

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

Second Quarter 2018: *Preparation for the End Time*

Lesson 1 “The Cosmic Controversy”

Read for this week’s study

Ezekiel 28:1, 2, 11–17; Genesis 3:1–7; Revelation 12:1–17; Romans 8:31–39; Revelation 14:12.

Memory Text

“And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ” (Revelation 12:17, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. The Fall of a Perfect Being
- III. More Than Head Knowledge
- IV. War in Heaven and Earth
- V. With You Always, Even Unto the End
- VI. The Law and the Gospel
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Jon Paulien

1. Do apocalyptic visions make those who believe in them passive toward the world and its needs? Is the apocalyptic promise of a better future beyond this world “pie in the sky”? Is the criticism of “heavenly mindedness” valid? How do you balance hope for a heavenly kingdom with striving for a better world here and now? Is it possible to maintain expectation of a soon coming of Jesus over several generations? What does it tell us about God that he gives us prophecy rather than crystal clarity about the future? (Lesson Introduction)
2. In the history of cosmic conflict theology one finds only about half a dozen witnesses over 2000 years? Why is belief in a cosmic conflict so rare among Christians? What does that tell us about God? (Sabbath afternoon)
3. When Adventists talk about the fall of Lucifer and the rise of evil, they go to Ezekiel 28:12-19 and Isaiah 14:12-14. Why these texts? Aren’t they about the kings of Tyre (Ezekiel 28:2) and Babylon (Isaiah 14:4) rather than Satan? What can these texts teach us about the beginning of the cosmic conflict? How did it all get started? What can we know about the origin of sin? (Sunday’s lesson)

4. Read Genesis 3:1-7. Was this tree a restriction on Adam and Eve's freedom as the snake suggested? Were they not trusted by God? God said one thing, the serpent said another. How does one decide whom one can trust? (Monday's lesson)
5. Read Revelation 12:1-17. What battles does this chapter portray as unfolding both in heaven and on earth? Read Revelation 12:10-12 once more. What hope do we find in these verses amid all the controversy and conflict seen in the other texts? (Tuesday's lesson)
6. Read Revelation 12:12-16. Why do Seventh-day Adventists interpret the 1260 days (or "time, times and half a time") on the basis of a year-day principle? What evidence is that this period should be interpreted as 1260 years? Read Matthew 28:20. How can we interpret this text in the light of the martyrdom of millions over the centuries? (Wednesday's lesson)
7. What does the name Seventh-day Adventist mean and what relationship does that have to the cosmic conflict? How do the following texts build a close link between the law and the gospel (Jeremiah 44:23; Romans 3:20-26; 7:7)? How is this relevant to the cosmic conflict (Revelation 14:12)? What does it mean to offer true obedience to God? (Thursday's lesson)
8. What Scriptural evidence do we have that points to the reality of Satan and of a cosmic conflict? What evidence do we have in everyday experience? (Friday's lesson)

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

God is obviously not the exclusive property of Seventh-day Adventists. The Methodists and the Baptists worshipped God before Adventists came on the scene. And the Lutherans were worshipping God before the Methodists and Baptists came on the scene. And the Jews were worshipping centuries before there were any Christians. And Adam and Eve were worshipping before there were any Jews and the loyal angels throughout the universe long before there were any people on our planet. God belongs to all of us. And all of us are members of his family. Or would it be more correct to say only the good ones among us are members of God's family? Is it the way you count your children? Today you report you have one child, tomorrow maybe three and the next day only two? Because you only recognize your children who are behaving well? We have all misbehaved, and yet God recognizes every one of us, counts every one of us, as members of the family of the universe.

