

The War Behind All Wars



SABBATH—MARCH 30

“Michael and his angels fought with the dragon.”

READ FOR THIS WEEK’S LESSON: Revelation 12:7–9; Revelation 12:4; Genesis 3:1–3; *The Great Controversy*, chapters 29–30.

MEMORY VERSE: “Then there was fighting in heaven. Michael and his angels fought with the dragon. The dragon and his angels fought back. But they did not win the fight and no longer were they allowed to stay in heaven” (Revelation 12:7, 8, WE).

IF GOD IS SO GOOD, why is the earth filled with sin? How can a God of love allow so much evil to happen? Why do bad things happen to good people? In this week’s lesson, we will look at the war between good and evil. This fight has been happening for a long time. We will begin our study with Lucifer’s fight against God in heaven. We will study how evil started. We also will learn how God has been very patient with sinners while He solves the sin problem.

God is love (1 John 4:7, 8). God shows His love in everything He does (Jeremiah 31:3). God won’t force anyone to love Him. Ellen G. White explains how love works: “If you want people to love you, you must first love them.”—*The Desire of Ages*, page 22, adapted. What if God forced us to love Him? Then we aren’t free. If we aren’t free, we really can’t be happy. But God doesn’t destroy our free choice. God wins our hearts with His love. God also works to end the war between good and evil so that sin won’t happen again. God wants to show everyone He has always done what’s best for them. God’s work in the war against good and evil gives us hope. In the end, good will win over evil forever.

THE FIGHT IN HEAVEN (Revelation 12:7–9)

Read Revelation 12:7–9. What do these verses show us about how evil started? Was there freedom in heaven before Lucifer sinned? When Lucifer fought against God, what did God do? What did God choose NOT to do? Why do you think God chose not to destroy Lucifer right away?

Revelation 12:7–9 shows us the war between good and evil. Lucifer and his angels fought against Jesus. In the end, God threw Lucifer and his angels out of heaven. Heaven is a perfect place, right? So, how did fighting start in heaven? Did a loving God make an evil angel? What caused Lucifer to fight against God?

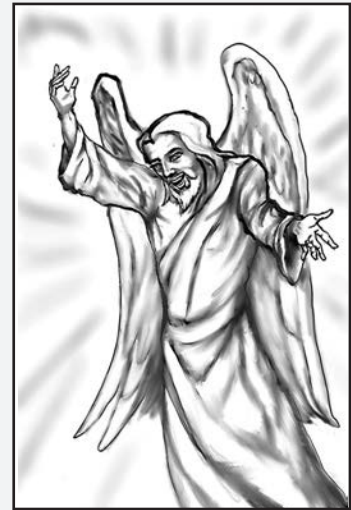
Compare Ezekiel 28:12–15 with Isaiah 14:12–14. What do these verses teach us about Lucifer? What happened in his heart and mind that caused him to fight against God?

The Bible explains how evil started. God didn't make the devil. God made a perfect angel named Lucifer who was bright and beautiful. God also made Lucifer free to choose. Free choice is an important part of God's government in heaven. God accepts only our love. He never forces anyone to serve or love Him. We can't explain why a perfect angel allowed pride and jealous feelings to fill his heart. These evil feelings grew in Lucifer until they caused him to fight against the One who made him.

Lucifer sinned because he wanted angels to worship him. God is the only One we should worship. Lucifer caused many angels to doubt God and His law. Then Lucifer tried to steal God's throne for himself.

God was very patient with Lucifer. But God refused to allow Lucifer to ruin the peace in heaven with his lies and fighting. "God tried to save Lucifer. Jesus Himself showed Lucifer that the One who made Him was powerful, good, and fair. Jesus also showed Lucifer that God's law can't be changed. God Himself made the law in heaven. If Lucifer refused to obey it, then he showed no respect to God. God warned Lucifer in love and mercy. But God's warning filled Lucifer with hate. His disobedience ruined him."—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, pages 494, 495, adapted.

What lessons can you learn about God from the way He solves the problem of sin and evil?



