perfect accord with its great principles of righteousness.** God desires from all His creatures the service of love--service that springs from an appreciation of His character. He takes no pleasure in a forced obedience; and to all He grants freedom of will, that they may render Him voluntary service. {PP 34.3}

- In the first few paragraphs we have emphasized what?
- God's character is what? Love.
- God's law is what? Love.
- Why does the happiness of all creatures depend upon perfect accord with the law of love? Because life is constructed to operate upon this law.

What other design law, an expression of love, is described in this paragraph? The law of liberty, love cannot exist in an atmosphere without freedom. So, regarding the character of God, what does it mean? What does it mean if we hear arguments about God using power to force His way? It is a lie and something is misunderstood.

**So long as all created beings acknowledged the allegiance of love,** there was perfect harmony throughout the universe of God. It was the joy of the heavenly host to fulfill the purpose of their Creator. They delighted in reflecting His glory and showing forth His praise. And while love to God was supreme, love for one another was confiding and unselfish. There was no note of discord to mar the celestial harmonies. But a change came over this happy state. **There was one who perverted the freedom that God had granted to His creatures.** Sin originated with him who, next to Christ, had been most honored of God and was highest in power and glory among the inhabitants of heaven. Lucifer, "son of the morning," was first of the covering cherubs, holy and undefiled. He stood in the presence of the great Creator, and the ceaseless beams of glory enshrouding the eternal God rested upon him. "Thus saith the Lord God; Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty. Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering. . . . Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee." Ezekiel 28:12-15. {PP 35.1}

- What was supposed to be the allegiance of the created beings? The allegiance of love.



- What is the essence of love? Other-centered regard.
- What is the essence of sin? Selfishness, exploitation of others.
- How could deviation from love occur? Because of genuine freedom.
- What does this say about God? God is NOT a dictator.

If God was like Satan says, Satan could never exist. It is only because God is love and gives real freedom that Satan had the liberty to misuse and abuse.

Little by little Lucifer came to indulge the desire for self-exaltation. The Scripture says, "Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness." Ezekiel 28:17. "Thou hast said in thine heart, . . . I will exalt my throne above the stars of God. . . . I will be like the Most High." Isaiah 14:13, 14. Though all his glory was from God, this mighty angel came to regard it as pertaining to himself. **Not content with his position, though honored above the heavenly host, he ventured to covet homage due alone to the Creator. Instead of seeking to make God supreme in the affections and allegiance of all created beings, it was his endeavor to secure their service and loyalty to himself. And coveting the glory with which the infinite Father had invested His Son,** this prince of angels aspired to power that was the prerogative of Christ alone.... {PP 35.2}

- Does this motive, this intent, have any bearing on the "sanctuary"?
- Does it have any bearing on defiling the sanctuary, or cleansing the sanctuary?
- Does it have any bearing on how we teach the sanctuary?

Lucifer did not want a building. He wanted the loyalty and devotion of intelligent creatures turned to him. Thus, he worked to corrupt their hearts, the sanctuary of the soul of intelligent beings. We err when we focus on inanimate materials in heaven.

**To dispute the supremacy of the Son of God, thus impeaching the wisdom and love of the Creator, had become the purpose of this prince of angels.** To this object he was about to bend the energies of that master mind, which, next to Christ's, was first among the hosts of God. **But He who would have the will of all His creatures free,** left none unguarded to the bewildering sophistry by which rebellion would seek to justify itself. Before the great contest should open, all were to have a clear presentation of His will, whose wisdom and goodness were the spring of all their joy. {PP 36.1}

- What was Satan's wedge to cause discontent in heaven? He alleged no difference between himself and Christ and that God was arbitrary in choosing Christ over Lucifer.
- How could this argument be made? Because Christ was the member of the Godhead, who while fully God, pre-existent, fully divine, left infinity and moved out toward His creation to interact on the level of His creation.



Thus Christ “manifested” Himself in the *form* of an angel, even though He was not an angel. (Exodus 3 the burning bush and many other places) And Satan complains that Christ gets privileges to go into counsels that Lucifer doesn’t get to go in to.