But even though our heavenly Father is so gracious, even toward us who have misbehaved, the Bible incredibly describes a conflict that broke out in God's family—even to the extent of war in Heaven. The most vivid description of this war is presented in the last of the sixty-six books of the Bible, the book of Revelation. And part of this description is on the Bible Reference Sheet,

which I hope you may have in your hand. Notice the first one, Revelation 12:7-12, a description of the war:

When war broke out in heaven, Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, who fought back with his angels; but the dragon was defeated, and he and his angels were not allowed to stay in heaven any longer. The huge dragon was thrown out — that ancient serpent [and serpent reminds us of the Garden of Eden], that ancient serpent named the Devil, or Satan, that deceived the whole world. He was thrown down to earth, and all his angels with him. Then I heard a loud voice in heaven saying, “Now God’s salvation has come! Now God has shown his power as King! Now his Messiah has shown his authority! For the one who stood before our God and accused our brothers day and night has been thrown out of heaven. Our brothers won the victory over him by the blood of the Lamb and by the truth which they proclaimed; and they were willing to give up their lives and die. And so be glad, you heavens, and all you that live there! But how terrible for the earth and the sea [which is where we live]! For the Devil has come down to you, and he is filled with rage, because he knows that he has only a little time left. (TEV)

Now when we read this passage about the war in Heaven, it’s good to reflect that before there was war, there was peace. And there was peace throughout the whole universe. There was peace because all the members of God’s vast family trusted each other. And all of them trusted their heavenly Father. And he in turn could safely trust in them. Where there is such mutual trust and trustworthiness, there is perfect freedom, perfect peace, perfect security. And that’s the way it’s going to be in the hereafter. You notice the Bible never talks about prisons in the Promised Land. There will be no police on every corner. And our wives and daughters will safely walk the streets alone at any hour. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #1, “The Conflict In God’s Family” recorded January, 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/1MMCAG>*

And you could count on God when things were that bleak, to send a message of encouragement and enlightenment and explanation to his people. He surely wouldn’t send a book of mysteries and dates and schedules of events that they could not possibly understand. Rather, that sixty-sixth book that he did send, the book of Revelation (which means clarification, not mystification), that sixty-sixth book is an invitation to discouraged early Christians to look a little higher—to take the *larger view* of things. To see how they’ve all been caught up in a vast great controversy that affects the whole universe! And that it’s a controversy over God’s own character and government. And then to read on and see that God has already won this war, and the angels all agree with him. To see that this is the good news, and then to read on and realize that God is inviting *us* to join in the celebration; and then to go

out to the world and invite all others who are willing to listen, to join in God's victory in the war. And then we Christians might not seem so much on the defensive all the time; we have good news to tell. There's no way God and his side can lose. And should we not *join the winning side?* is the invitation in that sixty-sixth book.

And the book also says that you can count on God to wait until this truth about him—this good news about his character and government—has been spread all over the world. Because God is the kind of person who will wait until his children have had an opportunity to understand the issues in the war; and to be ready for the awesome events the Bible describes as taking place before Jesus' return. To see and to present the plan of salvation in the larger setting of the great controversy over the character and government of God is, I believe, the highest privilege of God's friends on this planet today. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #1, "The Conflict In God's Family" recorded January, 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/1MMCAG>*

Looking to the past when there once was peace, a crisis of distrust broke out in God's family. And thus sin entered our universe for the first time. For as God explained to Moses when he disobeyed him and smote the rock, *sin in its essence is a breach, a breakdown of trust.* We all know the story if we've ever read the Bible through. But moved by jealousy and pride, the most brilliant of all God's creatures—the one pictured in Ezekiel as standing in the very presence of God; the one pictured in Isaiah as knowing God so well that he went forth from the presence of God bearing light and truth to his fellow angels, (and that's why he was given the name *Lucifer*, which means bearer of light, teacher of truth—that's one of the names of Jesus Christ Himself). But this brilliant, most trusted, even revered angel, set out to undermine trust in God by circulating misinformation and lies about our heavenly Father. And thus he became—not a bearer of light and a teacher of truth, but a bearer of lies, even *The Adversary*. And the name that means adversary is *Satan*. You can see why we shouldn't call him Lucifer any longer. He no longer bears light, but lies. His real name is Satan—the opponent, the adversary.

