



2025 God's Love and Justice Lesson 9 The Cosmic Conflict

by Tim Jennings

SABBATH

What do you think of the lesson title?

If you haven't read our magazine [The Lie That Deceived Angels, Infects Christianity, and Delays the Second Coming of Christ](#), I encourage you to do so. And if you want a resource to share with others that lays out this cosmic conflict and the central issue, this is free to share and available in digital form on our website and in print in the US, South Africa, and Australia.

Read Memory Text:

- And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel." Genesis 3:15 NIV84.

The most important point for me about this text is that it sets the framework for the entire Old Testament. Without the Messiah promised in this passage no human being could be saved from sin. Right here, before Adam and Eve are expelled from Eden, God promises Jesus to be our Savior and He tells Satan that Jesus is coming to be our Messiah.

Satan does not go on vacation but begins using all his destructive ability to seek to prevent Jesus from coming as our Savior. How? By getting every single human being to permanently hardening themselves to God and closing their hearts and minds to the Holy Spirit. At the time of the Flood there was only one righteous man left on the entire planet still willing to work with God. And in mercy, grace, goodness, God acted, not to punish sin, for the punishment for sin is eternal death after the Great White Throne Judgment at the end of time. The Flood was not that, it was the sleep death, a death from which everyone good or evil will experience resurrection. God was not acting to inflict punishment, but was acting therapeutically, in mercy and grace, to keep open the avenue for the Messiah for without Jesus all humanity is eternally lost.

This gives insight into the focus of the Bible story arch, we keep narrowing the focus from the entire world at the time of the Flood—for we didn't know from which branch of the human family Jesus would come, to Abraham's family when God let him know it would be through his descendants that the Savior would come. But through Isaac, not Ishmael, and through Jacob and not Esau, we keep narrowing the focus of the story arch, ultimately Judah. For the entire story of the Bible is Jesus coming to save us from this terminal sin condition.

So this is the first and perhaps greatest point of this text. But what else does this text teach?

- Two opposing forces in conflict?
- Who are those opponents?
- Who is represented by the offspring of the woman?
- Who is the offspring of the serpent?
- 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. Why is my language not clear to you? Because you are unable to hear what I say. **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. John 8:42-44 NIV84, emphasis mine.

Who are the two groups? And notice, “**he will crush your head and you will strike his heel.**”

There are two leaders and two groups of followers.

The leaders are Jesus and Satan and the followers, the children, are those who bear the image of whomever they choose as their “father.” We either, through faith, through restored trust, surrender to Jesus and experience a rebirth, a new life, a new heart and right spirit and are recreated to bear the image of Jesus and thus are children of God, or we resist truth and love, we say no to the Spirit of God, we refuse to surrender self in love and trust to Jesus and we solidify ourselves to be like Satan and Jesus says when that happens he is our father and we are his offspring.

And these two groups war through history.

This cosmic conflict view, this Great Controversy view, is probably the most important theological contribution to Christian thought that the SDA church has brought to humanity. And there has been no one that I have read that has done a more comprehensive job of describing the cosmic view of the war that began in heaven better than Ellen G. White. Her Conflict of the Ages series is magnificent.

The great Reformer Martin Luther struggled to appreciate the cosmic conflict because he only accepted 62 of the 66 books of Scripture. He did not include James, Jude, Hebrews, and Revelation with the rest of the Bible and placed them in the back of his German translation.

Several of the church fathers struggled with the idea of a war in heaven because they conceived of God as running His universe like a Caesar and they opined, how could a creature war against the Creator. Such a war would be over in milliseconds. And again, this is where the Adventist Reformers were advancing the reformation. The church had been infected with Romanism, the lie that God’s law functions like human law and many Reformers failed to recognize this imbedded lie and thus concluded that no creature could war in heaven against our all-powerful God. EGW explicitly describes how the war was not about might and power:

- 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**. *The Desire of Ages* p. 759, emphasis mine

The Great Controversy was never about who has the power, it was always about whether we can trust God with the power. Satan alleged God was abusive, God uses power to impose His way, to threaten, to coerce, to inflict external punishments and thus we are not free—and without freedom there is no love. Satan did this by insinuating God's laws function like those of a creature, made up rules and thus God, in order to be just must use power to inflict punishments. This insidious lie is still taught throughout Christianity, in all denominations.

