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Introduction



Rebellion (Sinning Against God) and Redemption¹

We do not know why sin arose in God’s perfect creation. But we do know sin became the starting point for the great controversy (war between Christ and Satan). And we know that, as human beings, we are caught in the middle of this controversy. It is a battle that none of us can escape.

It was not supposed to be that way in the beginning. Creation was “very good” and “blessed” by God. The Lord was recognized as the Supporter of this perfect creation. But He gave Adam and Eve the responsibility of taking care of what He had made for them. The great controversy came to earth when Satan deceived Adam and Eve with lies and tricks. Satan took their loyalty from God to himself. But if they had obeyed God’s simple commands, then all the problems and suffering of the world would never have happened.

“Satan tries hard to twist the character [who God is] of God. He causes men to have false ideas about the Creator. He also caused them to fear and hate God rather than love Him. Satan tries to put aside God’s law. And he tries to lead people to think themselves free from its requirements. His attacks against those who are faithful to God have been continuing throughout all ages. They may be read in the history of patriarchs [forefathers and leaders], prophets [special messengers], and apostles [teachers and leaders], of martyrs² and reformers.”³—Adapted from Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, pages 12, 13.

But God has an answer to this tragedy. He had foreseen all this happening “before the foundation [beginning] of the world” (Ephesians 1:4). And so He put in place His rescue plan. It is what we know as the plan of Redemption. This Redemption is symbolized (shown) in the story about God meeting with Abram in Genesis 15. God showed Abram in symbols how He would save His people when He passed between the animal pieces. This very old ceremony was a promise to Abram and to all of us. It is God’s promise to end the problems caused by sin.

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1. Redemption—salvation at a great cost; Jesus paid the price for our sins by dying on the cross.
 2. martyrs—witnesses for Christ who are put to death for their beliefs.
 3. reformers—people who bring about a change for the better.

Yes, God has promised to accept the full responsibility Himself for all human rebellion and to suffer the results for every evil we have done. Only in this way could God restore (make new) His relationship with all humans and theirs with other people and with the rest of creation.

It is against this background that we find Satan's stubborn desire to destroy creation and to get rid of God's people. His evil plans are explained in the Bible, where good and evil are played out between families and nations. It is found in times of trouble and suffering, famine (shortage of food), slavery, and imprisonment. Satan tries to destroy the people's confidence in God and to encourage them to worship idols.

Throughout the Bible, God is always defeating Satan's purposes. Jesus' coming as Immanuel ("God with us") took back the territory stolen from Adam and Eve. Jesus succeeded where Adam failed. In His ministry (work done for God), Jesus showed His authority over creation and the forces of evil. Just before His return to heaven, He commanded His followers and empowered them to spread out the borders of His heavenly kingdom by advancing the gospel.

The plan of redemption is God's answer to the problems caused by sin.

Jesus has won the great victory at the cross. The challenge has always been where we put our loyalties, on the side that has won or on the side that has lost. The choice should be easy and clear. But the controversy (war) continues. And Satan is very busy with his lies. So the battle for our hearts and minds continues. Our hope and prayer is that this quarter's lessons will show some of these lies for what they really are. May these lessons also help us to choose Christ and remain faithful to Him because, as He has promised, "The one who stands firm to the end will be saved" (Matthew 24:13, NIRV).

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