



What it Means to be a Seventh-day Adventist Christian

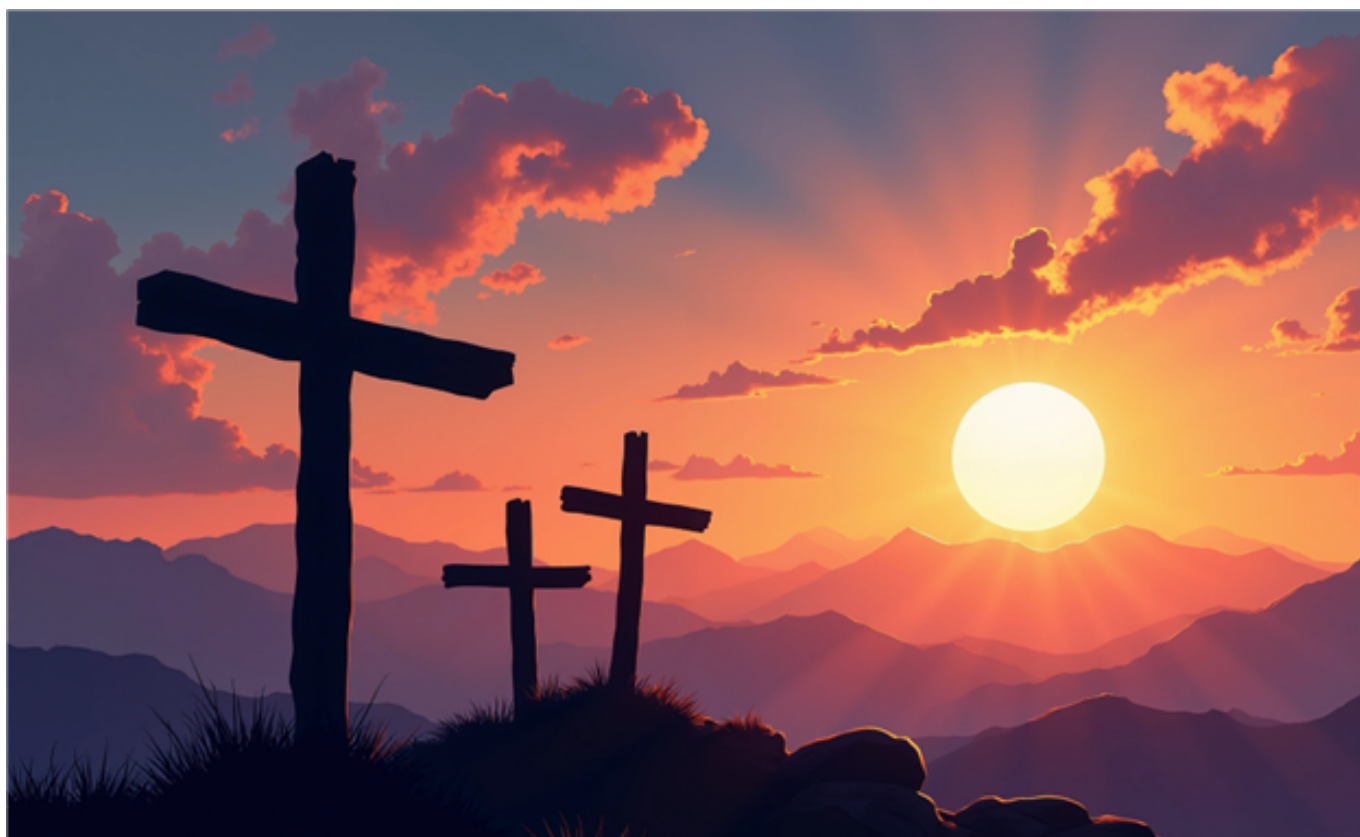
Love Defined

Love may best be defined as doing something for someone else that they cannot do for themselves, even if it comes at a great personal cost. When seen in the light of the Cross, what greater love could ever be expressed?