And the Reformation has stalled as this lie has never been fully confronted and eliminated and many Reformers fail to fully appreciate the larger view of the war that began in heaven, and others who do see the cosmic conflict view, misconstrue the nature of the war as being about might and power.

What makes the Adventist message unique is that it presents the gospel in the setting of a universal war with stakes that include more than simply using might and power to exterminate the opposition and saving humans from sin; it also includes the securing of the sinless heavenly beings in their loyalty to God so that sin will never rise again. As the apostle Paul wrote to the Colossians:

- For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or **things in heaven**, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross Colossians 1:19, 20 NIV84 emphasis mine.

When we view sin and salvation in this larger universal context, we discover eternal truths that are required for us to know and embrace in order for sin and Satan to be permanently defeated; the principalities and powers of darkness destroyed; and all doubt, disaffection, and rebellion eliminated from the entire universe, thereby not only saving humanity from sin but also solidifying the loyal angels in their purity and restoring all things back to sinless perfection.

The Bible teaches that Christ's mission, in addition to saving humans from sin, also included destroying the source and cause of all pain, suffering, and death:

- Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might **destroy him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil** (Hebrews 2:14, emphasis mine).
- The end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father **after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power**. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. **The last enemy to be destroyed is death** (1 Corinthians 15:24–26, emphasis mine).

In order to destroy Satan, death, and the powers of darkness and to eliminate sin from His universe, God must defeat the roots of sin—the lies, the fear, and the selfishness along with the methods and principles of Satan that operate within the hearts and minds of intelligent beings. Destroying Satan without also destroying the lies he has told would not stop the spread of sin and rebellion.

And lies, fear, and selfishness cannot be defeated by the exercise of power and might. A lie cannot be defeated by simply declaring it to be false; the truth must be revealed. It is the truth that sets us free (John 8:32). Fear cannot be eliminated and love and trust restored by threatening to torture and kill those who don't love and trust. In fact to try and destroy fear and selfishness and restore love and trust through imposed punishments actually spreads sin. This is why the Bible teaches that God wins,

- “Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,” says the Lord Almighty Zechariah 4:6 NIV84.

The Spirit is the Spirit of truth and love, not the spirit of fear (Romans 8:15); the truth destroys lies and wins us to trust, while love casts out all fear and empowers us to live victoriously (John 16:13; 1 John 4:18).

The war between Christ and Satan has always been a battle for hearts and minds, but this war did not begin in Eden; it began in heaven.

- And **war broke out in heaven:** Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer. So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him Revelation 12:7–9 NKJV, emphasis mine.

In Revelation 12:7, the Greek word translated as “war” is πόλεμος (*polemos*), from which we get “polemic,” which is an argument. This shows that this cosmic war is a battle of competing ideas, concepts, beliefs, methods, motives, and principles—it is not a war of physical combat. Thus, Satan wars against heaven by sowing into hearts and minds lies about God that undermine trust in Him, incite fear, and lead to selfishness and rebellion.

We are told that Satan is the originator of lies:

- You belong to your father, the devil. ... When he lies, he speaks his native language, **for he is a liar and the father of lies** John 8:44 NIV84, emphasis mine.

And the devil's primary lies in this war are about God because when we believe lies about God, our trust in Him is broken. As Paul said:

- For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. **We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the**

knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ 2 Corinthians 10:3–5 NI 84, emphasis mine.

And Jesus said:

- Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent John 17:3 NIV84.

