

A GOD WORTH SERVING

Throughout this series we have studied about God and His creation, about Christ and salvation, about Satan and disobedience, about deterioration and restoration, about eternal life and eternal death. Some have called all of this "the great controversy between Christ and Satan." Truly, it has been a great conflict between God and Satan, and has also raged throughout history in the life of every person since the time Adam sinned. Wrong or right? Evil or good? Satan's way or God's way? We have all been in the struggle. God's desire is that we all come out the victors.

It has ever been the course of Satan to distort and defame the character of God so that men and women, in believing such falsehoods, will refuse to serve such a God. He can lie about God, lead men to teach doctrines that make God a tyrant, unloving, a being to be feared. By way of contrast, God can work only in ways in harmony with His nature, which is love, to prove Himself all that He claims to be. This He has been doing throughout all history. But so many have failed to see it. Falsehood and deception are powerful, especially when they lead us to rationalize God's clear will, and thus justify ourselves in continuing in our own natural, sinful way. What a day it is when we find that our only true freedom and happiness is in the acceptance of Jesus as our Saviour and Lord. (See John 8:32,36; 10:10.)

1. What do these texts tell us about the true nature of God?

- (a) 1 John 4:8-10 _____
- (b) Luke 6:36 _____
- (c) Romans 3:26 _____

2. By way of contrast, what does the Bible teach us about the true nature of Satan, the devil?

- (a) John 8:44 _____
- (b) Zechariah 3:1 _____

(Satan, the "adversary," has ever attempted, first with holy angels (Jude 6; 2 Peter 2:4), then with mankind, to distort and obscure what the Bible says that God is in question 1.)

3. The two met face to face in the wilderness at the beginning of Christ's ministry. Read Matthew 4:1-11 and jot down every way you can find in which Satan was lying in his attempt to get Christ to sin.

4. In our series of lessons you will recall many references to the work that Christ has done for us all at the cross. John 3:16 is a fine summary of it. But the death of Christ, without having yielded to temptation, accomplished something else that we often overlook. Read Hebrews 2:14 (also in Revelation 12:10; John 12:31-33), and identify this second accomplishment of Calvary.

5. In this state of guaranteed, final annihilation, how has Satan continued to operate against God's people since Calvary? Review Revelation 12:10:
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(No wonder the 1,260 years of persecution (verses 13-16), and the devil's wrath against those who remained after that time (verse 17).

6. If God demonstrated His total and unchanging love by offering His Son for sinners (who could have been left to perish), and if the ten commandments reveal facets of a loving God's character--holiness, majesty, trustworthiness, purity, honesty, etc.--would it not then be the natural thing for Satan to seek to malign the marvelous sacrifice of Christ and His ten commandments since the time of Calvary? Review these two texts:

- (a) 1 John 4:1-3 _____
 (b) Daniel 7:25 _____

(Review and compare Matthew 5:17; John 15:10; Romans 6:14; 3:31.)

- (c) Note the beautiful way in which Ellen G. White blends grace and law in connection with the death of Christ: "Had it been possible for the law to be changed or abrogated, then Christ need not have died. But to abrogate the law would be to immortalize transgression, and place the world under Satan's control. It was because the law was changeless, because man could be saved only through obedience to its precepts that Jesus was lifted up on the cross. Yet the very means by which Christ established the law Satan represented as destroying it. Here will come the last conflict of the great controversy between Christ and Satan."--Desire of Ages, page 762.
7. As the result of many of our studies, we know that the "last conflict" is upon us. And as we studied in lesson 28, Satan will, through the enactment of human laws, seek to compel men to obey him and thus force God's loyal followers to disobey conscience and forfeit their allegiance to God. How is the contrast dramatically made in these verses?
- (a) John 14:15 (Psalm 40:8) _____
 (b) Revelation 13:16,17 _____
8. For all there is a reward. What is the reward for
- (a) Satan and his followers, in Malachi 4:1?
 (b) Christ's followers, in Revelation 12:10? "Now is come _____,
 and _____, and the _____."
9. All of the holy angels and the redeemed praise God forever and ever. What do they praise Him for in
- (a) Revelation 4:11; 5:11,12? _____
 (b) Revelation 5:13? _____
 (c) Revelation 15:2,3? _____

Our God is truly a God worth serving, NOW. There is no way to lose in life if we make the total choice to serve our wonderful God faithfully, but always in His strength (Philippians 4:13). Then we will be ready to praise Him with gratefulness throughout all eternity. If you have already made such a decision, renew it. If you need to make it, the Bible encourages you, "Today if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts" (Hebrews 4:7). From this point, let us walk together, right into the kingdom of God.

