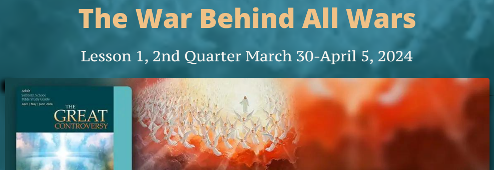
The War Behind All Wars

Lesson 1, 2nd Quarter March 30-April 5, 2024



Sabbath Afternoon, March 30

Memory Text:

"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." KJV — Revelation 12:7, 8

"Christ does not drive but draws men unto Him. The only compulsion which He employs is the constraint of love. When the church begins to seek for the support of secular power, it is evident that she is devoid of the power of Christ—the constraint of divine love." MB 127.1

"It was the Maker of all things who ordained the wonderful adaptation of means to end, of supply to need. It was He who in the material world provided that every desire implanted should be met. It was He who created the human soul, with its capacity for knowing and for loving. And He is not in Himself such as to leave the demands of the soul unsatisfied. No intangible principle, no impersonal essence or mere abstraction, can satisfy the needs and longings of human beings in this life of struggle with sin and sorrow and pain. It is not enough to believe in law and force, in things that have no pity, and never hear the cry for help. We need to know of an almighty arm that will hold us up, of an infinite Friend that pities us. We need to clasp a hand that is warm, to trust in a heart full of tenderness. And even so God has in His word revealed Himself." Ed 133.2

Sunday, March 31

War in Heaven

Read Revelation 12:7-9. What does this passage reveal about the feedom existing in heaven and the origin of evil? When Lucifer rebelled, in what ways could God have responded?

This incident of verse 4, the dragon drawing down the stars, preceded the incident of verse 9, the Lord casting down the dragon. The former took place before the Lord was born and the latter after His resurrection. This is made manifest in the following paragraphs:

In the days of Job Satan still had access to heaven, for we are told that "... there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them.And the Lord said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the Lord and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it." Job 1:6, 7.

Satan, then, was not cast out of heaven immediately after he rebelled or even when he caused Adam and Eve to sin. Rather, it must have been after Job's time. But to determine just when, we shall read Rev. 12:13: "And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child." He therefore was cast out before he went to persecute the church. This he did at the "time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles." Acts 8:1. This fact is again borne out by the Spirit of Prophecy:

Triumphantly the Lord was caught up unto God and His throne. "...all are there to welcome the Redeemer. They are eager to celebrate His triumph and to glorify their King... He presents to God the wave-sheaf, those raised with Him as representatives of that great multitude who shall come forth from the grave at His second coming.... The voice of God is heard proclaiming that justice is satisfied. Satan is vanquished. Christ's toiling, struggling ones on earth are 'accepted in the Beloved.' Before the heavenly angels and the representatives of unfallen worlds, they are declared justified.

"Satan saw that his disguise was torn away. His administration was laid open before the unfallen angels and before the heavenly universe. He had revealed himself as a murderer. By shedding the blood of the Son of God, he had uprooted himself from the sympathies of the heavenly beings. Henceforth his work was restricted. Whatever attitude he might assume, he could no longer await the angels as they came from the heavenly courts, and before them accuse Christ's brethren of being clothed with the garments of blackness and the defilement of sin. The last link of sympathy between Satan and the heavenly world was broken." – The Desire of Ages, pp. 833, 834, 761.

Compare Ezekiel 28:12-15 and Isaiah 14:12-14. What went on in the mind of this angelic bean called Lucifer that led to his rebellion?

You recognize this description [Isaiah 28:1, 2, 13-17] as being that of Lucifer; yet the prophecy is addressed to the prince of Tyrus just as Isaiah 14 associated the king of Babylon with Lucifer. By this we are to understand that both "Tyrus" and "Babylon" are instigated by Satan and are set up to do on earth the identical wicked work that Satan did originally in heaven. But we are here told that Satan's defeat in these endeavors will be complete and shameful.