For in this manner, God so loved the world [cosmos; meaning everyone and not just those who profess Christ] that He gave His only Christ for those who believe [belief in Christ is conditional for receiving eternal life; an ongoing trust and commitment; a living faith evidenced by a life of bearing the cross of Christ] in Him [Christ] that they should not perish [eternal separation from God] but have everlasting life [in Greek this describes the new life as a new quality of life and communion with God, forever]. John 3:16
(adapted)

We have no worth outside of what Jesus Christ did for us on the Cross - His greatest GIFT!

“The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by human hands. And He is not served by human hands, as if He needed anything [from us]. Rather, He himself gives everyone life and breath and everything else.” Acts 17:24-25.



Lesson 1 - The War in Heaven and the Great Controversy and Why are We Here?

INTRODUCTION

We serve a loving, kind and gracious God. As a Seventh-day Adventist Christian or a Christian of any denomination, it is important to understand the broad context of our life on earth and the importance of choosing to follow Christ and bear His cross. We would not be on this planet had there never been a war in Heaven. Understanding this war, the players and the stakes is critical and places our lives and religious professions in the proper context. It is important to understand the origin of the war in Heaven. Lucifer's pride-fueled rebellion cost him everything, in other words, he is defeated and his days are numbered. Someday, the entire universe will be free from Satan, his angels, sin and sinners. We are living in a sinful, evil world where we see the consequences of this heavenly rebellion every

day. It is God's greatest desire that every person uses their God-given free will to accept Him.

What does the Bible say about the war in Heaven? The war in Heaven is most likely symbolic of the conflict which arose when Lucifer, the covering cherub, began to plot against God. Let's find out more about the war in Heaven by going to the book of Revelation. Revelation 12:1-17 is John's 7th vision from God. Let's start with verses 7-9. This passage describes the war in Heaven, "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 [Lucifer] was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceives the whole world: he was cast out into the earth and his angels were cast out with him". The dragon and his angels lost the battle. They were not strong enough to prevail and were cast out of heaven.

Ezekiel 28:12-19, provides another view of the heavenly conflict, "Son of man, take up a lamentation upon the king of Tyrus and say unto him, Thus saith the Lord God; thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering, the sardis, topaz and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold: the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee in the day that thou was created. Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so: thou was upon the holy mountain of God; thou has walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. Thou was perfect in thy ways from the day that you were created, till iniquity was found in thee. By the multitude of thy merchandise they have filled the midst of thee with violence, and thou hast sinned: therefore, I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God: and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire. Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness: I will cast thee to the ground, I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee. Thou hast defiled thy sanctuaries by the multitude of thine iniquities, by the iniquity of thy traffic; therefore, will I bring forth a fire from the midst of thee, it shall devour thee, and I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold thee. All that know thee among the people shall be astonished at thee: thou shalt be a terror, and never shalt thou be any more."

SECTION 1: THE CAST OF CHARACTERS DURING THE WAR IN HEAVEN

As with all things knowable, we start at a beginning - our beginning and even a bit before that time. We ask the important questions: who, what, when, where, which way, how, why, and what if any, are the consequences? Even though we ask important questions, we may not always find answers which completely satisfy our curiosity. Some want short, quick answers while others spend hours, days and even years in prayer and study, diving deep into better understanding the heart and mind of God. Each of us is encouraged to diligently study to show ourselves approved before God. 2 Timothy 2:15.

Who made up the cast of characters in this heavenly war plot? God, God's Christ, Heavenly angels, other created worlds, Lucifer, and his evil angels who now inhabit the earth. The earth and the human race join the cast of characters after the war in Heaven began. It ended with Satan and his angels being cast out of their Heavenly roles. Unfortunately, until Christ lived on earth as a man, died and rose again, Satan had access to heaven as described in the first two chapters of the book of Job. Fortunately, Job understood the plot and one only needs to read the last 5 chapters of Job to see the incredible conversation and the outcome of Job's faithfulness to God. Each one of us can be like Job. Under severe trials and persecution, we either choose God or we choose our selfish interests.