And how this adversary worked among the angels! In his pretentiously pious manner he insinuated that God himself was an untrustworthy liar. And specifically he charged that God was arbitrary—not respectful of the freedom of his children; that God was exacting, vengeful, unforgiving, and severe. And thus he hoped to turn the angels away from God, and win them to worship *him*, himself. It seems unbelievable that a creature could presume to think of himself as God, and suggest that angels worship him. But that Satan is actually capable of such insanity, look at the scripture that's second on this Bible Reference Sheet, in Isaiah 14:12-14. And this is mentioned other places in the Bible:

How you are fallen from heaven, O Day Star [your favorite version may read "Lucifer" there, perhaps. It's exactly the same word. I chose a version that would have "Day Star"

to remind us that this is one of the names of Christ—Lucifer, Morning Star, Day Star]. How you are fallen from heaven, O Day Star, son of Dawn! How you are cut down to the ground, you who laid the nations low! You said in your heart, “I will ascend to heaven; above the stars of God I will set my throne on high; I will sit on the mount of assembly in the far north [where the gods are pictured as gathering]; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will make myself like the Most High.” (RSV)

{Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #1, “The Conflict In God's Family” recorded January, 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link:* <http://pkp.cc/1MMCAG>

Lou: If God knew that Lucifer would be such an instigator of trouble upon the human race, why did he create him? This question baffles many, and a good, understandable answer would settle many people’s questioning.

Graham: That’s quite an order now! As I mentioned last week, I never like to limit God. I don’t like to limit his foreknowledge. So I like to believe that when God created Lucifer, he knew he would cause the trouble. But God also knew what he would do, and he said, “I’m willing, as I create this magnificent person; it’s going to cost me, and I’m willing to pay.” And I think that’s even more wonderful, that he would go ahead, knowing that he would cause the trouble.

What was the second part of that? Is God then responsible? God has never created anybody imperfect. His creations are perfect. Lucifer had no bent to evil, whatever. He brought that up himself; which does suggest a wonderful thing. God creates us perfect, but part of that is giving us the ability even to rebel. So when we say we love God, it isn’t because we’re programmed that way, because we can also say, “We hate you.” Adam and Eve showed that. When they sinned in the garden they were free to sin.

Lou: So then, Satan didn’t go wrong because of some malfunction in the way he was made, like an automobile that has to be recalled. He was perfect.

Graham: He was perfect.

Lou: But with that freedom to make choices, it could lead to all kinds of consequences. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #2 with Lou Venden, “What Went Wrong In God’s Universe?” recorded January, 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link:* <http://pkp.cc/2MMCAG>

We began these Conversations by remembering that there once was peace throughout the universe. And there was peace because all the members of God’s vast family trusted each other; all of them trusted their heavenly Father, and he, in turn, could safely trust in them. But we have also talked about the war that began in Heaven, the conflict of distrust, the false

charges of the adversary, and God's long and patient demonstration of the truth. This conflict was not over mere obedience to the rules, but over the very character and government of God Himself. So victory for God is not the destruction of his enemies. That kind of victory he could have accomplished very easily, by the merest command or exhibition of almighty power. But the sad part is that God's enemies have been his own beloved and misbehaving children. What victory would it be for God to destroy them—easily as he could have done it? There would be no victory for God unless what went wrong has been set right, and peace in his family has been made eternally secure; not a false peace based on force or fear, but real peace based on freely given love and trust. What else could he find satisfactory from his children?

Now, there could certainly be no peace if God should be the kind of person Satan has made him out to be—arbitrary, exacting, vengeful, unforgiving, and severe. And yet there are explanations of salvation that seem based on the assumption that Satan's false picture of God is the truth. For example, "God is arbitrary", some will say, "but as Sovereign he has the right to be."

"God does take vengeance," others will say, "but for him we should call it justice."

Perhaps few would dare say that God is unforgiving and severe, and yet they imply the same by urging the necessity of a Friend up there to plead with God to forgive and heal.

You see, mere pardon, mere adjustment of our legal standing, with that kind of a God, would hardly bring peace between him and sinners. Peace with that kind of a God, arbitrary, vengeful and severe, who yes, under certain circumstances may have chosen to forgive; peace with that kind of a God would be little more than a ceasefire, a temporary truce. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #20, "At Peace with Our Heavenly Father" recorded June, 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/20MMCAG>*

Graham: God will not release the four winds, the final troublous events, until his people are settled. If I should see him apparently releasing, him ceasing to restrain, he won't do it until his friends are settled into the truth. Things going on in the world today make one wonder. It may be the four angels are beginning to release their hold. But then there's another thing. The people in the world have got to realize their freedom to ask questions, to make up their own minds. They cannot be dictated to as to the truth about God. And there's a great stirring and desire for freedom all over the world. Often people don't know how to handle it at first, but the sweep of the desire for freedom around the world is an important indication. Also important is that there's an attempt to stifle it in certain parts of the world. Freedom is the essence of this thing. People must recognize their right to weigh the evidence for themselves.

