Rules of Engagement

Lesson 10, 1st Quarter March 1-7, 2025

Sabbath Afternoon March 1

Memory Text:

"He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil." KJV — 1 John 3:8

"The "familiar spirits" were not the spirits of the dead, but evil angels, the messengers of Satan. Ancient idolatry, which, as we have seen, comprises both worship of the dead and pretended communion with them, is declared by the Bible to have been demon worship. The apostle Paul, in warning his brethren against participating, in any manner, in the idolatry of their heathen neighbors, says, "The things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God, and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils." 1 Corinthians 10:20. The psalmist, speaking of Israel, says that "they sacrificed their sons and their daughters unto devils," and in the next verse he explains that they sacrificed them "unto the idols of Canaan." Psalm 106:37, 38. In their supposed worship of dead men they were in reality worshiping demons. PP 685.4

"Modern spiritualism, resting upon the same foundation, is but a revival in a new form of the witchcraft and demon worship that God condemned and prohibited of old. It is foretold in the Scriptures, which declare that "in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils." 1 Timothy 4:1. Paul, in his second letter to the Thessalonians, points to the special working of Satan in spiritualism as an event to take place immediately before the second advent of Christ. Speaking of Christ's second coming, he declares that it is "after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders." 2 Thessalonians 2:9.," PP 686.1

Sunday, March 2

An Angel Delayed

Read Daniel 10:1–14, with special attention to verses 12, 13. What do these verses teach that is relevant to the cosmic conflict? What do you make of the angel sent by God being "withstood" for twenty-one days?

"While Satan was striving to influence the highest powers in the kingdom of Medo-Persia to show disfavor to God's people, angels worked in behalf of the exiles. The controversy was one in which all heaven was interested. For three weeks the prophet Daniel we are given a glimpse of this mighty struggle between the forces of good and the forces of evil. For three weeks Gabriel wrested with the powers of darkness, seeking to counteract the influences at work on the mind of Cyrus and to bring before the coldest closed, Christ himself came to Gabriel's aid. "The prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days: but, lo, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me; and I remained there with the kings of Persia." Daniel 10:13. All that heaven could do in behalf of the people of God was done. The victory was finally gained, and the forces of the enemy were held in check all the days of Cyrus, and all the days of his son Cambyses, who reigned about seven and a half years. PP 537.2

"In these Scriptures scenes in the heavenly courts are brought to our view. Angels of the highest rank in the kingdom of God are represented as taking an interest in the affairs of men. Both the good and the evil angelic hosts are active part in matters connected with earthly rulers. 18LtMs, Ms 95, 1903, par. 4

"Daniel affected his soul before God. His earnest prayer moved a mighty angel from heaven to come to his assistance. Satan's forces were working upon the mind of the king of Persia, to prevent him if possible from doing the work that would answer Daniel's prayer. Michael Himself—the Archangel—came to the assistance of Gabriel. 18LtMs, Ms 95, 1903, par. 5

"A similar scene of controversy is portrayed in the third chapter of Zechariah. "And he showed me Joshua the high priest, standing before the Angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him. And the Lord said unto Satan, The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan; even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?" 18LtMs, Ms 95, 1903, par. 6

"In the Word of God are represented two contending parties that influence and control human agencies in our world. Constantly these parties are working with every human being. Those who are under God's control and who are influenced by the heavenly angels will be able to discern the crafty workings of the unseen powers of darkness. Those who desire to be in harmony with the heavenly agencies should be intensely in earnest to do God's will. They must give no place whatever to Satan and his angels." 18LtMs, Ms 95, 1903, par. 9

Monday, March 3

The Dragon of Revelation

Read Revelation 13:1–8. What does this reveal about the extent of the dragon's jurisdiction?

"The line of prophecy in which these symbols are found begins with Revelation 12, with the dragon that sought to destroy Christ at His birth. The dragon is said to be Satan (Revelation 12:9), he it was that moved upon Herod to put the children to death, and he it was that caused Pilate to making war upon Christ and His people during the first centuries of the Christian Era was the Roman Empire, in which paganism was the prevailing religion. Thus while the dragon, primarily, represents Satan, it is, in a secondary sense, a symbol of pagan Rome. GC 438.2

"In chapter 13 (verses 1-10) is described another beast, "like unto a leopard," to which the dragon gave "his power, and his seat, and great authority." This symbol, as most Protestants have believed, represents the papacy, which succeeded to the power and seat and authority once held by the ancient Roman empire. Of the leopardlike beast it is declared: "There was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies.... And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven. And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations." This prophecy, which is nearly the counterpart of the description of the little horn of Daniel 7, unquestionably points to the papacy." GC 439.1

"And they worshiped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshiped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him?" (Rev. 13:4.) The question may well be asked, Upon what does Christian nations base the dragon? The answer is easy, and the worship of the dragon can be clearly seen. The present system of worship by so-called Christian institutions—observance of Christmas, Sunday, Christmas, and Easter keeping, etc., originated in ancient Babylon, from the old pagan religion in honor of the sun god. Christians, in modern times, assume to honor the most High God with pagan customs calling them "Christian Doctrines." Protestantism has taken a grip on these pagan festivals as a leech on a human body. As the sluggard sucks the blood unaware that his satisfaction brings him to destruction, just so with protestants and their pagan commemoratives, even daring to call them by the name of Christ. Blasphemy indeed! Ignorant students of ancient history know this to be true. Likewise every Bible student knows these so-called Christian festivals are unbiblical as well as unchristian. If these institutions were Christian, or Biblical, they would certainly have been spoken of in the Bible. But since they are not found in the Word of God, Christians had better leave them alone lest they be found worshiping the dragon.

