

8. The Great Controversy

All humanity is now involved in a great controversy between Christ and Satan regarding the character of God, His law, and His sovereignty over the universe. This conflict originated in heaven when a created being, endowed with freedom of choice, in self-exaltation became Satan, God's adversary, and led into rebellion a portion of the angels. He introduced the spirit of rebellion into this world when he led Adam and Eve into sin. This human sin resulted in the distortion of the image of God in humanity, the disordering of the created world, and its eventual devastation at the time of the worldwide flood. Observed by the whole creation, this world became the arena of the universal conflict, out of which the God of love will ultimately be vindicated. To assist His people in this controversy, Christ sends the Holy Spirit and the loyal angels to guide, protect, and sustain them in the way of salvation.

The root cause of all the evil we see on earth today is Lucifer's (Satan's) rebellion against God, which has led to a universe-wide conflict.

- The conflict began in heaven. Revelation 12:4-9
- Satan was created perfect. Ezekiel 28:12-18
- Satan's pride led him to want to be equal to God. Isaiah 14:12-14

When he was cast out of heaven, Satan came to earth and tempted Adam and Eve to join his rebellion. Their fall changed earth from a paradise to a battlefield. All the inhabitants of the universe have witnessed the results of Satan's work here.

- When Adam and Eve followed Satan in rebellion, all of mankind became tainted by sin. Genesis 3; Romans 5:12-14
- Sin has distorted the image of God in mankind. Romans 1:19-32
- Sin caused God's beautiful creation to become so vile that He had to destroy it in a flood. Genesis 6-8; 2 Peter 3:6
- All of creation watches events here, waiting for the final redemption of God's children. Romans 8:19-22; Ephesians 3:8-10; 1 Corinthians 4:9
- God sends His Son, His Spirit, and His angels to help us in our struggles against evil. Romans 5:15-21, 8:26-27; Hebrews 1:14

In the end, all the universe will see that God's way is right and Satan's way wrong, and God will be vindicated as the only just ruler for the universe.

- Every knee will finally bow to Christ. Philippians 2:5-11
- All will acknowledge Christ as worthy of worship. Revelation 5:11-14

Personal Application

-  After witnessing the results of Satan's work on earth, do you think that anyone in the universe will want to rebel against Him after God puts an end to sin here?
-  Who has suffered the most from sin's effects, God or humanity?
-  Understanding that all evil is the result of Satan's rebellion helps me to "see behind the scenes" and understand that the evil I see in the world today is temporary, it is not God's fault.

Commitment

- I recognize the great battle going on between You and Satan. I choose Your side and appeal to You for help in my personal battle against evil.