**The King of the universe summoned the heavenly hosts before Him, that in their presence He might set forth the true position of His Son** and show the relation He sustained to all created beings. The Son of God shared the Father's throne, and the glory of the eternal, self-existent One encircled both. About the throne gathered the holy angels, a vast, unnumbered throng--"ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands" (Revelation 5:11.), the most exalted angels, as ministers and subjects, rejoicing in the light that fell upon them from the presence of the Deity. **Before the assembled inhabitants of heaven the King declared that none but Christ, the Only Begotten of God, could fully enter into His purposes**, and to Him it was committed to execute the mighty counsels of His will. The Son of God had wrought the Father's will in the creation of all the hosts of heaven; and to Him, as well as to God, their homage and allegiance were due. **Christ was still to exercise divine power, in the creation of the earth and its inhabitants.** But in all this He would not seek power or exaltation for Himself contrary to God's plan, but would exalt the Father's glory and execute His purposes of beneficence and love.... {PP 36.2}

- Why was it necessary to state this before the angels?
- Was God’s declaration that only Christ could fully enter into His purposes an edict?
- Was it the declaration that made it so, or did God declare what was already true?
- Why could others not enter fully into the purposes of God?
- Was it because God was restrictive, exclusive, selfish? No, God is infinite, and only an infinite being can enter infinity.

Created beings, including angels, are finite. This was no arbitrary decree on God’s part, but merely the way reality is. In other words, natural law. But Lucifer, alleged God made up arbitrary rules and enforced them by use of selfish power. Just as Satan has caused human’s to conceive of God’s law today.

He [Lucifer] was beloved and revered by the heavenly host, angels delighted to execute his commands, and he was clothed with wisdom and glory above them all. Yet the Son of God was exalted above him, as one in power and authority with the Father. He shared the Father's counsels, while Lucifer did not thus enter into the purposes of God. **"Why," questioned this mighty angel, "should Christ have the supremacy? Why is He honored above Lucifer?"**

Leaving his place in the immediate presence of the Father, Lucifer went forth to diffuse the spirit of discontent among the angels. **He worked with mysterious secrecy, and for a time concealed his real purpose under an appearance of reverence for God.** {PP 36.3}

Hypocrisy. Note how he pretends to be righteous but actually sews discord. And where do we find such activity in human history? Where do we find those who profess to be promoting God’s cause? In religious institutions. It was religious leaders who pretended to be righteous while crucifying Christ,



burned people at the stake, carried out crusades, conducted the inquisition. Yes, there are also righteous leaders, but Satan's most powerful agents are those cloaked in the pretense of righteousness.

The false claim of equality with Christ was made possible only because God is love, humble, meek, kind, gentle, completely trustworthy, and Jesus the self-existent eternal Creator, chose to move out of infinity and interact intimately with His creation.

**He began to insinuate doubts concerning the laws that governed heavenly beings, intimating that though laws might be necessary for the inhabitants of the worlds, angels, being more exalted, needed no such restraint, for their own wisdom was a sufficient guide... The exaltation of the Son of God as equal with the Father was represented as an injustice to Lucifer, who, it was claimed, was also entitled to reverence and honor... But now even the liberty which they had hitherto enjoyed was at an end; for an absolute Ruler had been appointed them, and to His authority all must pay homage. Such were the subtle deceptions that through the wiles of Lucifer were fast obtaining in the heavenly courts. {PP 37.1}**

In other words, Satan alleges God appointed Jesus arbitrarily; God's law is an imposed list of rules. But the truth is, Christ possessed His position, not by appointment, but by inherent ability of His being. He is God.

**There had been no change in the position or authority of Christ. Lucifer's envy and misrepresentation and his claims to equality with Christ had made necessary a statement of the true position of the Son of God; but this had been the same from the beginning. Many of the angels were, however, blinded by Lucifer's deceptions.... {PP 38.1}**

How many humans are likewise confused and deceived about Christ and God? A battle of ideas about God raged in heaven between loyal angels and deceived angels.

Still the loyal angels urged him [Lucifer] and his sympathizers to submit to God; and they set before them the inevitable result should they refuse: He who had created them could overthrow their power and signally punish their rebellious daring. No angel could successfully oppose the law of God, which was as sacred as Himself. They warned all to close their ears against Lucifer's deceptive reasoning, and urged him and his followers to seek the presence of God without delay and confess the error of questioning His wisdom and authority. {PP 40.2}

**Many were disposed to heed this counsel, to repent of their disaffection, and seek to be again received into favor with the Father and His Son. But Lucifer had another deception ready. The mighty revolter now declared that the angels who had united with him had gone too far to return; that he was acquainted with the divine law, and knew that God would not forgive.**

How many today declare the same thing, that God will not forgive, unless he receives the blood payment of His Son. This lie is one of Satan's lies from the beginning of the conflict in heaven, which infected the minds of angels, and infects the minds of humans on earth today.