Jeremiah, looking forward to this time of apostasy, says: "Thus saith the Lord, Learn not the way of the heathen, and be not dismayed at the signs of heaven; for the heathen are dismayed at them. For the customs of the people are vain: for one cutteth a tree out of the forest, the work of the hands of the workman, with the axe. They deck it with silver and with gold; they fasten it with nails and with hammers, that it move not." Jer. 10:2-4.) Though it was written centuries, "Learn not the way of the heathen," professed ministers of the gospel will cut a tree from the forest and deck it with silver and gold, then dare call it by the name of Christ - Christmas tree. What greater blasphemy can one do? Yet ministers and religious teachers ignorant of these things? Jesus said, "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." GC 440.1

Tuesday, March 4

The Case of Job

Read Job 1:1–12 and Job 2:1–7. What principles of the great controversy do we see unveiled here?

"And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born....

"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.

"And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

"And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man-child." Verses 4, 7-9, 13.

Here are described two different "castings-out." Note that in the first instance, the dragon drew the angels with his tail, but you wonder, who pulled his tail to cast them out? Some people would falsely indicate that Satan defeated the Lord and consequently dragged out of heaven a third of the angels. But in the second casting-out, the tail was not used, but it is clear that it was the angels that 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." Spiritual Testimonies, Vol. 3, p. 115. The dragon persuaded the angels and they followed him from heaven to earth, whereupon he cast them out of heaven. Christ.

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 paragraph:

"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 Revelation 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. We are told that 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 award 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.

Wednesday, March 5

The (Temporary) Ruler of This World

Read John 12:31, John 14:30, John 16:11, 2 Corinthians 4:4, and Luke 4:6. What do these texts teach about the ruleership of the enemy in this world?

"Now is the judgment of this world," Christ continued; "now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me. This he said, signifying what death he should die." This is the crisis of the world. If I become the propitiation for the sins of men, the world will be lightened up. Satan's hold upon the world will be broken. The defeated image of God will be restored in humanity, and a family of believing saints will finally inherit the heavenly home. This is the result of Christ's death. The Saviour is lost in contemplation of the scene of triumph called up before Him. He sees the cross, the cruel, ignominious cross, with all its attending horrors, blazing with glory. DA 625.4

"But the work of human redemption is not all that is accomplished by the cross. The love of God is manifested to the universe. The prince of this world is cast out. The accusations which Satan has brought against God are refuted. The reproach which he has cast upon heaven is forever removed. Angels as well as men are drawn to the Redeemer. "I, if I be lifted up from the earth," He said, "will draw all unto Me." DA 626.1

Upon this word Jesus rested, and He gave Satan no advantage. When the last steps of Christ's humiliation were to be taken, when the deepest sorrow was closing about His soul, He said to His disciples, "The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in Me." "The prince of this world is judged." Now shall he be cast out. John 14:30; 16:11; 12:31. With prophetic eye Christ traced the scenes to take place in His last great conflict. He knew what then He should proclaim, "It is finished," all heaven would triumph. His ear caught the distant music and the shouts of victory in the heavenly courts. He knew that the kindof Satan's empire would then be sounded, and the name of Christ would be rendered honor to world throughout the universe. DA 679.1

Thursday, March 6

Limits and Rules

Read Mark 6:5 and Mark 9:29. What do these texts display about how even divine action might be integrally related to such factors as faith and prayer?

"The nine disciples were yet pondering upon the bitter fact of their own failure; and when Jesus was once more approached by the anxious multitude, they could not see clearly what course to pursue. Jesus answered them, "Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you. Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting." Their unbelief, that their own put from deeper sympathy with Christ, and the carelessness with which they regarded the sacred work committed to them, had caused their failure in the conflict with the powers of darkness. DA 429.4

"The words of Christ pointing to His death had brought sadness and doubt. And the selection of the three disciples to accompany Jesus to the mountain had excited the jealousy of the nine. Instead of strengthening their faith by prayer and meditation on the words of Christ, they had been dwelling on their discouragements and personal grievances. In this state of darkness they had undertaken the conflict with Satan. DA 431.1

"In order to succeed in such a conflict they must come to the work in a different spirit. Their faith must be strengthened by fervent prayer and fasting, and humiliation of heart. They must be emptied of self, and be filled with the Spirit and power of God. Earnest, persevering supplication to God in faith—faith that leads to entire dependence upon God, and unreserved consecration to His work—can alone avail to bring men the Holy Spirit's aid in the battle against principalities and powers, the rulers of the darkness of this world, and wicked spirits in high places." DA 431.2

Friday, March 7

Further Thought

"Satan, that archdeceiver, transforms himself into an angel of light and comes to the youth with his specious temptations and succeeds in winning them, step by step, from the path of duty. He is described as an accuser, a deceiver, a liar, a tormentor, and a murderer. "He that committeth sin is of the devil." Every transgression brings the soul into condemnation and provokes the divine displeasure. The thoughts of the heart are discerned of God. When impure thoughts are cherished, they need not be spoken or even a word or act to constitute the sin and bring the soul into condemnation. Its purity is defiled, and the tempter has triumphed." 4T 623.1