We understand that Satan's name before he sinned was Lucifer, and that he sinned before Eve sinned, that he was impersonated in the serpent that deceived Eve. We shall therefore consider the sin in heaven before we further consider sin on earth.

Satan, we are told, was not the only sinner in Heaven, for with him were cast out of Heaven a third of the angelic host (Rev. 12:4). These were cast out of Heaven because they gave heed to the words of Lucifer, to a man in Heaven, rather than giving heed to the word of God. This was the angels' downfall. Lucifer himself fell when he aspired to be as God.

Monday, April 1

Lucifer Deceives; Christ Prevails

Read Revelation 12:4. What does this passage reveal about Satan's ability to deceive? How many of the angels fell for his lies about God?

Here are described two different "castings out" [Rev. 12:4, 9]. Note that in the first instance, the dragon drew the angels with his tail. But, you wonder, why not with his claws? – Simply because such would falsely indicate that Satan defeated the Lord and consequently dragged out of heaven a third of the angels. But since he drew them with his tail, the true significance is clear – that a third part of the angels voluntarily followed him. They clung to his tail, so to speak, while he led the way. "They turned from the Father and from his Son, and united with the instigator of rebellion." – Testimonies, Vol. 3, p. 115. The dragon persuaded the angels and they followed him from heaven to earth, whereupon he sought to devour Christ.

Read Genesis 2:15-17, Exodus 32:26, Joshua 24:15, 1Kings 18:20, 21, and Revelation 22:17. What fundamental principle in the great controversy do these verses teach?

These two sins – trust in man, and desire to exalt self – are still the leading sin elements now here on earth. This was Eve's stumbling block and to many even today it is still the stumbling block. No, appetite alone was not the cause of Eve's downfall. The serpent did not say, "Thou shouldst eat of this fruit for it is wonderful, more delicious than any other fruit in the garden of God." But he said: "God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." Gen. 3:5.

The fruit, of course, appealed to her, but she was tempted by the idea of having the opportunity to be exalted to the throne of God, to be exalted to the same position to which Lucifer himself aspired. Lucifer must have honestly believed that he would be as God if the angels in Heaven and the men on earth would but take orders from him.

And so we see that the Devil deceived Eve on the same grounds he deceived himself and his angels, the only difference being that he caused Eve to eat of the fruit which he himself and his angels would not eat. Consequently, Eve sinned against her physical being, too, by taking into it something that was not created for food, and consequently she died. But Satan and his angels still live.

Tuesday, April 2

Planet Earth becomes involved

Read Genesis 3:1-3 with Romans 3:23 and Romans 5:12. What do these texts have in common? Describe the ultimate results of sin that plagued the entire human race.

"Eve had overstated the words of God's command. He had said to Adam and Eve, "But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." In Eve's controversy with the serpent, she added "Neither shall ye touch it." Here the subtlety of the serpent appeared. This statement of Eve gave him advantage; he plucked the fruit and placed it in her hand, using her own words, He hath said, If ye touch it, ye shall die. You see no harm comes to you from touching the fruit, neither will you receive any harm by eating it. Con 14.2

"Eve yielded to the lying sophistry of the devil in the form of a serpent. She ate the fruit, and realized no immediate harm. She then plucked the fruit for herself and for her husband. 'And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.'" Con 14.3

"With what intense interest the whole universe watched the conflict that was to decide the position of Adam and Eve. How attentively the angels listened to the words of Satan, the originator of sin, as he ... sought to make of none effect the law of God through his deceptive reasoning! How anxiously they waited to see if the holy pair would be deluded by the tempter, and yield to his arts! They asked themselves, Will the holy pair transfer their faith and love from the Father and Son to Satan? Will they accept his falsehoods as truth? 17 TMK 14.5

"Adam and Eve persuaded themselves that in so small a matter as eating of the forbidden fruit, there could not result such terrible consequences as God had declared. But this small matter was sin, the transgression of God's immutable and holy law, and it opened the floodgates of death and untold woe upon our world.... Let us not esteem sin as a trivial thing."18 TMK 14.6

Wednesday, April 3

Love finds a way

Read Hebrews 2:9, Galatians 3:13, and 2Corinthians 5:21. What do these verses tell us about the immensity of Christ's sacrifice on the cross?