But maybe most of all, the counterfeit. Satan's final effort to deceive will be brilliant counterfeit. I think seeing the counterfeit developing is the most troubling.

Lou: When you say counterfeit now, what do you see as the most serious threat or counterfeit?

Graham: I don't see it as open opposition or black vs. white. It's going to be something very, very close to the truth. And the Bible speaks of the gospel going to all the world, the Holy Spirit being poured out, people seeing wondrous things. And I think, and I would not want to indict any individual in this, but I think there is a vast counterfeit spiritual revival sweeping the world. There are many innocent people caught up in it, and they're looking for the truth. I wouldn't want to point at any one person. But the emphasis in this counterfeit revival is not on the truth. It's not on weighing the evidence in Scripture. It isn't even about God. It's all about ourselves. It's all about our feelings. And there is great emphasis in this religion on "Get in touch with your feelings; get in touch with your feelings." The good news is get in touch with God. It's good news about God. We think about ourselves too much and it can be depressing. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #19 with Lou Venden, "How Soon Will the Conflict Be Over?" recorded June, 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/19MMCAG>*

You notice the contrast in all these passages between deceit on Satan's side and the truth on God's side. Because truth and evidence are not on the adversary's side, Satan cannot use evidence. He cannot dare invite inquiry and investigation, as God can with perfect safety and freedom. In order to win his case, the devil always has to use things like counterfeit miracles, signs, and wonders to persuade. Are you impressed with how much of this is going on at the present time?

Now people who survive this period of extreme deception and confusion are certainly not babes in the truth. Rather, they are grown-up, adult believers. They meet the Biblical description from an earlier conversation, "God Can Completely Heal the Damage Done," of perfection and Christian maturity. These are people who have their faculties trained by practice to distinguish good from evil. Though their faith be severely tried, they will never let God down. They have more than the faith of a little child. They still have that. But when one has the faith of a little child, he still needs much protection. These saints, like Job, can stand alone.

I understand that God is waiting for such firm believers. He waits in mercy because he loves his children. He is not willing that any of them should be lost. God knows that if these final, awesome, closing events should be allowed to come too soon, his children would be unready. They would be confused, and some deceived. You recall from an earlier conversation, he would never allow anyone to be tested more than he is able to bear. Of course, he waits.

The last book of the Bible pictures angels mercifully holding back the final winds of strife until God's children have been unshakably sealed and settled into the truth. It makes sense that he should do so. How consistent with what we know to be true about our God. Look, for example, at Revelation 7:1-3, all familiar passages:

After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding back the four winds of the earth, that no wind might blow on earth or sea or against any tree. Then I saw another angel ascend from the rising of the sun, with the seal of the living God, and he called with a loud voice to the four angels . . . “Do not harm the earth or the sea or the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God upon their foreheads.”
(RSV)

The closing events of human history are being held back because we have not yet been sealed. Now, what could it mean to be sealed? What would sealing mean to the early Christians, when they heard this section of Revelation being read out loud to them? Had they received any help in understanding the meaning of sealing? Like as not, they were in Ephesus. That is where the scroll arrived from the Isle of Patmos. Someone arose and read it out loud. If it was in Ephesus, you recall Paul’s letter that eventually became known as the letter to the Ephesians. And in the letter to the Ephesians, Paul has quite a lot to say about the sealing and how this is the work of the Holy Spirit. Look at Ephesians 4:30 for example: “Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.” (NIV)

That raises the question of how is the Holy Spirit involved in our being sealed? Look at Ephesians 1:13: “In Him [that is, in Christ, in union with Christ], you also, who have heard the word of truth, the gospel [that is the good news], of your salvation, and have believed in Him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit.” (RSV)