What happened? We are told Lucifer became prideful and jealous of Christ and wanted God's glory for himself. Ellen White in *Patriarchs and Prophets* (pages 35-37) describes him, "Little by little, Lucifer came to indulge the desire for self-exaltation... Leaving his place in the immediate presence of the Father, **Lucifer went forth to diffuse the spirit of discontent among the angels.** He worked with mysterious secrecy, and for a time concealed his real purpose under an appearance of reverence for God. He began to insinuate doubts concerning the laws that governed heavenly beings, intimating that though laws might be necessary for the inhabitants of the worlds, angels, being more exalted needed no such restraint, for their own wisdom was a sufficient guide... **The exaltation of the Son of God as equal with the Father was represented as an injustice to Lucifer, who, it was claimed, was also entitled to reverence and honor.** God in His great mercy bore long with Lucifer. **He was not immediately degraded from his exalted station when he first indulged the spirit of discontent, nor even when he began to present his false claims before the loyal angels. Long was he retained in heaven (PP p 68-69).**"

Let's read more from the pen of EGW. "Again and again he was offered pardon on condition of repentance and submission... **Lucifer himself did not at first see whither he was drifting; he did not understand the real nature of his feelings... But as his dissatisfaction was proved to be without cause, Lucifer was convinced that he was in the wrong, that the divine claims were just, and that he ought to acknowledge them as such before all heaven.** Had he done this, he might have saved himself and many angels. He had not at this time fully cast off his allegiance to God. Though he had forsaken his position as covering cherub, yet if he had been willing to return to God, acknowledging the Creator's wisdom, and satisfied to fill the place appointed him in God's great plan, he would have been reinstated in his office. **But pride forbade him to submit. He persistently defended his own course, maintained that he had no need of repentance, and fully committed himself, in the great controversy, against his Maker... God in His wisdom permitted Satan to carry forward his work, until the spirit of disaffection ripened into active revolt. It was necessary for his plans to be fully developed, that their true nature and tendency might be seen by all...** (PP p 68-69)"

"The plan of redemption had a yet broader and deeper purpose than the salvation of man. It was not for this alone that Christ came to the earth; it was not merely that the inhabitants of this little world might regard the law of God as it should be regarded; **but it was to vindicate the character of God before the universe. To this result of His great sacrifice - its influence upon the intelligences of other worlds, as well as upon man - the Saviour looked forward when just before His crucifixion He said: 'Now is the judgment of this world: now the ruler of this world will be cast out.'** John 12:31,32. The act of Christ in dying for the salvation of man would not only make heaven accessible to men, **but before all the universe** it would justify God and His Son in their dealing with the rebellion of Satan. It would establish the perpetuity of the law of God and would reveal the nature and the results of sin (PP p 68-69)."

When and where did the war in heaven occur? We have no way of definitively answering this question but we know it occurred before God created the world and human race. Spiritual Gifts, Volume 3, p 5 (EGW), states, "Before the fall of Satan, the Father consulted His Son in regard to the formation of man. They purposed to make this world and create beasts and living things upon it, and to make man in the image of God, to reign as a ruling monarch over every living thing which God should create. When Satan learned the purpose of God, **he was envious and jealous of Christ because the Father had not consulted him in regard to the creation of man.** Satan was of the highest order of angels; but Christ was above all. He was the commander of all Heaven."

As the title of this lesson reads, **the war started in heaven** but it ultimately ends on the Earth with the establishment of the “new earth.” Ellen White writes about the perfect constitution of Heaven until Lucifer’s pride changes everything. “So long as all created beings acknowledged the allegiance of love, there was perfect harmony throughout the universe of God. It was the joy of the heavenly host to fulfill the purpose of their Creator. They delighted in reflecting His glory and showing forth His praise... There was no note of discord to mar the celestial harmonies. But a change came over this happy state... Sin originated with him who, next to Christ, had been most honored of God and was highest in power and glory among the inhabitants of heaven. Lucifer, “son of the morning,” was the first of the covering cherubs, holy and undefiled... Ezekiel 28:12-15 describes Lucifer’s fall from Heaven, “Thus saith the Lord God: Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. Thou has been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering... Thou are the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so: thou was upon the holy mountain of God; thou has walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire (it is understood these stones were precious stones, dazzling in their glory and fiery presence of God’s holiness). Thou was perfect in thy ways from the day that thou was created, till iniquity was found in thee.” PP 35.1”