We must have the lies about God removed from our hearts and minds and come to know Him intimately and personally in order to be saved and transformed.

Believing Satan’s lies breaks down love and trust, resulting in rebellion against God, thus “everything that does not come from faith [trust] is sin” (Romans 14:23).

The unique contribution of the Adventist Church to the ongoing Reformation is the expansion of the Christian understanding of the sin problem from being an exclusively human problem to a universal problem—and expanding the salvation mission of Jesus from being exclusively about saving human beings from sin to also including the revelation of the truth about God and His government in order to destroy the lies of Satan and secure the unfallen heavenly beings in their loyalty.

Jesus described this larger purpose of His mission when He said,

- “Now is the time for judgment on this world; now **the prince of this world will be driven out**. But I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all **men** to myself.” He said this to show the kind of death he was going to die John 12:31–33 NIV84, emphasis mine.

The word “men” in this passage is not in the Greek manuscripts; it was added by the translators. It should read: “will draw all to myself.” As such, Jesus was telling us that His mission included more than just humanity; it also included defeating the powers of darkness in the heavenly realms (Ephesians 6:12). By revealing the truth about God and exposing Satan as a liar, Jesus drives Satan from the shadows, out into the open, and from the affections and sympathies of God’s loyal angels, who knew, loved, and trusted Lucifer before his fall. In so doing, Jesus draws to Himself *all* those who love God and His methods and secures them to Himself for eternity because they are convinced by the truth itself, the truth that God is trustworthy and that Satan is a liar and fraud.

And what is the central lie that Satan has told that undermines trust in God and leads intelligent beings into rebellion and sin?

That God’s law is no different than the laws creatures make, made up rules that God then enforces through inflicted punishments. This is the root lie. For if one believes God’s law functions like human law one always believes God is the source of inflicted pain, suffering, and death for so-called justice sake.

That is why the final message that is to lighten the world is the message of the 3 angels which calls on people to stop judging God as an imperial dictator and source of pain, suffering, and death and start worshiping Him as Creator, the one who made the heavens, earth, sea, and fountains of water. And this requires we rejected the imposed law lies and understand His laws are design laws.

If you would like a comprehensive exploration of the message of the 3 Angels through the design law understanding, get our magazine [The Final Message of Mercy to the World: The Three Angels](#) the digital version is on our website or you can get a free print version in the US, South Africa, and Australia.

When we view God as Creator rather than imperial dictator and His law as design law rather than imposed rules, we realize sin is transgression of the protocols life is built to operate upon and therefore, the wages of sin is death, just like tying a plastic bag over your head and transgressing the law of respiration results in death unless someone puts you back in harmony with the law. This is why Jesus came, to *not only* reveal the truth about God that wins us and angels to trust, but for humans He also came to restore God's living law back into humanity. When we are won to trust and open our hearts to Him, we receive a new heart and right spirit animated with His living law of love as the operational, motivation, drive to our actions.

Here is an historical quote from EGW describing the lie in the opening of the GC:

- **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.** *The Desire of Ages* p. 761, emphasis mine.

What kind of law requires God to punish sin? Human law, imposed law, made up rules and if punishment is not inflicted then there is no justice in a human law system, a made-up legal framework. But this is not so with design law.

Consider the quotation from *The Great Controversy*, cited in Thursday's lesson,

- In His dealing with sin, God **could employ only righteousness and truth.** Satan could use what God could not—flattery and deceit. He had sought to falsify the word of God and **had misrepresented His plan of government** before the angels, **claiming that God was not just in laying laws and rules upon the inhabitants of heaven;** that in requiring submission and obedience from His creatures, He was seeking merely the exaltation of Himself. Therefore it must be demonstrated before the inhabitants of heaven, as well as of all the worlds, **that God's government was just, His law perfect.** Satan had made it appear that he himself was seeking to promote the good of the universe. The true character of the usurper, and his real object, must be understood by all. He must have time to manifest himself by his wicked works. *The Great Controversy* p. 498, emphasis mine.