"The cross of Christ—teach it to every student over and over again. How many believe it to be what it is? How many bring it into their studies and know its true significance? Could there be a Christian in our world without the cross of Christ? Then keep the cross upheld in your school as the foundation of true education. The cross of Christ is just as near our teachers, and should be as perfectly understood by them, as it was by Paul, who could say, "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. CT 23.1

"Let teachers, from the highest to the lowest, seek to understand what it means to glory in the cross of Christ. Then by precept and example they can teach their students the blessings it brings to those who bear it manfully and bravely. The Saviour declares, "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me." Matthew 16:24. And to all who lift it and bear it after Christ, the cross is a pledge of the crown of immortality that they will receive. CT 23.2

"Educators who will not work in this line are not worthy of the name they bear. Teachers, turn from the example of the world, cease to extol professedly great men; turn the minds of your students from the glory of everything save the cross of Christ. The crucified Messiah is the central point of all Christianity. The most essential lessons for teachers and students to learn are those which point, not to the world, but from the world to the cross of Calvary." CT 23.3

Thursday, April 4

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?

All this could be, because Christ laid hold of the nature of man, and partook of the divine attributes, and planted His cross between humanity and divinity, bridging the gulf that separated the sinner from God. 1SM 261.1

"For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted" (Hebrews 2:16-18). 1SM 261.2

"'For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin'" (Hebrews 4:15). 1SM 261.3

"Jesus came to bring moral power to combine with human effort, and in no case are His followers to allow themselves to lose sight of Christ, who is their example in all things. He said, 'For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth' (John 17:19). Jesus presents the truth before His children that they may look upon it, and by beholding it, may become changed, being transformed by His grace from transgression to obedience, from impurity to purity, from sin to heart-holiness and righteousness of life." 1SM 262.1

Read John 17:24-26. What is Christ's longing desire in the great controversy between good and evil?

"The love of Christ is broad and deep and full, and should awaken in the heart a response that will overbalance every worldly consideration. The cross of Calvary is a convincing proof of his interest in humanity. His plea in their behalf, before he ascended to the Father, was, 'Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me; for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.' 'I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.'" RH October 13, 1896, par. 13

Friday, April 5

Further Thought

"We are now living in the great day of atonement. In the typical service, while the high priest was making the atonement for Israel, all were required to afflict their souls by repentance of sin and humiliation before the Lord, lest they be cut off from among the people. In like manner, all who would have their names retained in the book of life should now, in the few remaining days of their probation, afflict their souls before God by sorrow for sin and true repentance. There must be deep, faithful searching of heart. The light, frivolous spirit indulged by so many professed Christians must be put away. There is earnest warfare before all who would subdue the evil tendencies that strive for the mastery. The work of preparation is an individual work. We are not saved in groups. The purity and devotion of one will not offset the want of these qualities in another. Though all nations are to pass in judgment before God, yet He will examine the case of each individual with as close and searching scrutiny as if there were not another being upon the earth. Everyone must be tested and found without spot or wrinkle or any such thing. GC 489.3

"Solemn are the scenes connected with the closing work of the atonement. Momentous are the interests involved therein. The judgment is now passing in the sanctuary above. For many years this work has been in progress. Soon—none know how soon—it will pass to the cases of the living. In the awful presence of God our lives are to come up in review. At this time above all others it behooves every soul to heed the Saviour's admonition: 'Watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is.' Mark 13:33. 'If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.'" Revelation 3:3. GC 490.1

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