The imagery of walking down the midst of the fiery stones representing God’s holiness and in a sense, could also parallel the covenant God made with Abraham when he asked Abraham to slaughter the animal sacrifices down the middle and place them in a row. As Abraham entered a deep sleep, God’s presence in the form of fire and smoke, passed between the animal halves. God had a covenant with the angels and Lucifer broke the covenant. This shows that even the most perfect created being in heaven, Lucifer, could succumb to evil. Only God and His Christ can commit a covenant and fulfill it on our behalf.

Which way did this happen? Initially it was a covert action on the part of Lucifer who secretly sought to undermine God the Father and God the Christ. At some point what had been happening in “secret” became an open rebellion. “Leaving his place in the immediate presence of the Father, **Lucifer went forth to diffuse the spirit of discontent among the angels...** He began to insinuate doubts concerning the laws that governed heavenly beings, intimating that though laws might be necessary for the inhabitants of the worlds, angels, being more exalted, needed no such restraint, for their own wisdom was a sufficient guide. They were not beings that could bring dishonor to God; all their thoughts were holy; it was no more possible for them than for God Himself to err. **The exaltation of the Son of God as equal with the Father was represented as an injustice to Lucifer, who, it was claimed, was also entitled to reverence and honor.** If this prince of angels could but attain to his true, exalted position, great good would accrue to the entire host of heaven, for

it was his object to secure freedom for all. But now even the liberty which they had hitherto enjoyed was at an end; for an absolute Ruler had been appointed them, and to His authority all must pay homage. Such were the **subtle deceptions** that through the wiles of Lucifer were fast obtaining in the heavenly courts. PP 37.1”

How and why did this occur? To answer the question of “how,” we can read that Lucifer gathered as many unfallen angels as possible to bolster his prideful rebellion. The war was waged in ‘back rooms,’ as an “underground” gaslighting campaign. The war of deceit eventually became physical to the point Lucifer and the fallen angels were physically cast out of heaven. “There was war in heaven. God’s angels, led by Michael, fought against the dragon, Lucifer, and his angels. Lucifer and his angels were defeated and cast out of heaven.”

The answer to the question, “why,” is not a complex answer. The Bible tells us Lucifer wanted to be greater than his Creator and he wanted the honor only afforded to God and His Christ. The consequences of this war in Heaven activated the Plan of Salvation. Every human who has ever lived on this planet makes a choice resulting either in eternal life with God or the alternative. If you choose Satan, you will cease to exist and will miss out on eternity with God - a life inconceivably joyful and rewarding. It requires faith to believe and accept. We are not asked to have blind faith. We have the Word of God. We have a Saviour who died to rescue us from the sin which originated in Heaven and resulted in the war in heaven.

The tragic consequences of Lucifer’s rebellion. “Man was to bear God’s image, both in outward resemblance and in character. Christ alone is ‘the express image’ (Hebrews 1:3) of the Father; but man was formed in the likeness of God. His nature was in harmony with the will of God. His mind was capable of comprehending divine things. His affections were pure; his appetites and passions were under the control of reason. He was holy and happy in bearing the image of God and in perfect obedience to His will. PP 45.2.”

After the war in heaven and Lucifer’s fall, God created the earth as described in Genesis 1 to 3. The war in Heaven now centered around the creation of man and earth. When Adam and Eve were placed in the beautiful garden, they had everything for their happiness which they could desire. But He chose in His all-wise arrangements to test their loyalty.