He declared that all who should submit to the authority of Heaven would be stripped of their honor, degraded from their position. For himself, he was determined never again to acknowledge the authority of Christ. The only course remaining for him and his followers, he said, was to assert their liberty, and gain by force the rights which had not been willingly accorded them. {PP 40.3}

So far as Satan himself was concerned, it was true that he had now gone too far to return. But not so with those who had been blinded by his deceptions. To them the counsel and entreaties of the loyal angels opened a door of hope; and had they heeded the warning, they might have broken away from the snare of Satan. {PP 41.1}

Here is it suggested that angels in rebellion against God could have returned to God without a blood payment, without any legal payment being made. It was Lucifer who said that God would not forgive. Today, much of Christianity teaches this lie. God will not forgive unless He receives a blood payment.

- Why was it true that Lucifer had gone too far?
- Does it mean God was so upset with Lucifer that God wouldn't forgive him?
- Or, that Lucifer, by persistent rebellion, had destroyed the faculties that respond to truth and love and there was no way to reach him?

Lucifer was beyond healing!

- And if God didn't need a blood payment for angels, does He need a blood payment for humans?
- Then why was Christ's death necessary, and it absolutely was? Let's keep reading.

But pride, love for their leader, and the desire for unrestricted freedom were permitted to bear sway, and the pleadings of divine love and mercy were finally rejected... {PP 41.1}

**The discord which his own course had caused in heaven, Satan charged upon the government of God. All evil he declared to be the result of the divine administration.** He claimed that it was his own object to improve upon the statutes of Jehovah. Therefore God permitted him to demonstrate the nature of his claims, to show the working out of his proposed changes in the divine law. **His own work must condemn him.** Satan had claimed from the first that he was not in rebellion. The whole universe must see the deceiver unmasked.... {PP 42.2}

- What does it mean "his own work must condemn him"?
- What kind of process is this?
- Is it a court room, with testimony, witnesses, prosecution and defense arguments etc. or is it the evidence and results of the choices and actions themselves being carried to their inevitable conclusion and becoming self evident as they inherently lead to certain results?





This is the outworking of the natural results of deviating from God's design. The entire imposed law construct is a lie, foisted on us by Satan, to confuse us about the divine government and just as angels in heaven were confused, so too people on earth have been confused.

Chapter 79 of *The Desire of Ages*, entitled *It Is Finished*, is another historic document to give us insights into how our church founders thought of these issues. Let's go through some of it together and see if it helps us gain insight:

Christ did not yield up His life till He had accomplished the work which He came to do, and with His parting breath He exclaimed, "It is finished." John 19:30. The battle had been won. His right hand and His holy arm had gotten Him the victory. As a Conqueror He planted His banner on the eternal heights. Was there not joy among the angels? All heaven triumphed in the Saviour's victory. Satan was defeated, and knew that his kingdom was lost. {DA 758.1}

Satan was defeated by Christ's death. Just as Scripture says, "By his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death that is the devil." Heb 2:14

- Why? How? What does it mean?
- What is revealed in this?
- What method is God using to destroy Satan and Satan's kingdom?
- What does it say about God?
- What does it say about Satan?
- How did Jesus conquer? Did Jesus conquer with the exercise of His personal divine power, or by the exercise of His human brain?
- What does this mean?
- What did Jesus achieve?

To the angels and the unfallen worlds the cry, "It is finished," had a deep significance. It was for them as well as for us that the great work of redemption had been accomplished. They with us share the fruits of Christ's victory. {DA 758.2}

- How do angels, with unfallen natures, share in Christ's victory?
- What does this mean regarding what Christ was to accomplish?

"All things in heaven and earth are reconciled to Christ at the cross." Col 1:20

Why? Because Satan's war was not a war of physical might and power, but of ideas, focused on distorting God's character in the minds of intelligent beings. Thus, the angels who remained loyal needed clarification, needed truth, needed the questions answered, needed to understand, needed to have the issues settled in their minds. What does this tell us about God, His methods, and the current war on earth? But because of Adam's choice humans needed more from Christ than the angels did.



