

Sabbath School Lesson #1 – The War Behind All Wars – 30 March-5 April 2024

Christ would have us know that the war behind all wars is the great controversy between Christ and Satan. It started in heaven: “And there was war in heaven: Michael and His angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven” (Revelation 12:7-8). Michael is the Archangel (Jude 9), that is, the Chief or Prince of the angels; and the Archangel is Christ, for it is the voice of the Archangel that will be heard at the last great day, when the dead shall be raised (1 Thessalonians 4:16); and Christ declared (John 5:26-29) that His own voice would be the one that should penetrate the graves, and call forth the dead. Therefore this war in heaven was between Christ and His angels on one side, and Satan and his angels on the other side. It was the beginning of the great controversy, which has been going on till the present time. When Christ was on earth He again met the devil in person, and again vanquished him; but still the warfare is kept up; Satan still opposes Christ by seeking to blind the minds of men so that the light of the glorious gospel of Christ may not shine unto them (2 Corinthians 4:3-4); this contest will cease with the destruction of Satan.

Sunday: War in Heaven – Read again Revelation 12:7-8 and then read verse 9. We see that Lucifer started the war in heaven. Why did Lucifer go to war, what did he want? The Lesson writer quotes Ellen G White, *The Great Controversy*, pp 494-495. Let us read more from Ellen G White on this matter. Lucifer went to war over the matter of Christ being the only begotten: “Christ was the only begotten Son of God, and Lucifer, that glorious angel, got up a warfare over the matter, until he had to be thrust down to the earth” {25LtMs, Ms 86, 1910, par. 29}. Here we are told explicitly that the “matter” that Lucifer went to war over was that Christ was “the only begotten Son of God.” Therefore, it behoves us to understand this matter ourselves if we would be on the right side of the great controversy. Lucifer claimed he must be above the Son of God: “We had for years to meet this and were always carried back to the experience of the first departure from truth in the history of the fall of Lucifer from heaven. He occupied a special, exalted position in the heavenly courts. He must have no one higher than himself. He must be next to God in efficiency. But Christ was above him, and he claimed he must be above Christ. Christ was the only begotten Son of God, united with God” {25LtMs, Lt 157, 1910, par. 1}. Lucifer’s God-given glory did not make him as God’s only begotten Son: “Lucifer was the most lovely being in all our world, but he fell from his high estate because the loveliness and glory he possessed (given of God), did not make himself [as God’s] only-begotten Son. He insinuated to the angels [that] there would be a change ere long in the heavenly courts. He would have the highest place” {18LtMs, Ms 200, 1903, par. 4}. The Father told Lucifer that this was impossible: “His beauty was so highly exalted that he thought he should be as God, and Christ must be second to him; but the Lord informed Satan this could not be possible. Christ was His only begotten Son” {25LtMs, Lt 157, 1910, par. 7}. “At length all the angels are summoned to appear before the Father, to have each case decided. Satan unblushingly makes known to all the heavenly family, his discontent, that Christ should be preferred before him, to be in such close conference with God, and he be uninformed as to the result of their frequent consultations. God informs Satan that this he can never know. That to his Son will he reveal his secret purposes, and that all the family of Heaven, Satan not excepted, were required to yield implicit obedience. Satan boldly speaks out his rebellion, and points to a large company who think God is unjust in not exalting him to be equal with God, and in not giving him command above Christ. He declares he cannot submit to be under Christ’s command, that God’s commands alone will he obey. Good angels weep to hear the words of Satan, and to see how he despises to follow the direction of Christ, their exalted and loving commander” {3SG 37.3}. Satan had wanted to be the Head, to be his own Head, he waged war against the Headship of Christ: “Satan is the originator of sin. In heaven he resolved to live to himself. He resolved to be leader. He determined to make himself a center of influence. If he could not be the highest authority in heaven, he would be the highest authority in rebellion against the government of heaven. Head he would be, to control, not to be controlled” {RH April 16, 1901, par. 1}.

Monday: Lucifer Deceives; Christ Prevails – How many did Lucifer deceive in his war and why were they all expelled? “When Satan became disaffected in heaven, he did not lay his complaint before God and Christ; but he went among the angels who thought him perfect and represented that God had done him injustice in preferring Christ to himself. The result of this misrepresentation was that through their sympathy with him one third of the angels lost their innocence, their high estate, and their happy home. Satan is instigating men to continue on earth the same work of jealousy and evil surmising that he commenced in heaven” {5T 291.1}. “Angels were expelled from heaven because they would not work in harmony with God. They fell from their high estate because they wanted to be exalted. They had come to exalt themselves, and they forgot that their beauty of person and of character came from the Lord Jesus. This fact the angels would obscure, that Christ was the only begotten Son of God, and they came to consider that they were not to consult Christ. One angel began the controversy and carried it on until there was rebellion in the heavenly courts among the angels. They were lifted up because of their beauty” {25LtMs, Lt 42, 1910, par. 3}.

Tuesday: Planet Earth Becomes Involved –What was that by which Satan induced Eve to transgress the express commandment of the Lord? It is all summed up in one sentence, “Ye shall not surely die” (Genesis 3:4). It was the belief of this lie that caused the first sin and all the sins that have followed in its train. It is by the subtlety by which the serpent beguiled Eve, that our minds are in danger of being corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. The false prophets and teachers are threatened with punishment by the Lord, because, as He says: “With lies ye have made the heart of the righteous sad, whom I have not made sad; and strengthened the hands of the wicked, that he should not return from his wicked way, by promising him life” (Ezekiel 13:22). Paul said: “I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ” (2 Corinthians 11:3). Evidently, in every attempt to beguile men from the truth as it is in Christ, Satan has used the same arts with which he succeeded in deceiving Eve.

Wednesday: Love Finds a Way – How did love find a way to defeat Satan when he brought his war to planet earth and had succeeded in deceiving man in Eden? When man sinned, he lost enmity with Satan. The Lord, intervened. The Lord, in His mercy for Adam’s entire race, tells Satan: “And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her Seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise His heel” (Genesis 3:15). By this, the Lord has implanted in the soul of every man some natural desires for the right; and whenever a man gives himself wholly to sin, he does so only by resisting the strivings of the Spirit of Christ. We are indebted to Christ for every good. So it is that Christ is the “true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world” (John 1:9). Thus it is that Christ is made unto us, the very “wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption” (1 Corinthians 1:30). And so the true child of God, while patiently continuing in well-doing, will ever exclaim, “God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world” (Galatians 6:14). Our praise will be “unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood” (Revelation 1:5).

Thursday: Our High Priest – Read Hebrews 4:15, 16 and Hebrews 7:25. How do these verses give us assurance in a world of temptation, suffering, disease, and death? Read what Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 10:13. There is a way of escape; the only trouble is that we fail to see it. We look at the temptation, we look at ourselves, and we seem to be hopelessly trapped. Ah, we do not see Christ! He is the way of escape. There is no sin in that Way. We have but to see and fly to it, and we are safe. It is only when we look away from Him that danger comes. Let us claim God’s promises. Read again Hebrews 4:15-16. God does not upbraid us, does not taunt us with our weakness. A child has not the strength of a man, and no father will ridicule his infant child because of its weakness. It’s very helplessness appeals to his sympathy. God says, “Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him. For He knoweth our frame; He remembereth that we are dust” (Psalm 103:13-14). We need to “ask in faith, nothing wavering,” for “without faith it is impossible to please Him.” Be exhorted: “Be content with such things as ye have; for He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee” (Hebrews 13:5); and “He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?” (Romans 8:32).