“God placed man under the law, as an indispensable condition of his very existence... God might have created man without the power to transgress His law; He might have withheld the hand of Adam from touching the forbidden fruit; but in that case man would have been not a free moral agent, but a mere automaton. Without freedom of

choice, his obedience would not have been voluntary, but forced. There could have been no development of character. Such a course would have been contrary to God's plan in dealing with the inhabitants of other worlds. It would have been unworthy of man as an intelligent being and would have sustained Satan's charge of God's arbitrary rule. PP 49.1"

No longer free to stir up rebellion in heaven, Satan's enmity against God found a new field in plotting the ruin of the human race. In the happiness and peace of the holy pair in Eden, he beheld a vision of the bliss that to him was forever lost. Moved by envy, he determined to incite them to disobedience and bring upon them the guilt and penalty of sin. He would change their love to distrust and their songs of praise to reproaches against their Maker. Thus he would not only plunge these innocent beings into the same misery which he was himself enduring, but would cast dishonor upon God and cause grief in Heaven. Patriarchs and Prophets, 52.1."

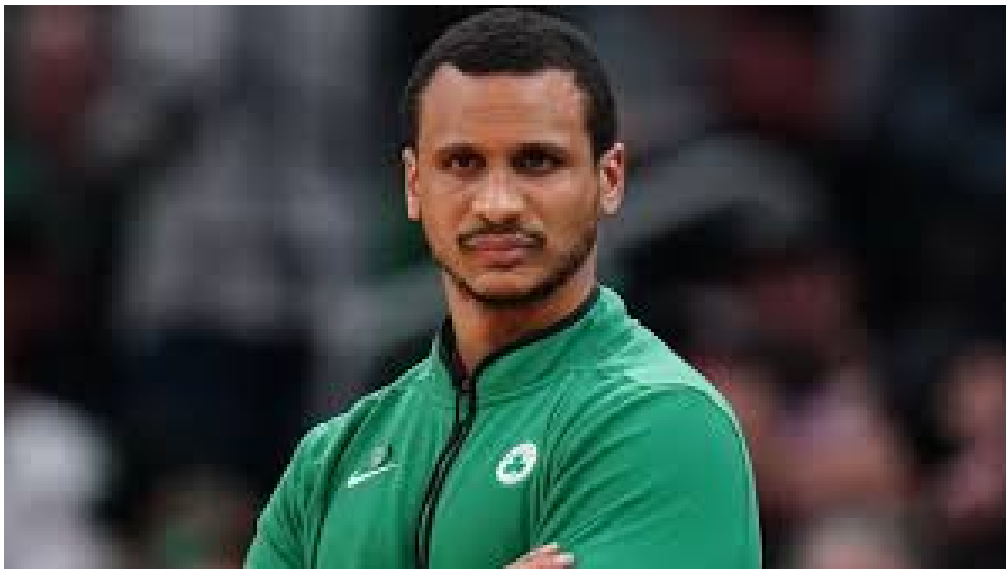
"It was not the will of God that the sinless pair should know aught of evil. He had freely given them the good and had withheld the evil. But, contrary to His command, they had eaten of the forbidden tree and now they would continue to eat of it - they would have the knowledge of evil - all the days of their life. From that time the human race would be afflicted by Satan's temptations. Instead of the happy labor heretofore appointed them, anxiety and toil were to be their lot. They would be subject to disappointment, grief, pain, and finally to death. Patriarchs and Prophets, 59.3."

"In humility and unutterable sadness they bade farewell to their beautiful home and went forth to dwell upon the earth, where rested the curse of sin. The atmosphere, once so mild and uniform in temperature, was now subject to marked changes, and the Lord mercifully provided them with a garment of skins as a protection from the extremes of heat and cold. Patriarchs and Prophets, 61.5."

Purpose of the War in Heaven. Let's continue reading in Revelation 12:10-13, "And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, **NOW** is come **SALVATION** and **STRENGTH** and the **KINGDOM of our GOD**, and the **POWER of HIS CHRIST**: for the accuser of our brethren [Lucifer] is cast down, which used them before our God, day and night. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb [Jesus Christ] and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death. Therefore, rejoice ye heavens and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth [the human race] and of the sea [those who are ignorant of God]! For the devil is come down unto you having great wrath because he knows he has but a short time. And when the dragon saw that he was cast to the earth, he persecuted the woman [Christian church] which brought forth the man child [Jesus Christ]."