Not until the death of Christ was the character of Satan clearly revealed to the angels or to the unfallen worlds. The archapostate had so clothed himself with deception that even holy beings had not understood his principles. They had not clearly seen the nature of his rebellion. {DA 758.3}

- If angels in heaven were deceived, and even the loyal angels were confused, does that inform us of the power of Satanic deception?
- Where is the battleground?
- What is the key to winning the victory? The death of Christ.
- Did the angels need a legal payment? No!
- Did they need the death of Christ? Yes!
- Do we need what the angels needed? Yes, and more of course.
- What more do we need? A new nature, healing of our characters.

Let's see if this is part of the achievement of Christ.

It was a being of wonderful power and glory that had set himself against God. Of Lucifer the Lord says, "Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty." Ezekiel 28:12. Lucifer had been the covering cherub. He had stood in the light of God's presence. He had been the highest of all created beings, and had been foremost in revealing God's purposes to the universe. After he had sinned, his power to deceive was the more deceptive, and the unveiling of his character was the more difficult, because of the exalted position he had held with the Father. {DA 758.4}

Thoughts? What is the point? Because of his exalted station, because of his years of good service, because of prior truth telling, because of trust he had earned over the years, because he was esteemed and looked up to, because he pretended to be righteous, when he lied it was much more impactful. Is this instructive for us today? What lessons?

- Be careful who you trust
- Always think for yourself
- Don't believe on claims, examine the claims in light of the abundant evidences God has given, which are found in Scripture, Science/nature and Experience
- Remember God's testable laws, law of love, law of liberty etc.

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.** {DA 759.1}

What are the powers of God that prevail? Truth and love. What will never be used? Coercive power, the use of force. Then what would it mean if people teach that God will use force to kill His enemies,



even torture them? That the people who teach this still have their minds infected with distortions about God. They need their sanctuary cleansed.

We don't need to hate such people or be derogatory about such people, many of us thought and taught similar things at some point in our journey, why? Because we are all infected with sin, selfishness, lies, misunderstandings. So, when we hear such distortions we need to recognize them as symptoms of the infection and use the divine weapons provided by Christ – truth, love and freedom, which have prevailing power!

It was God's purpose to place things on **an eternal basis of security**, and in the councils of heaven it was decided that time must be given for Satan to develop the principles which were the foundation of his system of government. He had claimed that these were superior to God's principles. **Time was given for the working of Satan's principles, that they might be seen by the heavenly universe.** {DA 759.2}

- How are things placed on an eternal basis of security?
- Why can things not be eternally secure if the war is won by force?
- So, what would be the problem if God uses His power to torture and kill in the end, or burn people for all eternity?
  
- What method is being used to win the war?
- Is it a court room, reading a record of sins, of charges, of offenses? No, it is Satan himself revealing his methods and what they result in. It is the outworking of the natural result of deviating from God's design.
- What would God have lost if God did not allow Satan time to develop and reveal his principles?
- What are Satan's principles?
  - Lies
  - Coercion
  - Flattery
  - Force
  - Intimidation
  - Death, disease, perversion

Satan led men into sin, and the plan of redemption was put in operation. For four thousand years, Christ was working for man's uplifting, and Satan for his ruin and degradation. And the heavenly universe beheld it all. {DA 759.3}

- What was Christ doing in Old Testament times? Working for man's uplifting.
- What does it mean when some suggest God was punishing sin in the OT?

God, therapeutically intervened throughout the OT in many places, but all His actions were part of the plan to heal and restore. When a doctor cauterizes a cancer he is not torturing, or punishing, but



excising dead and destructive tissue. Likewise, in OT times, God sometimes cauterized festering pockets of moral decay, for the purpose of keeping open the avenue for the Messiah. Yet, even those individuals who were put in the grave by God, are not terminated. Each will still arise to complete their lives by the exercise of their own freewill choices.