Note the emphasis on truth, the emphasis on the gospel, the good news, along with this sealing work of the Holy Spirit. What is this truth? What is this good news? It is the whole subject of our conversations about God. The truth is—the good news is that God is not the kind of person his enemies have made him out to be. You could finish that good news by now, I am sure. Compare then, Ephesians 1:17. Paul says: “I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation [so that you may know something], so that you may know Him better.” (NIV)

Notice “to know him better.” That is the truth. That is the good news. This is the work of the Spirit of truth. You remember how much Jesus said about the Holy Spirit coming to lead us into truth so that we might know the Father better. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #18, “God Waits for His Children to Grow Up” recorded June, 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/18MMCAG>*

So what is the message of the cross? Evidently it’s much more than the payment of a legal penalty so that somehow God can justly forgive you and me. The cross was needed by the loyal angels. And this truly suggests (and we’ll do it in this series) that we ought to go back to the foot of the cross and join the universe, the family of the universe, in watching closely just how

Jesus died. And then listening very carefully to how Jesus cried, and what he cried: “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” What does that mean? And how does that suffering and death bring peace—once again—to God’s family? I believe that in the great controversy, all Christian beliefs take on much broader significance. Particularly does the gospel take on a much larger meaning. You see, while we’re still preoccupied with our own salvation, the gospel quite naturally might be understood as the good news about what God has done for me and for you.

But in the larger great controversy setting, the gospel is the truth about our gracious God; the truth that ends the war, and confirms the loyalty of the universe, and wins some of us back to repentance and to trust. I believe (more strongly than I believe anything) that the most important of all our beliefs is the truth about our God. God is not the kind of person his enemies have made him out to be—arbitrary, vengeful, and severe. He is instead precisely as his Son revealed him to be. We believe the testimony of Jesus when he said, “If you have seen me, you have seen the Father.” God is just as loving and gracious as his Son; just as willing to forgive and heal. Could there be any better news than that? To me, that’s the everlasting good news that holds the loyalty of the universe. And wins us back, and will hold our loyalty and trust for the rest of eternity.

And this is the message we have the high privilege of sharing with people all over this planet, who may not know they are members of God’s family, but who deserve to know, and who deserve to hear this truth. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, *Conversations About God*, #1, “The Conflict In God's Family” recorded January, 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link:*
<http://pkp.cc/1MMCAG>

Further Study with Ellen White

By coming to dwell with us, Jesus was to reveal God both to men and to angels. He was the Word of God,—God’s thought made audible. In His prayer for His disciples He says, “I have declared unto them Thy name, “—”merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, “—”that the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them, and I in them.” But not alone for His earthborn children was this revelation given. Our little world is the lesson book of the universe. God’s wonderful purpose of grace, the mystery of redeeming love, is the theme into which “angels desire to look,” and it will be their study throughout endless ages. Both the redeemed and the unfallen beings will find in the cross of Christ their science and their song. It will be seen that the glory shining in the face of Jesus is the glory of self-sacrificing love. In the light from Calvary it will be seen that the law of self-renouncing love is the law of life for earth and heaven; that the love which “seeketh not her own” has its source in

the heart of God; and that in the meek and lowly One is manifested the character of Him who dwelleth in the light which no man can approach unto. {DA 19.2}

The earth was dark through misapprehension of God. That the gloomy shadows might be lightened, that the world might be brought back to God, Satan's deceptive power was to be broken. This could not be done by force. The exercise of force is contrary to the principles of God's government; He desires only the service of love; and love cannot be commanded; it cannot be won by force or authority. Only by love is love awakened. To know God is to love Him; His character must be manifested in contrast to the character of Satan. This work only one Being in all the universe could do. Only He who knew the height and depth of the love of God could make it known. Upon the world's dark night the Sun of Righteousness must rise, "with healing in His wings." Malachi 4:2. {DA 22.1}

The plan for our redemption was not an afterthought, a plan formulated after the fall of Adam. It was a revelation of "the mystery which hath been kept in silence through times eternal." Romans 16:25, R. V. It was an unfolding of the principles that from eternal ages have been the foundation of God's throne. From the beginning, God and Christ knew of the apostasy of Satan, and of the fall of man through the deceptive power of the apostate. God did not ordain that sin should exist, but He foresaw its existence, and made provision to meet the terrible emergency. So great was His love for the world, that He covenanted to give His only-begotten Son, "that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John 3:16. {DA 22.2}

