



## 2024 2Q The Great Controversy Lesson 12 Earth's Closing Events

by Tim Jennings

### ANNOUNCEMENTS:

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**A NEW CHILDREN'S BOOK IS NOW AVAILABLE: Biblical Concepts Made Easy**, by Stephanie Land. It is a fun book with puzzles that teaches children the truth about God, His design laws, and answers difficult questions regarding moral decision making and why suffering happens. These are available for you and your family and to share. We will ship them at no cost to any US Postal address. They will also be for sale on Amazon as an individual book and we will have them for sale at bulk discount pricing on our website for schools and church groups to purchase and give to their youth. Please get a copy and share with your youth pastor or leader and give them the contact information where they can order on our website.

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Most of our class today is going to be via power point, continuing to unpack the beasts of Revelation 13 and 17 as these are topics that the lesson focuses upon for this week—Earth's Closing Events. However, before we do that there are a couple of points I want to highlight from the lesson.

### SUNDAY

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Read first paragraph,

- Throughout the ages, the great controversy has been a **battle between truth and error**. Satan is a liar and the father of lies (John 8:44). Jesus is the author of all truth. He declared, “ ‘I am the way, the truth, and the life’ ” (John 14:6). **The truth that sets us free** from Satan's deceptions is found in God's Word. The Bible unmasks Satan's strategy and reveals God's plans. Scripture is a lamp to our feet (Ps. 119:105). The psalmist declares, “The entrance of

Your words gives light; it gives understanding to the simple” (Ps. 119:130, NKJV). He then adds, “The entirety of Your word is truth” (Ps. 119:160, NKJV). (Adult SS Guide 2nd Q 2024, The Great Controversy p. 97, emphasis mine).

Thoughts? Everything said in this paragraph is true—and I agree with it—yet, it left the issue wide open for misuse, misdirection, misinterpretation, and deception—how? It did not identify the central issue in the war. Yes, it is a battle between truth and error—but over what? Yes, the truth does set us free—but what truth? Is it the truth about how to be baptized, or which day is the Sabbath, or the state of the dead, or any other of our doctrines? No, those are not the central truths in the war. The central truth that must be setting, the truth that unmasks Satan and reveals God’s plan and then causes the Bible to be a lamp to enlighten us, is what?

Consider Jesus’ words to see if the most important truth was left out of the paragraph:

- You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me. But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life. (John 5:39-40 NKJV).
- “Eternal life means knowing you, the only true God, and knowing Jesus Christ, whom you sent. I have shown your glory on earth; I have finished the work you gave me to do. Father! Give me glory in your presence now, the same glory I had with you before the world was made. I have made you known to those you gave me out of the world. (John 17:3-6 GNT).
- Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. (John 14:9).
- You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me, yet you refuse to come to me to have life. (John 5:39-40 NIV84).

Now consider the first paragraph again and ask, are all the ideas true, and yet still something is missing?

- Throughout the ages, the great controversy has been a **battle between truth and error**. Satan is a liar and the father of lies (John 8:44). Jesus is the author of all truth. He declared, “ ‘I am the way, the truth, and the life’ ” (John 14:6). **The truth that sets us free** from Satan’s deceptions is found in God’s Word. The Bible unmasks Satan’s strategy and reveals God’s plans. Scripture is a lamp to our feet (Ps. 119:105). The psalmist declares, “The entrance of Your words gives light; it gives understanding to the simple” (Ps. 119:130, NKJV). He then adds, “The entirety of Your word is truth” (Ps. 119:160, NKJV). (Adult SS Guide 2nd Q 2024, The Great Controversy p. 97, emphasis mine).

Can one use this paragraph to teach the truth about correct doctrines, the correct fundamental beliefs, the correct day of worship, the correct way to go through ceremonial baptism, searching Scripture for the truth on these things but cling to the lies about God because one holds the wrong law concept?

In other words, the lesson rightly tells us that the controversy is a battle between truth and error but LEAVES OUT the central issue over God's character, and our belief about that is determined by how we understand God's law functions! And this leaves room for people to believe they are pursuing the truth, that they are loyal to God and the Scripture while they are God's enemies, just like the Jews 2000 years ago.

## TUESDAY

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Read first paragraph,

- In the last days, the great controversy will be played out, in a dramatic way, over worship. **Do we worship the Creator, or do we worship the beast and its image?** There is no middle ground. The first angel of Revelation 14 urges men and women to “ ‘worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water’ ” (Rev. 14:7, NKJV). In further support of heaven's appeal, the third angel reveals the dire consequences of worshipping the beast: “The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation” (Rev. 14:10). By contrast, those who worship the Creator are described as keeping “the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus” (Rev. 14:12, NKJV). (Adult SS Guide 2nd Q 2024, The Great Controversy p. 99, emphasis mine).

What determines whether we are worshipping the Creator or a creature? The law one believes their God's government operates upon. What we believe about God's law determines what we believe about God.

Consider this dialogue between the church leaders and Jesus Christ—and remember these church leaders were the Adventists of their day. They were the ones with the Bible, Sabbath, health message, sanctuary message, believers in the one true Creator God and they specifically claim that they are worshipping the Creator God and notice what Jesus says in this interaction:

“**Abraham is our father,**” they answered.

“**If you were Abraham's children,**” said Jesus, “**then you would do the things Abraham did.** As it is, you are determined to kill me, a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God. Abraham did not do such things. **You are doing the things your own father does.**” [They claim virtue by genetics, by biology, claiming promises God made to Abraham. But Jesus tells them that Abraham's true children are those who do what Abraham did, those who respond to the truth by placing their faith, their trust in Jesus, by having hearts that love truth and grow in the truth about God, His methods, practices, and principles. And Jesus goes further and tells them that God recognizes relationship based on the qualities of character one forms, based on the principles, the type of law one chooses to operate their lives upon. And these people have chosen not the God of truth, of love, of liberty, of design law. But they have chosen the god of lies, of fantasy, of selfishness, of imposed rules with coercive enforcement.]

“We are not illegitimate children,” they protested. “The only Father we have is God himself.” [So the legalists up their claim—they claim to be Bible believing worshipers of the Creator God and they are seventh-day Sabbath keepers. Notice what Jesus says.]

Jesus said to them, “**If God were your Father**, you would love me, for I came from God and now am here. I have not come on my own; but he sent me... **You belong to your father, the devil**, and you want to carry out your father’s desire. He 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. Yet **because I tell the truth**, you do not believe me! Can any of you prove me guilty of sin? If I am telling the truth, why don’t you believe me? **He who belongs to God hears what God says. The reason you do not hear is that you do not belong to God.**”

The Jews answered him, “**Aren’t we right in saying that you are a Samaritan and demon-possessed?**” (John 8:39-48 NIV84, emphasis mine). [When one rejects the truth, when one’s heart prefers the lies, the lies about God’s character, the lies about God’s government, which are based in the lies about God’s law—then when they hear the truth they not only reject it they claim those with the truth—Jesus Himself—is demon possessed.]

So, putting this together with our lesson’s paragraph—what does it mean to worship the Creator? Is it enough to be a loyal observer of the seventh-day Sabbath? No! And this is where all but the very elect will be deceived. Those who observe the seventh-day Sabbath as an imposed edict from a god who makes up rules and who uses his power to inflict punishment for rule-breaking will find themselves in the same camp as those Jews Jesus was speaking to in John 8. They will claim they are children of the Creator, that they are worshiping the Creator God, but they will sadly discover that they are children of the devil.

Now we turn to completing our exploration about the beasts of Revelation 13 and 17, the seal of God, the mark of the beast and the final events on planet earth.