There is great news in this passage. Revelation 12:10 says, our salvation is NOW! We can have the assurance of salvation now! Is that something you want? **We receive not only salvation but strength, the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ.** There is nothing else we need to defeat Satan. He is a defeated foe, but we must make choices all day and every day that show our fidelity to God's kingdom. Choosing selfish pursuits and living for one's self is the opposite of bearing the cross of Christ. This doesn't mean we live a strenuous and joyless life on earth, in fact it is the opposite.

How then shall we live? We live knowing Christ conquered our enemy. We live as a critical member of God's Heavenly Royal Family. This reminds me of the comment by the head coach for the Boston Celtics, Joe Mazulla (pictured below), when asked about the Prince and Princess of Wales attending a Celtics game. The reporter asked how he felt about having the "royal family" at the game. His response was, "Jesus, Mary and Joseph?" The reporter laughed and he replied, "I'm only familiar with one Royal Family." You can watch the greatest reply ever by a sports coach, here: <https://www.youtube.com/shorts/YS4-K-1BVhQ> . There is only one Royal Family. Everyone else is just pretending to be royal or they claim imperial importance propagating the myth of castes and human hierarchies, which is not Biblical. The only hierarchy we need to know is Jesus Christ and His Heavenly Royal Family. He has secured a place for us if we choose.



As we give our testimony for Jesus, we overcome every accusation by the devil, the fiery darts do not pierce us, the fire does not burn us, the waters will not drown us. Revelation 12:11, "they loved not their lives unto death." Our heritage is with God's kingdom and not of this earth. The length of our life on earth is unimportant to our salvation. It may mean

something to our loved ones, but ultimately, the most important decision we make is to walk with God. Salvation is a gift which must be accepted. It is demonstrated by our daily words and actions. Our words and actions show others around us, Satan and his angels, and our Heavenly audience, our allegiance. By our behaviour, we either show we are ambassadors for Christ or we serve the Devil. We do not make the decision once and then go on with our lives. We decide for Christ with every word and deed. We serve others as if Jesus was still walking on the earth and performing miracles. A kind word, a good deed done for God is evidence of our love for Him. We love Him because He loved us and sent His Christ to die for us so that we can live with Him forever. It may seem too much to comprehend at first, but when you take up the flag of Christ, He will empower you and give you the strength to make right decisions.

This passage also shows the cast of characters has expanded to include the human race, an empowered human race who is not at the mercy of an evil, fallen angel, but we as God's people possess the winning combination. This indicates a key role for the humans in resolving the conflict. When Jesus created the human race, He knew the war had just begun and we must accept this is the best strategy for winning the war in Heaven. Even though Satan had been cast out of heaven, the remaining angels may not have been fully convinced the highest standing angel, now a fallen angel, had been wrong.

SECTION 2: THE WAR IN HEAVEN LED TO THE PLAN OF SALVATION

When the conflict began, it set into motion a great replacement strategy. Heaven had been perfectly balanced before the war in Heaven. We could assume the redeemed will restore the perfect balance which was lost during the war in Heaven. God is not a random, punitive dictator, but a sovereign, loving, just, merciful and unknowable God. We have Jesus to bridge the gap to God the Father. God's ways are not our ways. His thoughts are not our thoughts. But, when it comes to Jesus, He walked with us, talked with us, healed us, laughed with us, and loved us enough to die for us. Jesus loved us enough as well as He loved His Father, that He was willing to be the sacrificial Lamb to restore Heaven. We may never fully understand the war in Heaven, but it is worth serious contemplation and conversations with our Heavenly Father.

Let's keep reading in Revelation 12 verses 14 to 17, "And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent. And the serpent [Satan] cast out of his mouth water as a flood [water is symbolic of people or groups of people] after the woman [symbolic of the true church], that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood. And the earth helped the woman and the earth opened up her mouth and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth. And the dragon was wroth with the woman and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ." It is clear the serpent is maximizing his efforts to destroy the remnant. It is imperative to know Him - He is our only safety. Study His Word. The Word became flesh so we might live forever in heaven. Turn off the TV. Put down your phone or computer. Pick up the Word of God, pray for the Holy Spirit to guide your study and provide spiritual insights. Once you have begun to study, share your insights with others. This becomes your testimony. Let's go back to Revelation 12:11, "And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb [Jesus Christ] and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death." We overcome the Devil by the Blood of Jesus Christ and our testimony. Our testimony must bring great joy to the Heavenly Hosts, including God, the Lamb of God, the Holy Spirit as well as the rest of the heavenly cast.