<p><u>The Nature of God:</u></p> <p>1a. _____</p> <p>1b. _____</p> <p>1c. _____</p>	<p><u>The Nature of Satan:</u></p> <p>2a. _____</p> <p>2b. _____</p>	<p>3. Christ & Satan met in the wilderness</p>		<p><u>For what is God praised:</u></p> <p>9a. _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>9b. _____</p> <p>9c. _____ & _____</p>	<p><u>Reward for Christ's Followers:</u></p> <p>8b. _____</p> <p>_____</p>
<p><u>Christ's Death:</u></p> <p>4. _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>		<p>5. Satan has continued to accuse God and His followers</p> <p>HOW? 6a. _____</p> <p>6b. _____</p> <p>_____</p>			
<p><u>Satan's Reward:</u></p> <p>8. _____</p>		<p>_____</p>			

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Notes for the Instructor

Purpose of lesson 33: This topic opens up, a bit more fully, the story of the issues of the great controversy--law and grace. Thus, it can serve as a challenge to further study of the subject, which is the framework of the entire Bible, and also bring an interest to see what Ellen White writes about the subject in the Conflict of the Ages set.

Lesson 33 also is designed to either cement the student's decision to be baptized, or to offer another opportunity to make that decision. If some still do not make their decision to be baptized, the study can be used as a vehicle to probe and find areas where they need review or more instruction. Thus, we can open the way for moving on with additional study without leaving them with the opinion that we are through and have no more to teach them.

During the lesson itself: Review lesson 33 carefully as it is in Unto a Perfect Man, pages 190-195. The approach there is slightly different, but the overall understanding is vital. In connection with question 4, make it very clear that Calvary established God's eternal love, and guaranteed Satan's final destruction. Both are encouraging.

In connection with question 8, review the last chapter of Great Controversy, pages 665-671.

Appeal: Question 9 contains a powerful appeal.

Illustration: In the illustration as completed below, a point or two are included which are not explicit in the lesson. The overall aim is to see the great controversy in very brief form from beginning to end.

<p><u>The Nature of God:</u> 1a. Love 1b. Merciful 1c. Just</p> <p><u>The Nature of Satan:</u> 2a. Liar 2b. Accuser</p>	<p>3. Christ and Satan met in the wilderness</p>		<p><u>For what is God praised:</u> 9a. Creator Salvation 9b. Lamb on Throne 9c. Just and True</p> <p><u>Reward for Christ's Followers:</u> 8b. Salvation, Strength, Kingdom</p>
<p><u>Christ's Death:</u> 4. Saves sinners and guarantees Satan's destruction</p> <p>5. Satan has continued to accuse God and His followers</p> <p><u>HOW?</u> 6a. Denies Christ 6b. Seeks to change Law</p> <p><u>Satan's Reward:</u> 8. Burned up</p>			

Introduction**John 8:32, 36**

³²And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”

³⁶Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.

John 10:10

¹⁰The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have *it* more abundantly.

1a. 1 John 4:8-10

¹⁰The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have *it* more abundantly.

Answer: God is love.

1b. Luke 6:36

³⁶Therefore be merciful, just as your Father also is merciful.

Answer: God is merciful.

1c. Romans 3:26

²⁶to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

Answer: God is just.

2a. John 8:44

⁴⁴You are of *your* father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own *resources*, for he is a liar and the father of it.

Answer: Satan is a murderer and a liar and the truth is not in him.