God made a perfect angel named Lucifer who was bright and beautiful.

LUCIFER'S LIES (Revelation 12:4)

No one can explain why Lucifer, a perfect angel, allowed pride and jealous feelings to grow in his heart. These feelings caused him to fight against God. Lucifer accused God. Lucifer said God wasn't fair. Lucifer's lies filled the hearts of many angels with doubts about God.



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Read Revelation 12:4. What does this verse teach us about Lucifer and his lies? Was he a skillful liar? How many angels did Lucifer trick?

When war started in heaven, the angels needed to decide: Should they follow Jesus or Lucifer? What was this war in heaven all about? Was it a real war with weapons? Or was this war fought only with ideas and words? Or did the angels fight this war with a combination of weapons and words? We don't know. We do know that God finally threw Satan "down to earth from heaven . . . and his angels were thrown down with him" (Revelation 12:9, NLV). "No longer were they allowed to stay in heaven" (Revelation 12:8, WE). Because God threw Satan and his angels out of heaven, we can see that the war included some type of real fighting.

We can say one thing for sure about the war in heaven. Every angel needed to decide for or against Jesus. The loyal angels chose to obey Jesus and His loving commands. But 1/3 of the angels listened to Lucifer. These angels disobeyed God. They lost their home in heaven. We, too, must decide for or against Jesus in this important time in earth's history. We, too, must choose whose side we are on: Jesus' or Satan's.

Read Genesis 2:15–17; Exodus 32:26; Joshua 24:15; 1 Kings 18:20, 21; and Revelation 22:17. What important rule do these verses teach us?

God made us free to think and to choose. We can choose between right and wrong. This gift from God makes us human and not robots or animals. God invites His people to love Him and obey His law. He wants us to choose to serve Him.

What does the war in heaven teach us about our own personal fight with evil? Satan tricked holy angels into believing his lies. So, how much more can he trick sinners?

PLANET EARTH JOINS THE FIGHT (Genesis 3:1–3)

When God made the earth, He made it perfect. The Bible tells us, “God looked at everything he had made. And he saw that everything was very good” (Genesis 1:31, ERV). There was no sin or evil anywhere. God gave Adam and Eve the same freedom of choice that He gave to Lucifer. God didn’t want robots on earth any more than He wanted robots in heaven!

God planted a tree in the Garden of Eden. God named this tree “the tree that gives knowledge about good and evil” (Genesis 2:17, ERV). God told Adam and Eve not to eat the fruit from this tree. God wanted to make sure that Adam and Eve **knew** they had a choice.

Satan came to the tree. As Eve came near, Satan told her a sneaky lie about the fruit: “ ‘You will not die. God knows that if you eat the fruit from that tree, you will learn about good and evil. Then you will be like [the same as] God!’ ” (Genesis 3:4, 5, ICB). Satan told Eve that she would become very wise. The fruit would thrill her with pleasure she had not known before. Satan told Eve that God was keeping something good from her. So, Satan told Eve to take the forbidden fruit for herself and eat it. Then she would know everything that God was keeping from her.

When Eve, and later Adam, made the choice to eat the forbidden fruit, they opened a “door” to something God wanted to keep shut forever. What was that door? The door to sin, suffering, broken hearts, sickness, and death.

Read Genesis 3:1–3; Romans 3:23; and Romans 5:12. What same thing do each of these verses teach us? What does sin do to the human family?

Sin is war against God. Sin separates us from God, too. God is life. In the end, separation from God leads to death. Sin also causes worry, suffering, sickness, and disease. The pain we suffer in this life comes from living on a planet that sin has hurt and ruined.

Read Genesis 3:15; Leviticus 5:5, 6; and John 1:29. What promise did God give Adam and Eve in the Garden after they ate the fruit? How did this promise give them hope? What did God do for Adam and Eve after they sinned? How did this offering help them to understand how God would solve the sin problem?