Satan represents God's law of love as a law of selfishness. He declares that it is impossible for us to obey its precepts. The fall of our first parents, with all the woe that has resulted, he charges upon the Creator, leading men to look upon God as the author of sin, and suffering, and death. Jesus was to unveil this deception. {DA 24.2}

By His life and His death, Christ has achieved even more than recovery from the ruin wrought through sin. It was Satan's purpose to bring about an eternal separation between God and man; but in Christ we become more closely united to God than if we had never fallen. In taking our nature, the Saviour has bound Himself to humanity by a tie that is never to be broken. {DA 25.3}

The work of redemption will be complete. In the place where sin abounded, God's grace much more abounds. The earth itself, the very field that Satan claims as his, is to be not only ransomed but exalted. Our little world, under the curse of sin the one dark blot in His glorious creation, will be honored above all other worlds in the universe of God. Here, where the Son of God tabernacled in humanity; where the King of glory lived and suffered and died,—here, when He shall make all things new, the tabernacle of God shall be with men, "and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God." And through endless ages as the redeemed walk in the light of the Lord, they will praise Him for His unspeakable Gift,—Immanuel, "God with us." {DA 26.3}

By the same misrepresentation of the character of God as he had practiced in heaven, causing Him to be regarded as severe and tyrannical, Satan induced man to sin. And having succeeded thus far, he declared that God's unjust restrictions had led to man's fall, as they had led to his own rebellion. {GC 500.2}

God could employ only such means as were consistent with truth and righteousness. 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, claiming that God was not just in imposing laws upon the angels; that in requiring submission and obedience from His creatures, He was seeking merely the exaltation of Himself. It was therefore necessary to demonstrate before the inhabitants of heaven, and of all the worlds, that God's government is 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. {PP 42.1}

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}

Even when he was cast out of heaven, Infinite Wisdom did not destroy Satan. Since only the service of love can be acceptable to God, the allegiance of His creatures must rest upon a conviction of His justice and benevolence. The inhabitants of heaven and of the worlds, being unprepared to comprehend the nature or consequences of sin, could not then have seen the justice of God in the destruction of Satan. Had he been immediately blotted out of existence, some 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. For the good of the entire universe through ceaseless ages, he must more fully develop his principles, that his charges against the divine government might be seen in their true light by all created beings, and that the justice and mercy of God and the immutability of His law might be forever placed beyond all question. {PP 42.3}

Satan's rebellion was to be a lesson to the universe through all coming ages—a perpetual testimony to the nature of sin and its terrible results. The working out of Satan's rule, its effects upon both men and angels, would show what must be the fruit of setting aside the divine authority. It would testify that with the existence of God's government is bound up the well-being of all the creatures He has made. Thus the history of this terrible experiment of rebellion was to be a perpetual safeguard to all holy beings, to prevent them from being deceived as to

the nature of transgression, to save them from committing sin, and suffering its penalty. {PP 42.4}

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}

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}

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}

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}

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}

But the plan of redemption had a yet broader and deeper purpose than the salvation of man. It was not for this alone that Christ came to the earth; it was not merely that the inhabitants of this little world might regard the law of God as it should be regarded; but it was to vindicate the character of God before the universe. To this result of His great sacrifice—its influence upon the intelligences of other worlds, as well as upon man—the Saviour looked forward when just before His crucifixion He said: "Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all unto Me." John 12:31, 32. The act of Christ in dying for the salvation of man would not only make heaven accessible to men, but before all the universe it would justify God and His Son in their dealing with the rebellion of Satan. It would establish the perpetuity of the law of God and would reveal the nature and the results of sin. {PP 68.2}

Through the plan of salvation, a larger purpose is to be wrought out even than the salvation of man and the redemption of the earth. Through the revelation of the character of God in Christ, the beneficence of the divine government would be manifested before the universe, the charge of Satan refuted, the nature and result of sin made plain, and the perpetuity of the law fully demonstrated. {ST, December 22, 1914 par. 4}