2b. Zechariah 3:1

¹Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the Angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to oppose him.

Answer: Satan is an adversary opposing God.

3. Matthew 4:1-11

¹Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. ²And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterward He was hungry. ³Now when the tempter came to Him, he said, "If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread."

⁴But He answered and said, "*It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.'*"

⁵Then the devil took Him up into the holy city, set Him on the pinnacle of the temple, ⁶and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down. For it is written:

'He shall give His angels charge over you,'

and,

*'In their hands they shall bear you up,
Lest you dash your foot against a stone.'*

⁷Jesus said to him, "*It is written again, 'You shall not tempt the Lord your God.'*"

⁸Again, the devil took Him up on an exceedingly high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. ⁹And he said to Him, "All these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me."

¹⁰Then Jesus said to him, "Away with you, Satan! For it is written, *'You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only you shall serve.'*"

¹¹Then the devil left Him, and behold, angels came and ministered to Him.

Answer: Let the student come up with them. May include: Since Jesus was God, Satan tempted Him to make stones bread to supply His hunger, tempted Him over physical security, and pride of life (kingdoms of the world). He did so by misquoting Scripture.

4. John 3:16

¹⁶*For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.*

Hebrews 2:14

¹⁴Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil,

Revelation 12:10

¹⁰Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, "Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down.

John 12:31-33

³¹*Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out.* ³²*And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself.* ³³This He said, signifying by what death He would die.

Answer: Not only saves sinners, but guarantees Satan's destruction

5. Revelation 12:10

¹⁰Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, "Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down.

Answer: Satan has continued to accuse God and His followers.

6a. 1 John 4:1-3

¹Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world. ²By this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, ³and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the *spirit* of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world.

Answers: He denies Christ has come in the flesh.

6b. Daniel 7:25

²⁵ He shall speak *pompous* words against the Most High,
Shall persecute the saints of the Most High,
And shall intend to change times and law.
Then *the saints* shall be given into his hand
For a time and times and half a time.

Matthew 5:17

¹⁷"Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill.

John 15:10

¹⁰If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love.

Romans 6:14

¹⁴For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.

Romans 3:31

³¹Do we then make void the law through faith? Certainly not! On the contrary, we establish the law.

Answers: He would change times and law.

6c. No Texts

7a. John 14:15

¹⁵“If you love Me, keep My commandments.

Psalm 40:8

⁸ I delight to do Your will, O my God,
And Your law is within my heart.”

Answers: If we love Christ, we will keep His commandments.

7b. Revelation 13:16, 17

⁶He causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads, ¹⁷and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.

Answers: Forces individuals to receive the mark by economic pressure.

8a. Malachi 4:1

¹ “For behold, the day is coming,
Burning like an oven,
And all the proud, yes, all who do wickedly will be stubble.
And the day which is coming shall burn them up,”
Says the Lord of hosts,
“That will leave them neither root nor branch.

Answers: Burned up.

8b. Revelation 12:10

¹⁰Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, “Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down.

Answers: Salvation, strength, kingdom of our God.

9a. Revelation 4:11

¹¹ “You are worthy, O Lord,
To receive glory and honor and power;
For You created all things,
And by Your will they exist and were created.”

Revelation 5:11, 12

¹¹Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne, the living creatures, and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands,

¹²saying with a loud voice:

“Worthy is the Lamb who was slain
To receive power and riches and wisdom,
And strength and honor and glory and blessing!”

Answers: For being the Creator as well as our Savior (or for salvation).

9b. Revelation 5:13

¹³And every creature which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, I heard saying:

“Blessing and honor and glory and power
Be to Him who sits on the throne,
And to the Lamb, forever and ever!”

Answers: For being the Lamb on the throne.

9c. Revelation 15:2, 3

²And I saw *something* like a sea of glass mingled with fire, and those who have the victory over the beast, over his image and over his mark *and* over the number of his name, standing on the sea of glass, having harps of God. ³They sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying:

“Great and marvelous *are* Your works,
Lord God Almighty!
Just and true *are* Your ways,
O King of the saints!

Answers: For being just and true.