When Jesus came into the world, Satan's power was turned against Him. From the time when He appeared as a babe in Bethlehem, the usurper worked to bring about His destruction. In every possible way he sought to prevent Jesus from developing a perfect childhood, a faultless manhood, a holy ministry, and an unblemished sacrifice. But he was defeated. He could not lead Jesus into sin. He could not discourage Him, or drive Him from a work He had come on earth to do. From the desert to Calvary, the storm of Satan's wrath beat upon Him, but the more mercilessly it fell, the more firmly did the Son of God cling to the hand of His Father, and press on in the bloodstained path. All the efforts of Satan to oppress and overcome Him only brought out in a purer light His spotless character... {DA 759.4}

- What did Satan do? Why did he do it?
- Why did Satan want to prevent Christ from developing a perfect childhood?
- When Satan led Herod to try and have baby Jesus killed, why did God intervene to prevent it?
- If sin is a legal problem, and God requires a legal payment, and that payment is the blood of His sinless Son, then why stop it? Jesus was human, on earth, sinless and about to be executed by evil men at the prompting of Satan. So, we would have had a "blood payment."
- Why stop it? Because a blood payment was NEVER needed, NEVER. The idea of a legal blood payment is a lie of Satan. What was needed was for Christ to reveal the truth about God, expose Satan and develop a perfect human character!

**Heaven beheld** the Victim betrayed into the hands of the murderous mob, and with mockery and violence hurried from one tribunal to another. It heard the sneers of His persecutors because of His lowly birth. It heard the denial with cursing and swearing by one of His best-loved disciples. It saw **the frenzied work of Satan, and his power over the hearts of men.** Oh, fearful scene! the Saviour seized at midnight in Gethsemane, dragged to and fro from palace to judgment hall, arraigned twice before the priests, twice before the Sanhedrin, twice before Pilate, and once before Herod, mocked, scourged, condemned, and led out to be crucified, bearing the heavy burden of the cross, amid the wailing of the daughters of Jerusalem and the jeering of the rabble. {DA 760.1}

**Heaven viewed with grief and amazement Christ hanging upon the cross,** blood flowing from His wounded temples, and sweat tinged with blood standing upon His brow. From His hands and feet the blood fell, drop by drop, upon the rock drilled for the foot of the cross. The wounds made by the nails gaped as the weight of His body dragged upon His hands. His labored breath grew quick and deep, as His soul panted under the burden of the sins of the world. **All heaven was filled with wonder when the prayer of Christ was offered in the midst of His terrible suffering,--"Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."** Luke 23:34. **Yet there stood men, formed in the image of God, joining to crush out the life of His only-begotten Son.** What a sight for the heavenly universe! {DA 760.2}



- What is happening in the war?
- What is the purpose of Christ?
- Is Christ working to convince His Father to love us?
- Is Christ working to win His Father's favor as is often taught?
- Is Christ seeking legal means to get His Father's government to pardon us? No, Christ is working to undo the lies of Satan, to expose Satan as a fraud, to vindicate the truth about God's character and to Remedy the fallen condition of humanity.

**The principalities and powers of darkness were assembled around the cross, casting the hellish shadow of unbelief into the hearts of men.** When the Lord created these beings to stand before His throne, they were beautiful and glorious. Their loveliness and holiness were in accordance with their exalted station. They were enriched with the wisdom of God, and girded with the panoply of heaven. They were Jehovah's ministers. But who could recognize in the fallen angels the glorious seraphim that once ministered in the heavenly courts? {DA 760.3}

**Satanic agencies confederated with evil men** in leading the people to believe Christ the chief of sinners, and to make Him the object of detestation. Those who mocked Christ as He hung upon the cross were imbued with the spirit of the first great rebel. He filled them with vile and loathsome speeches. He inspired their taunts. But by all this he gained nothing. {DA 760.4}

Could one sin have been found in Christ, had He in one particular yielded to Satan to escape the terrible torture, the enemy of God and man would have triumphed. Christ bowed His head and died, but He held fast His faith and His submission to God. "And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ: **for the accuser of our brethren is cast down**, which accused them before our God day and night." Revelation 12:10. {DA 761.1}

Satan was cast down from heaven at the Cross – why? Note the reason and what restricted his access to heaven.