Those who believe the lie that God’s law functions like Roman law will argue that the statement above “**claiming that God was not just in laying laws and rules upon the inhabitants of heaven**” means that God is indeed being just to impose laws upon His creatures and, therefore, God’s laws are, in fact, imposed just like human laws. But the author is demonstrating the subtlety of the satanic deception, EGW wrote this position is Lucifer’s claim. This is how Lucifer in heaven could deceive sinless angels—for this statement reveals a double lie designed to trick people into accepting one lie by rejecting the other lie.

Consider someone telling you the following lie about one of your close friends, a friend you are certain is always just in all of his actions: “John is not just in beating his wife.” Knowing that your friend is always just, you immediately recognize the allegation that “John is not just” is a lie. So, in order to reject the lie that John is not just, you conclude, “No, John must be just in beating his wife.” Thus, in rejecting the one lie, you accept and promote the other lie—the lie that John is beating his wife! *Both* insinuations are false, and *both* must be rejected. It is false to say God is not just, *and* it is also false to say God imposes laws and inflicts pain and death as punishments for breaking them.

But sadly, many fail to recognize the second lie; therefore, they claim God is just to impose laws and use His power to inflict punishments upon sinners. They don’t realize that they are presenting Satan’s original lie about God and, thereby, are undermining God’s law and government and obstructing the eternal gospel.

Some might doubt that the angels could be deceived like this. They may argue that these were brilliant sinless beings who lived in a sinless heaven and, as such, wouldn’t be duped so easily by a lie. But that is the point. The angels in heaven had never heard a lie, much less a double lie. Moreover, the lie was being told by their beloved and trusted leader and friend, Lucifer. They were not prepared to even consider that they were being deceived.

But unlike those angels, we have the evidence of human history as recorded in Scripture and the life of Jesus, the living Word, the truth embodied that reveals God’s true nature, character, and methods. We must reject the lie that God is not just; He is always just! Yet we also must reject the embedded lie that God imposes made-up laws on His creatures. Instead, God creates reality, and His laws are the protocols reality functions upon.

Furthermore, angels in heaven did not have an imposed list of rules to obey that required God to police and punish them. The same author, EGW, quoted by the lesson above also wrote:

- **But in heaven, service is not rendered in the spirit of legality. When Satan rebelled against the law of Jehovah, the thought that there was a law came to the angels almost as an awakening to something unthought of.** In their ministry the angels are not as servants, but as sons. There is perfect unity between them and their Creator. Obedience is to them no drudgery. Love for God makes their service a joy. So in every soul wherein Christ, the hope of glory, dwells, His words are re-echoed, “I delight to do Thy will, O My God: yea, Thy law is within My heart.” Psalm 40:8. *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing* p. 109, emphasis mine.

What kind of law can be in operation and beings are living in harmony with it but haven't been informed about it or even thought of it?

This can be only design law—the protocols reality functions upon. Consider Isaac Newton discovering, not creating, the law of gravity and then telling his friends, “Hey, I have discovered the law of gravity.” As he describes that law to them, can't you envision them saying, “Wow, gravity is a law? I never thought of that; it is just how things work”?

SUNDAY

The lesson asks what evidence in Scripture for the cosmic conflict?

- Genesis account of the serpent and temptation
- Job chapter one
- Zechariah and the high priest Joshua
- The parable of the landowner who sows good seed only to find the field corrupted with weeds, and a servant asked, who did this and the landowner says an enemy did.
- Revelation 12:7 war in heaven already cited
- [Jesus] replied, “I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. Luke 10:18 NIV84
- And the angels who did not keep their positions of authority but abandoned their own home—these he has kept in darkness Jude 6 NIV84.
- Ezekiel 28 and Isaiah 14
- Other texts?