SECTION 3: SYMBOLISM IN REVELATION 12:7-17

This passage is certainly worthy of more in-depth study. There are many significant symbols in the above passages. Let's unpack some of them. Each symbol is worthy of prayerful study. This somewhat dark and ominous passage found in the apocalyptic book of Revelation, provides significant insights into our purpose on earth.

1. The **war in Heaven** - The Ellen G. White Bible Commentary states, "Opposition to the law of God had its beginning in the courts of heaven, with Lucifer, the covering cherub. Satan determined to be first in the councils of heaven and equal with God. He began his work of rebellion with the angels under his command, seeking to diffuse among them, the spirit of discontent. And he worked in so deceptive a way that many of the angels were won to his allegiance before his purposes were fully known. Even

the loyal angels could not fully discern his character, or see to what his work was leading. When Satan had succeeded in winning many angels to his side, he took his cause to God, representing that it was the desire of the angels that he occupy the position that Christ held. There are only two parties upon this earth - those who stand under the bloodstained banner of Jesus Christ and those who stand under the black banner of rebellion." The 12th chapter of Revelation describes the conflict between those two classes of people on the earth.

2. **Michael** and his angels (v. 7) - In this passage, Michael is another name for Jesus Christ. It describes Michael as the commander of the heavenly forces who do battle with evil powers. This shows Michael led the charge to rid heaven of its first sinners - Lucifer and the angels he recruited. Michael and His angels prevailed! Verse 10 describes the result of Michael's victory, which is the salvation of a subset of the human race. The power of Jesus Christ gives us the victory!
3. A **dragon / serpent / ancient serpent and his angels** (v. 7,9,10,12-17) - The dragon and his angels, are identified as the devil, Satan, who deceives the whole world and the third of the fallen angels who were kicked out of Heaven along with Lucifer. Verse 10, is described as a victory for Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ was accused and ultimately Lucifer and His angels were cast out. This must have been a devastating blow for everyone involved. There are no other passages in the Bible which so vividly narrate Satan's fall and the subsequent war. The Ellen G. White Bible Commentary provides this description, "The casting down of Satan as an accuser of the brethren in heaven was accomplished by the great work of Christ in giving up His life. Notwithstanding, Satan's persistent opposition, the plan of redemption was being carried out. Man was esteemed of sufficient value for Christ to sacrifice His life for him. Satan, knowing the empire he had usurped would in the end be wrested from him, determined to spare no pains to destroy as many as possible of the creatures whom God had created in His image. He hated man because Christ had manifested for him such forgiving love and pity, and he now prepared to practice upon him every species of deception by which [man] might be lost; he pursued his course with more energy because of his own hopeless condition." 7 BC 973.10.
4. A **woman** - A woman represents God's church consisting of His chosen people. The "woman" is the object of Satan's attack to the point she takes refuge by fleeing into the wilderness. This passage describes the people who make up the church at the time right before the second coming who gain victory over sin. They keep God's commandments and have the testimony of Jesus Christ. If a "woman" in Scripture represents the church, this passage describes how Satan hates God's church made up of God's people. Verse 17 goes on to describe how Satan is wroth with the remnant of her (Eve's) seed which is described as those who keep the commandments of God and

who have the testimony of Jesus Christ. This verse references Genesis 3:14-15, "And the Lord said unto the serpent, because thou has done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life: And I will put enmity between thee and the woman and between thy seed and her see; it shall bruise thy head and thou shalt bruise his heel."