**Satan saw that his disguise was torn away. His administration was laid open before the unfallen angels and before the heavenly universe. He had revealed himself as a murderer. By shedding the blood of the Son of God, he had uprooted himself from the sympathies of the heavenly beings. Henceforth his work was restricted. Whatever attitude he might assume, he could no longer await the angels as they came from the heavenly courts, and before them accuse Christ's brethren of being clothed with the garments of blackness and the defilement of sin. The last link of sympathy between Satan and the heavenly world was broken.** {DA 761.2}

Think of the significance – no heavenly beings listen to anything Satan says any more. God doesn't listen, Christ doesn't listen, angels unfallen don't listen. He is restricted. He is cast down. He is cast out of their hearts, affections and sympathies. This is a war of ideas and loyalties and there is no being



in the heavenly universe who will any longer listen to anything Satan has to say. He is not able to stand in heaven and accuse us before the heavenly beings. There is no courtroom scene going on in heaven in which Satan is a prosecuting attorney trying to get us convicted and Jesus is our defense attorney pleading His blood and claiming its legal power to grant us pardon. This is all false, based on Satan's distortion and lies about God and God's law.

**In the opening of the great controversy, Satan had declared that the law of God could not be obeyed,** that justice was inconsistent with mercy, and that, should the law be broken, it would be impossible for the sinner to be pardoned. **Every sin must meet its punishment, urged Satan;** and if God should remit the punishment of sin, He would not be a God of truth and justice. When men broke the law of God, and defied His will, Satan exulted. It was proved, he declared, that the law could not be obeyed; man could not be forgiven. Because he, after his rebellion, had been banished from heaven, Satan claimed that the human race must be forever shut out from God's favor. God could not be just, he urged, and yet show mercy to the sinner. {DA 761.4}

Here is Satan's view of God's law. And many church leaders, when I have shown them this have said, "well Satan was right about this." Unbelievably, those who have opposed our ministry have done so by sustaining and supporting Satan to be right, and most of the members of our church don't even notice.

This is the argument of imposed law. But the Creator could do justice how? By revealing the truth, winning us to trust and healing us, fixing what is broken in our hearts and character. This is right, this is just and then it is perfectly proper and in harmony with God's government for us to enter heaven, for we will have been restored into harmony with it. This is what Christ came to achieve for us!

**But even as a sinner, man was in a different position from that of Satan. Lucifer in heaven had sinned in the light of God's glory.** To him as to no other created being was given a revelation of God's love. Understanding the character of God, knowing His goodness, Satan chose to follow his own selfish, independent will. This choice was final. There was no more that God could do to save him. **But man was deceived;** his mind was darkened by Satan's sophistry. **The height and depth of the love of God he did not know. For him there was hope in a knowledge of God's love. By beholding His character he might be drawn back to God.** {DA 761.5}

Where is our hope? In a knowledge of God's character of love. Not in a legal blood payment. Why? Because it was never a legal problem, it has always been a problem with our actual condition. Sin is deviation from love and trust and a condition out of harmony with how life is built. This requires healing, recreation, restoration, and **of course occurs because God forgives. But His forgiveness precedes Christ's mission to earth, it is not in response to it.**

Through Jesus, God's mercy was manifested to men; but mercy does not set aside justice. **The law reveals the attributes of God's character, and not a jot or tittle of it could be changed to meet man in his fallen condition...**



Why? For the same reason the law of respiration cannot be changed to meet a person who ties weights to their legs and jumps in the ocean. It is the design for life, to change the law **WOULD DESTROY ALL LIFE**

...God did not change His law, but He sacrificed Himself, in Christ, for man's redemption. "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself." 2 Corinthians 5:19. {DA 762.1}

Sacrificed Christ for man's redemption, healing, saving, note the very next words of what the law requires and what Christ accomplished.

**The law requires righteousness,--a righteous life, a perfect character; and this man has not to give. He cannot meet the claims of God's holy law. But Christ, coming to the earth as man, lived a holy life, and developed a perfect character. These He offers as a free gift to all who will receive them.** His life stands for the life of men. Thus they have remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God. More than this, **Christ imbues men with the attributes of God. He builds up the human character after the similitude of the divine character**, a goodly fabric of spiritual strength and beauty. **Thus the very righteousness of the law is fulfilled in the believer in Christ.** God can "be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus."... Romans 3:26. {DA 762.2}

Note what is actually happening, Christ reveals the truth about God, exposes Satan as a fraud, wins us to trust, and cured the condition by developing a perfect character which He imbues to all who trust Him, thus transforming us to be like Him. We are reborn, healed, renewed, recreated in righteousness!

His life stands for earth. He is our head. He is our Adam. He is our champion. He stands for us, not in some legal sense, but in actuality. He is human and He is perfect and sinless. Thus He took His humanity to what Adam was created to be.