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A POWERFUL REASON TO HOPE (Hebrews 2:9)

After Adam and Eve sin, God tells them they must leave their garden home. From now on, their lives will be filled with hard work and suffering. Will they only suffer and finally die with no hope? Is death the end of everything?

God gives Adam and Eve a promise. We can read about it in Genesis 3:15. God tells Satan, the snake, “I will make you and the woman hate each other. Your children and her children will be enemies. Her son will crush [break into pieces] your head. And you will bite his heel’ ” (Genesis 3:15, NIV). Maybe Adam and Eve didn’t fully understand what this promise meant. But they knew that God gave them hope again. God promised to send One of the children of “the woman [the church]” to save them (Genesis 3:15, NIV).

This Child of the woman, of course, is Jesus Christ (Galatians 3:16). At the cross, Satan hurt or “bit” Jesus, the same as a snake bites. But Jesus won. His win is a promise. God will smash Satan, or the snake’s head, into pieces. Then God will close forever the “door” to suffering that Adam and Eve opened. No one will open that “door” again.



Jesus won the fight against the fallen angels in His life and on the cross.

Read Hebrews 2:9; Galatians 3:13; and 2 Corinthians 5:21. What do these verses tell us about Jesus’ death for us on the cross?

Do you ever wonder if God really loves you? Look at the cross! Look at the crown made from thorns! Look at the nails in Jesus’ hands and feet! With every drop of blood that spilled from Jesus’ body, God says to us, “I love you. I don’t want to be in heaven without you. Yes, you’ve sinned. You sold yourself to Satan, the enemy. Yes, you can’t earn everlasting life with your own good behavior. But I paid the price to get you back.” You never need to wonder again if God loves you when you look at the cross.

The Bible says that Jesus came to this earth to be one with us. He had painful experiences the same as you and me. He felt sad. He got his heart broken. Jesus understands all of our troubles. He won the fight against the fallen angels in His life and on the cross. He died for each one of us.

Think about it: the Bible teaches that Jesus made everything (read John 1:3). This same Jesus left heaven and came to this earth. He suffered in ways none of us will (read Isaiah 53:1–5). Why? Because He loved us, each of us. His love gives us a powerful reason to hope!

OUR HIGH PRIEST, OR SPIRITUAL LEADER (Hebrews 4:15, 16)

Jesus won the fight against sin for us at the cross. Because He won, He can help us in heaven as our High Priest. Jesus gives us everything we need to be saved so that we can go to heaven and live with God forever.

Read Hebrews 4:15, 16 and Hebrews 7:25. How do these verses help us to have hope in a life that is so often filled with suffering, sickness, and death?

Jesus was “tempted [Satan tried to get Him to sin] in every way, just as we are. But he did not sin” (Hebrews 4:15, NIV). So, “let us, then, feel free to come before [in front of] God’s throne. Here there is grace [mercy and strength to stop sinning]. And we can receive [get] mercy and grace to help us when we need it” (Hebrews 4:16, ICB).

Jesus saves us with His life and His death. He bought us with His blood. Jesus also will live in our hearts. He will not punish us for the sins we did in the past. Jesus removes our guilt. He goes to God to get help for us to fight against sin. Jesus breaks the hold that sin has on our lives. He makes us free.

Read John 17:24–26. In the worldwide war between good and evil, what does Jesus want more than anything?

“After Jesus offered Himself for our sins, He went to heaven. He refused to allow the angels to worship Him until He went to God the Father first. Jesus said, ‘Father, I want the people that you have given me to be with me.’ John 17:24 [WE]. The Father sat on His throne. He answered Jesus with love: ‘Let all God’s angels worship him.’ Hebrews 1:6 [ERV]. Jesus was free from any sin. Now His suffering was over. His offering was finished. God gave Him a name that is more important and powerful than anyone else’s name.”—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, pages 501, 502, adapted.

More than anything, Jesus wants us to be with Him in heaven. Do you have a special need in your life? Tell Jesus. Are you sad? He will make you feel better. Are you afraid? He will give you peace. Are you guilty? He will forgive you. Do you feel weak? Jesus will make you strong.