From the beginning it has been Satan's studied plan to cause men to forget God, that he might secure them to himself. Therefore he has sought to misrepresent the character of God, to lead men to cherish a false conception of Him. The Creator has been presented to their minds as clothed with the attributes of the prince of evil himself—as arbitrary, severe, and unforgiving—that He might be feared, shunned, and even hated by men. . . . {HP 8.2}

Christ came to reveal God to the world as a God of love, a God of mercy, tenderness, and compassion. By the world's Redeemer the thick darkness with which Satan had enshrouded the throne of the Deity was swept away, and the Father was again manifest to men as the Light of life. . . . {HP 8.3}

The people of God will not be free from suffering; but while persecuted and distressed, while they endure privation and suffer for want of food they will not be left to perish. That God who cared for Elijah will not pass by one of His self-sacrificing children. He who numbers the hairs of their head will care for them, and in time of famine they shall be satisfied. While the wicked are dying from hunger and pestilence, angels will shield the righteous and supply their wants. To him that "walketh righteously" is the promise: "Bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure." "When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them." Isaiah 33:15, 16; 41:17. {GC 629.2}

The precious Saviour will send help just when we need it. The way to heaven is consecrated by His footprints. Every thorn that wounds our feet has wounded His. Every cross that we are called to bear He has borne before us. The Lord permits conflicts, to prepare the soul for peace. The time of trouble is a fearful ordeal for God's people; but it is the time for every true believer to look up, and by faith he may see the bow of promise encircling him. {GC 633.1}

Amidst great discouragement, Nehemiah made God his trust, his sure defense. And He who was the support of His servant then has been the dependence of His people in every age. In every crisis His people may confidently declare, "If God be for us, who can be against us?" Romans 8:31. However craftily the plots of Satan and his agents may be laid, God can detect them, and bring to nought all their counsels. The response of faith today will be the response made by Nehemiah, "Our God shall fight for us;" for God is in the work, and no man can prevent its ultimate success. {PK 645.2}

Let all who are afflicted or unjustly used, cry to God. Turn away from those whose hearts are as steel, and make your requests known to your Maker. Never is one repulsed who comes to Him with a contrite heart. Not one sincere prayer is lost. Amid the anthems of the celestial choir, God hears the cries of the weakest human being. We pour out our heart's desire in our closets, we breathe a prayer as we walk by the way, and our words reach the throne of the Monarch of the universe. They may be inaudible to any human ear, but they cannot die away into silence, nor can they be lost through the activities of business that are going on. Nothing can drown the soul's desire. It rises above the din of the street, above the confusion of the multitude, to the heavenly courts. It is God to whom we are speaking, and our prayer is heard. {COL 174.1}

There was but one hope for the human race—that into this mass of discordant and corrupting elements might be cast a new leaven; that there might be brought to mankind the power of a new life; that the knowledge of God might be restored to the world. {Ed 76.1}

Christ came to restore this knowledge. He came to set aside the false teaching by which those who claimed to know God had misrepresented Him. He came to manifest the nature of His law, to reveal in His own character the beauty of holiness. {Ed 76.2}

Christ came to the world with the accumulated love of eternity. Sweeping away the exactions which had encumbered the law of God, He showed that the law is a law of love, an expression of the Divine Goodness. He showed that in obedience to its principles is involved the happiness of mankind, and with it the stability, the very foundation and framework, of human society. {Ed 76.3}

So far from making arbitrary requirements, God's law is given to men as a hedge, a shield. Whoever accepts its principles is preserved from evil. Fidelity to God involves fidelity to man. Thus the law guards the rights, the individuality, of every human being. It restrains the superior from oppression, and the subordinate from disobedience. It ensures man's well-being, both for this world and for the world to come. To the obedient it is the pledge of eternal life, for it expresses the principles that endure forever. {Ed 76.4}

Christ came to demonstrate the value of the divine principles by revealing their power for the regeneration of humanity. He came to teach how these principles are to be developed and applied. {Ed 77.1}

Recommended Reading:

The Story of Redemption Chapter 1 – “The Fall of Lucifer”

Patriarchs and Prophets chapter 3 – “The Temptation and Fall”

Desire of Ages chapter 1 – “God With Us” <https://egwwritings.org/>