**The warfare against God's law, which was begun in heaven, will be continued until the end of time.** Every man will be tested. Obedience or disobedience is the question to be decided by the whole world. **All will be called to choose between the law of God and the laws of men. Here the dividing line will be drawn. There will be but two classes. Every character will be fully developed; and all will show whether they have chosen the side of loyalty or that of rebellion.** {DA 763.3}

- What kind of law is God's law? Natural, design template for life, intrinsic.
- What kind of law is man's? Imposed, rules without inherent consequence.
- Thus, we must all decide, whose law will we follow?
- How do we see and understand God's law?

There will be but two classes, those who worship the Designer and adhere to the law of love, the design template for life and thus practice presenting truth in love and leaving others free. Or those who adhere to imposed law, and worship the dictator god who inflicts pain, suffering and death for



disobedience, and thus they will use their power to coerce others, as they practice and implement human law to force their religious way.

The character we develop is based on what God we worship, which is impacted by how we see His law. Is God the Designer or Dictator? Thus, SDAs who present the Sabbath as an imposed law, to test obedience, misrepresent the law of God and move people way from salvation.

Then the end will come. God will vindicate His law and deliver His people. Satan and all who have joined him in rebellion will be cut off. **Sin and sinners will perish**, root and branch, (Malachi 4:1),--Satan the root, and his followers the branches. The word will be fulfilled to the prince of evil, "Because thou hast set thine heart as the heart of God; . . . **I will destroy thee, O covering cherub**, from the midst of the stones of fire. . . . Thou shalt be a terror, and never shalt thou be any more." Then "the wicked shall not be: yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be;" "they shall be as though they had not been." Ezekiel 28:6-19; Psalm 37:10; Obadiah 16. {DA 763.4}

**This is not an act of arbitrary power on the part of God. The rejecters of His mercy reap that which they have sown. God is the fountain of life; and when one chooses the service of sin, he separates from God, and thus cuts himself off from life.** He is "alienated from the life of God." Christ says, "All they that hate Me love death." Ephesians 4:18; Proverbs 8:36. **God gives them existence for a time that they may develop their character and reveal their principles. This accomplished, they receive the results of their own choice. By a life of rebellion, Satan and all who unite with him place themselves so out of harmony with God that His very presence is to them a consuming fire. The glory of Him who is love will destroy them.** {DA 764.1}

This is not an arbitrary act, God does not use His power to inflict this. Their destruction is the NATURAL result of what happens when one deviates from the law upon which life is built! Yet, those who have accepted Satan's lie that every sin must be punished, that God's law is imposed, teach that God uses His power to inflict pain suffering and death.

At the beginning of the great controversy, the angels did not understand this. [What did they not understand?] Had Satan and his host then been left to **reap the full result of their sin**, they would have perished; but it would not have been apparent to heavenly beings that this was **the inevitable result of sin**. A doubt of God's goodness would have remained in their minds as evil seed, to produce its deadly fruit of sin and woe. {DA 764.2}

Note how this is described, reaping the full result of sin, the inevitable result of sin. Sin destroys, sin deviates from God's design, sin is the cause of death. Angels would not have understood this originally and what would that have caused? A doubt of God. And what about today? Because of Satan's lies so infecting Christianity about God and His law, many Christians teach that it is not sin that causes death, but God inflicts it to punish for sin. Thus many Christians teach ideas that cause people to doubt God. This is what needs to be cleansed. This is the prophecy of Daniel 8, to cleanse the sanctuary of all these lies and distortions about God.





But not so when the great controversy shall be ended. Then, the plan of redemption having been completed, **the character of God is revealed to all created intelligences. The precepts of His law are seen to be perfect and immutable. Then sin has made manifest its nature, Satan his character. Then the extermination of sin will vindicate God's love and establish His honor before a universe of beings who delight to do His will, and in whose heart is His law.** {DA 764.3}

Thoughts?

## MONDAY

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The lesson, in paragraph four quotes a section out of Christ's Object Lessons page 167 – "Satan 'is accusing the children of God, and making their case appear as desperate as possible. He presents before the Lord their evil doings and their defects.'"