Consider this one:

- His intent was that now, through the church, the **manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms**, according to his eternal purpose which he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord. Ephesians 3:10-11 NIV84, emphasis mine

The GC theme expands our understanding of the plan of salvation to be more than just the salvation of human beings; it includes the elimination of sin from the entire universe in such a way that all questions are answered and all the sinless are secured in their loyalty, and that requires the revelation of the truth about God's character, methods, and government and this is accomplished through Jesus.

MONDAY

The lesson focuses on the fall of Adam and Eve in the Genesis account, read the third paragraph,

- In this narrative, we see lies about God's character raised by the serpent, identified as the devil himself (that “serpent of old” [NKJV]) in Revelation 12:7–9. The serpent first uses a question to cast doubt on God's command, nearly reversing what God had commanded in his question.

Then, the serpent directly challenges what God had said, saying to Eve, “ ‘You will not surely die’ ” (Gen. 3:4, NKJV). *Adult SS Guide 1st Q 2025*, God’s Love and Justice p. 70.

What do lies do to love and trust when lies are believed?

- Lies believed break the circle of love and trust
- Broken love and trust result in fear and selfishness
- Fear and selfishness cause acts of sin
- Acts of sin damage mind, body, relationship, character a terminal condition

But it all starts with lies about God and these lies center on God’s law.

Notice the conversation between the serpent and Eve and let’s unpack the lie,

- The woman said to the serpent, “We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, but God did say, ‘You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.’ ”
 “**You will not surely die,**” the serpent said to the woman. “For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”
 Genesis 3:2-5 NIV84, emphasis mine.

What is the lie? And what is the lie saying? Is Satan’s lie saying the following:

- You cannot die?
- God cannot kill you?

I know that many people have taught, because God told them in the day they eat that they will die, then Satan’s lie is telling them that they cannot die, that they have immortality. But, is that really what the lie is saying?

If I tell someone, “If you pick a dandelion, you will not surely die”—is that the same thing as saying that they cannot die or cannot be killed by God?

The falsehood about natural immortality came later. They had the Tree of Life in the Garden—why? If they had natural immortality, why the Tree of Life? And why the angel to later block their way to the Tree of Life after they sinned?

No, I don’t think Adam and Eve thought they had natural immortality and I don’t think this lie in Eden was to trick Eve into believing she had natural immortality.

The primary purpose of the lie, and what it actually does say is that eating the fruit, disobeying God, breaking God’s law will not *cause* death, will not surely, certainly, unavoidable result in death, that death does not come out from sin, from breaking God’s law. And therefore, the only conclusion left, if death does come, is that God kills, God executes, God is the source of death as punishment. So Satan is saying, you will not surely die from eating the fruit, I am not saying God won’t kill you for it, but

the eating the fruit itself won't cause death. The implication is that God's laws are not built into reality, disobedience to God's law doesn't directly harm.

And this lie is still taught throughout Christianity. Disobedience doesn't cause the punishment for sin, it doesn't cause the death, it causes a legal problem and God causes the death.

But this is contrary to Scripture:

- “Sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death” James 1:15 NIV84.
- “The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life” Galatians 6:8 NIV84.

The Bible teaches directly that sin causes death, but Satan said in Eden it wouldn't.

Further the Bible teaches,

- Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might **destroy him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil**. Hebrews 2:14 NIV84, emphasis mine.
- The end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father **after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power**. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. **The last enemy to be destroyed is death**. 1 Corinthians 15:24–26 NIV84, emphasis mine.
- Christ Jesus, who has **destroyed death** and has brought life and immortality to light 2 Timothy 1:10 NIV84, emphasis mine

The Bible teaches that death comes from sin and Satan who is the originator of sin is the one who holds the power of death and that God through Jesus destroys death and Satan's power. But Satan has lied about God and God's law and when Christians accept the lie that God's law functions like human law they teach the lie that God is the one who is the source of death—the wages of sin death—not the sleep death.