“Jesus said, ‘Father, I want the people that you have given me to be with me.’”

ADDITIONAL THOUGHT: “When God threw Satan out of heaven, He judged Satan. God’s work as Judge was fair. God threw Satan out of heaven to protect His government. When man sinned, God gave him proof of His love: God offered His only Son to die for sinners. The cross shows us God’s love. The cross is proof to angels, humans, and the holy people on other planets that God and His government can’t be blamed for Lucifer’s sin.”—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, pages 500, 501, adapted.

“The cross of Calvary is proof that God’s law can’t be changed. The cross announces to everyone in heaven and on earth that sin causes death. When the Savior cried, ‘It is finished’ (John 19:30, ERV), Satan’s future was decided. God would end evil. That’s why the Son of God died and woke up from the dead. Jesus died so that ‘he could destroy the one who has the power of death. That one is the devil.’ Hebrews 2:14 [ICB].”—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, page 503, adapted.



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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- ① God knew that Lucifer was going to fight against Him. So, why did God give Lucifer free choice? Or, when Lucifer fought against God, why didn’t God destroy Lucifer at that time? What would have happened if God destroyed Lucifer right away? How do you think the holy angels and the people on other planets would have felt about God if He killed Lucifer after the war in heaven? The people on other planets are very interested in God’s plan to save us (1 Peter 1:12; Revelation 5:13; and Revelation 16:7). What part do the people on other planets have in the worldwide war between God and Satan? And how does their part help us better understand this war?
- ② What do the words “the worldwide war between good and evil” really mean? What did we learn about the war this week? What lessons did you learn for your own life from our study this week?
- ③ What Bible verses talk about the worldwide war between good and evil? (Hint: read Job 1; Job 2; Ephesians 6:12.)

VOLCANO, FIRES, AND COVID-19

Misael Delgado Rodríguez is a Bible worker from Cuba. He went to serve God on La Palma Island, which is part of the Canary Islands. The Canary Islands are in the Atlantic Ocean, west of the country of Morocco. Misael had a big problem his first Sabbath on La Palma. Only five people came to church.

So, Misael started to visit Adventists on La Palma who no longer came to church. He visited other people, too. A month later, Misael held his first baptism. He was so happy! But then COVID-19 stopped his work for God. Misael's problems only got worse. A fire broke out in the north part of the island and destroyed the homes of some church members. Another fire broke out in the south. Then a volcano exploded for 85 days, filling the air with poison gas and ash. The volcano caused several earthquakes. Two church families lost everything.

During all these troubles, something wonderful happened. Three years after Misael came to La Palma, 45 people came to church each Sabbath. Also, seven people got baptized. Five more were getting ready for baptism. 15 more people were doing Bible studies with church members. What happened? Misael said prayer changed everything: "We pray every day at 7 a.m., 2 p.m., and 9 p.m. Each member prays for five people."

Each church group got involved in doing work for God. Several church members offered people free Bible studies and copies of Ellen G. White's book *Steps to Christ*. The church offered classes on its Facebook page. These classes helped meet the needs of families, young people, and children. The youth group in the church held mini-concerts on the street. Or they visited the sick and needy and sang songs to them. Church members gave people cards that they could exchange for food in supermarkets. The church also gave health classes, Bible studies, and handed out copies of *The Desire of Ages* and other books. The church opened a school where they trained members to share the Good News about Jesus with other people. Four small groups started to meet in homes.

Making friends for Jesus has been a success and has helped the church to grow, Misael said. When the volcano exploded, church members spent two months handing out masks and small books with health information about volcanos. Misael said, "Our church became well known because we did these things. Many of the 15 people taking Bible studies lost everything in the volcano. They say the terrible experience brought them to God."

Misael looks back at his experience in the Canary Islands with joy. He said, "The beginning was very hard. Our church has suffered a lot. But God has blessed us in a wonderful way."

INSIDE Story

by ANDREW MCCHESENEY



When the volcano exploded, church members spent two months handing out masks and small books with health information about volcanos.