Is there a trial going on in heaven, or is something else happening? Let's read the context carefully:

The people of God are here represented as a criminal on trial. Joshua, as high priest, is seeking for a blessing for his people, who are in great affliction. **While he is pleading before God, Satan is standing at his right hand as his adversary. He is accusing the children of God, and making their case appear as desperate as possible.** He presents before the Lord their evil doings and their defects. He shows their faults and failures, hoping they will appear of such a character in the eyes of Christ that He will render them no help in their great need. Joshua, as the representative of God's people, stands under condemnation, clothed with filthy garments. **Aware of the sins of his people, he is weighed down with discouragement. Satan is pressing upon his soul a sense of guiltiness that makes him feel almost hopeless.** Yet there he stands as a suppliant, with Satan arrayed against him... {COL 166.4}

Every manifestation of God's power for His people arouses the enmity of Satan. Every time God works in their behalf, Satan with his angels works with renewed vigor to compass their ruin. He is jealous of all who make Christ their strength. His object is to instigate evil, and when he has succeeded, throw all the blame upon the tempted ones. **He points to their filthy garments, their defective characters. He presents their weakness and folly, their sins of ingratitude, their unlikeness to Christ, which have dishonored their Redeemer. All this he urges as an argument proving his right to work his will in their destruction. He endeavors to affright their souls with the thought that their case is hopeless, that the stain of their defilement can never be washed away. He hopes so to destroy their faith that they will yield fully to his temptations, and turn from their allegiance to God.** {COL 168.1}

Thoughts?

Do you notice, that in heaven no one pays any mind to Satan's allegations? The only place Satan's allegations have traction, make an impact, is in the minds of human beings. Thus, before the Father,



Christ is pleading to you and me and the Holy Spirit takes Christ's pleas and communicates them to your heart and mind!

Read last paragraph, "In both cases..." what is this paragraph communicating? What law is it predicated upon? Which version of God is it connoting? Is it representing God's character correctly?

## **TUESDAY**

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Read first paragraph, "From the very beginning..." Do you hear Satan's allegations from the opening of the controversy in heaven? We read this earlier. The lesson claims that the act of an innocent dying to pay the legal death payment of the guilty is an act of justice.

The truth is, that what they propose is the most unjust act possible in the universe and thus the present God as the most unjust being in the universe. It is just as EGW said Satan hid his rebellion under the pretense of righteousness. These theologians claim this is just, when it is vile, evil and unjust.

It is unjust to execute the innocent in place of the guilty, even if the innocent is willing to take the place of the guilty.

However, it is absolutely just, for love to interpose itself and sacrifice itself to save someone dying of a terminal condition. It is a just act of love to give a kidney to a child dying of kidney failure, to step into harms way to save one, to give up your seat on the life raft for another. When death is a result of deviation from the design protocol for life, it is an act of love and justice for a being to step in and take the place of the terminal party for the purpose of saving the one they love, for the purpose of providing Remedy.

Thus, Christ is our substitute. He took our terminal condition upon Himself and He overcame. He revealed the truth to win us to trust and He developed a perfect human character that He freely provides to all who trust Him. But God did NOT execute Jesus the innocent in our place to satisfy a divine legal penalty.

## **WEDNESDAY**

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Read first paragraph, "As Scripture..." thoughts? To whom is Satan presenting his allegations? Who needs the answer? Who is the one listening?

Read second paragraph, "God's character..." thoughts?

This is correct, the purpose of the records are like medical records, there to exonerate the Creator when allegations of misconduct are made against Him. They are not their to judge or impugn the patient or sinner.

## **THURSDAY**

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Read Ezekiel 36:22-27:

“Therefore say to the house of Israel, ‘This is what the Sovereign Lord says: It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am going to do these things, but for the sake of my holy name, which you have profaned among the nations where you have gone. <sup>23</sup> I will show the holiness of my great name, which has been profaned among the nations, the name you have profaned among them. Then the nations will know that I am the Lord, declares the Sovereign Lord, when I show myself holy through you before their eyes.

<sup>24</sup> “ ‘For I will take you out of the nations; I will gather you from all the countries and bring you back into your own land. <sup>25</sup> I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. <sup>26</sup> I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. <sup>27</sup> And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.

Thoughts? Why does giving us a new heart and spirit bring honor to God? For the same reason a patient being cured of cancer brings honor to the doctor who developed the cure.

We are sick, we don't get any glory from our being cured, God the Creator gets the honor and glory for creation and recreation.

## **FRIDAY**

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Read and discuss question 1