TUESDAY

Focuses our attention on Ezekiel 28 and Isaiah 14 which describes Lucifer in heaven and his fall.

Let's examine Isaiah 14:

- “How you are fallen from heaven, O **Lucifer**, son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground, You who weakened the nations! For you have said in your heart: **‘I will ascend**

into heaven, **I will exalt** my throne above the stars of God; **I will also sit** on the mount of **the congregation On the farthest sides of the north**; **I will ascend** above the heights of the clouds, **I will be like** the Most High.’ **Yet you shall be brought down** to Sheol, To the lowest depths of the Pit. “**Those who see you** will gaze at you, And consider you, saying: ‘**Is this the man who made the earth tremble**, Who shook kingdoms, Who made the world as a wilderness And destroyed its cities, Who did not open the house of his prisoners?’ Isaiah 14:12-17 NKJV, emphasis mine.

This is an incredible passage that gives such insight into the controversy.

First note that Lucifer falls from heaven, consistent with Jesus’ statement, Jude, and Revelation.

But notice the method it describes Lucifer uses is the exact opposite of Jesus.

- Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, **being in very nature God**, did **not consider equality** with God something to be **grasped**, but **made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness**. And **being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross! Therefore God exalted him** to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Philippians 2:5-11 NIV84, emphasis mine.

Lucifer seeks to exalt himself, this is through claim, proclamation, declaration, he is seeking to impose a rule that claims the throne to rule over others. And all the kingdoms of this world are Satan’s and all of them function with a few elites rising up to take power, impose laws, and exploit the masses for the benefit of the elites in power.

Jesus on the other hand, is inherently equal to God, His position, power, authority, rulership is not declared, not claimed, not imposed, it stems from objective reality that He is by nature God. And notice what He does with power, rulership, He does not seek to rise above, to exploit, to rule over, but surrenders self, humbles self, sacrifices self for the uplifting of the masses. And that is why no earthly government represents the kingdom of God for all earthly governments operate upon imposed laws coercive enforcement with a few ruling elites exploiting the masses.

But note something else, the Bible describes Satan making six moves to elevate self but is brought low, whereas Jesus humbles Himself seven times and is exalted:

- “How you are fallen from heaven, O **Lucifer**, son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground, You who weakened the nations! For you have said in your heart: ‘(1) **I will ascend** into heaven, (2) **I will exalt** my throne above the stars of God; (3) **I will also sit** on the mount of **the congregation** (4) **On the farthest sides of the north**; (5) **I will ascend** above the heights of the clouds, (6) **I will be like** the Most High.’ **Yet you shall be brought down** to Sheol, To the lowest depths of the Pit. “**Those who see you** will gaze at you, And consider

you, saying: ‘**Is this the man who made the earth tremble**, Who shook kingdoms, Who made the world as a wilderness And destroyed its cities, Who did not open the house of his prisoners?’ Isaiah 14:12-17 NKJV, emphasis mine.

- Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, **being in very nature God**, did (1) **not consider equality** with God something to be **grasped**, but (2) **made himself nothing**, (3) **taking the very nature of a servant**, (4) **being made in human likeness**. And (5) **being found in appearance as a man**, (6) **he humbled himself** and (7) **became obedient to death—even death on a cross! Therefore God exalted him** to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Philippians 2:5-11 NIV84, emphasis mine.

This is consistent with what Jesus said,

- This is why Jesus responded with “If anyone would come after me, he must **deny himself** and take up **his cross** and follow me. For whoever wants **to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it.**” Matthew 16:24-25 NIV84, emphasis mine.

We must choose which kingdom we identify with, prefer, and practice, the kingdom of love and trust which leads to surrendering self to Jesus and then we will, like Jesus, sacrifice self to save others, or if we reject the truth and don’t surrender in trust to Jesus then we harden ourselves and become like Satan and use the power of the state to promote and protect self, including killing others to protect self.

Finally, notice this section of the Isaiah passage,

- “**Those who see you** will gaze at you, And consider you, saying: ‘**Is this the man who made the earth tremble**’ Isaiah 14:16 NIV84, emphasis mine.

I think this is referencing the final end of all things when all responsibility for sin is placed on Satan, and this is symbolically taught in the sanctuary day of atonement when the high priest, after cleansing the sanctuary, places his hands on the head of the scapegoat and the scapegoat is lead out into the wilderness never to be in the camp with the people again. The symbolism is that the high priest has removed sin—fear, selfishness, lies, distrust, from the hearts and minds of all who trust Jesus and places all of the responsibility back on the originator of sin. And the truth revealed settles the issues in the Great Controversy, all the saved now know that God is not the source of sin, and also not the source of pain, suffering, and death, that all of it goes back on the head of Satan, the originator of sin.

WEDNESDAY

The lesson focuses on the temptations of Jesus in the wilderness and exposes Satan’s goal, which is to be the one worshiped, the one adored, the one enthroned into the hearts and minds of intelligent beings.

This is how Satan desecrates the sanctuary, or sets himself up in God's temple proclaiming himself to be God. He does it by getting people to accept the lie about God's law and therefore accept that God functions like Satan in character, an imposer of punishments and the source of death, a being who cannot truly be trusted without a payment of blood being given to him to pay the legal debt so he won't kill us.

And, because of the law of worship, by beholding we are changed, if we worship a god who is like Satan in character, even if we call that god "Jesus" we will become like Satan in character and that is Satan's goal to destroy the image of God in humans and place his own image where God's should be. He does this through all of the various means to corrupt our knowledge of God and get us to worship the creature instead of the Creator, and as Romans 1 describes, then our minds become darkened, depraved and futile.

But let's unpack just a little more the progressive steps of Satan's strategies, how he tempts and seeks to lead people into sin.

- Step one is deception—he deceived angels in heaven, he deceived Eve in Eden, and he tried to deceive Jesus
- Step two, but if deception doesn't work, he will add inducements; to Eve, "you will become like God" and to Jesus, "all the kingdoms of the world will be yours if you worship me." It will be worth it to compromise just on this one little thing, think of all you can gain, of all the good you can do if you would only compromise on this one little thing.
- Step three, but if deception and inducements don't work, Satan eventually brings threats, pain, suffering, hardship to discourage and coercion. Jesus' was betrayed, mocked, beaten, falsely accused, unjustly tried and convicted and crucified. So too many righteous through history have suffered all kinds of pain and injustice, all intended to get the righteous to rebel, lose faith, become discouraged, and give up, as Job's wife suggested to him, curse God and die.

But God has promised,

- No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it. 1 Corinthians 10:13 NKJV

FRIDAY

Read the quote,

- "Nothing is more plainly taught in Scripture than that **God was in no wise responsible for the entrance of sin**; that there was **no arbitrary withdrawal of divine grace, no deficiency in the divine government**, that gave occasion for the uprising of rebellion. Sin is an intruder, for whose presence no reason can be given. It is mysterious, unaccountable; to excuse it is to

defend it. . . . **Had he [Satan] been immediately blotted from existence, they [the inhabitants of heaven and of other worlds] would have served God from fear** rather than from love. The **influence of the deceiver would not have been fully destroyed**, nor would the **spirit of rebellion** have been utterly eradicated. Evil must be permitted to come to maturity. **For the good of the entire universe** through ceaseless ages Satan must more fully develop his principles, that his charges against the divine government might be seen in their true light by all created beings, that the justice and mercy of God and **the immutability of His law** might forever be placed beyond all -question.”—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, pp. 492, 493, 499, emphasis mine.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

March 8, 2025 2-4 p.m. Spiritual Warfare: Angels, Demons, Quantum Mechanics and Your Brain: A Special Presentation by Dr. Jennings. Where, our ministry building. The event will be streamed live.