5. The **earth** - The earth represents all of the human race. It represents people and their systems of government. It represents the righteous and the wicked. This passage shows God's intention to fully vet and test every single person before they are saved. The vetting is not punitive but redemptive. Vetting is simply choosing Christ, carrying the cross of Christ, and bearing others' burdens as Christ bore our burdens. In later lessons, we will learn more about justification (our fitness for heaven) and sanctification (the refining of our character through our life choices).
6. The **man child** - Represents the seed of the woman, Christ after he became a man, died to save man, and returned to Heaven. Why use the term, "man child?" Jesus was God, reincarnated in the form of a baby. He grew into a man, ministered for 3.5 years, lived a perfect life, died as the sacrificial Lamb, rose on the third day, ministered a few more days, and returned to Heaven. When Jesus became a man and joined the human race, He as a Jew, gave birth to Christianity, an entirely different system compared to Judaism. He removed the distinctions between Jews and Greeks (Gentiles), he removed the prejudice against women by declaring women and men equal, he removed the distinctions between slaves and free men. Everyone is a child of God. Galatians 3:28.
7. **Two wings of a great eagle** - "And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent." This passage is considered to symbolize God's protection for His people during the final days of earth's history right before His second coming. We see the eagle and eagle's wings mentioned by a number of Bible writers. Psalm 91:4, "He shall cover thee with His feathers and under His wings shalt thou trust: His truth shall be thy shield and buckler." Exodus 19:4, "You have seen how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself." Isaiah 40:31, "But those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not be faint." Read Psalm 18 about how the Lord protects His children.
8. The **wilderness** - represents a place of safety and protection from the persecuting powers which will be present right before the Second Coming. The wilderness is a symbolic place where God's provisions will reach and sustain us. The enemy will not be able to touch us. It may also mean a time where we examine our lives and seek to purge every sin and every wrong tendency from our lives.
9. **Time, and times, and half a time** - There are several ways to read this. "Time"

refers to a year, "times" is two years, and "half a time" is half a year. This translates into 3.5 years or 1260 days (assuming a 360-day year which was in place at that time). According to Ellicott's Bible Commentary, "The woman is persecuted and driven into the wilderness: yet it is with the eagle wings given her by her Lord that she flies; the serpent drives her into the wilderness: yet it is in the wilderness that her place is prepared by God. The way that seems hard is the way that is most blest. The opposition of the dragon brings her blessings she never would have received except in persecution; neither the eagle power nor the heavenly sustenance had been hers without the serpent's hate..."

10. **Mouth of the dragon and water as a flood after the woman** - Let's go to Ellicott's Bible Commentary to help with understanding, verse 15, "...And the serpent cast out of his mouth after the woman, water as a river, that he might make her to be carried away by the river." Ellicott's states, "The same emblem is used in Psalm 74:2-6 to describe the uprising of a people's ill will. The floods, rivers, the waves of the sea, are employed to express popular movements. The woman that cannot be destroyed by positive persecution may be swept away by a hostile public opinion. It is not the rulers alone who stand up against the Lord and His church: an infuriated populace may be stirred up against them. The temper of the mob occasioned as much suffering and as many deaths in the early Christian days as did the political authorities. Ill-regulated popular impulses, leading to violence and unwise action, whether nominally for Christianity or against it, have done enough of the devil's work in the world."
11. The **earth opening its mouth** - verse 16, "And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth." According to Ellicott's Bible Commentary, "This is generally understood as some earthly power which is raised up to protect the church against persecution."
12. The **dragon making war** - "And the dragon was wroth with the woman and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ." According to Ellicott's Bible Commentary, "...The attempt to sweep away the Christian Church is vain. The wrath of man has always been found to turn to God's praise; the earth has always helped the woman; out of a thousand seeming defeats the Church of Christ has arisen; the banner of the Lord has been lifted up over every flood. But the foe will not give up his attacks. He can make war upon individual Christians; he may cease to assail the collective Church of Christ, but he can assail Christians by a thousand discomforts, by petty opposition, by undermining their morals, by making them unpopular, not as Christians, but as 'very particular' Christians: for those thus assailed are they who "keep the commandments of God and the testimony of Jesus." It is the old combination of a holy life and a fidelity to their Master which is the test of true loyalty. They take heed to themselves; they

abide in Christ; they take heed to the teaching, that Christ's word may abide in them. They keep His word and they witness to Him in lip and life." According to Barnes' Notes on the Bible, "The scene, then, in this chapter is this: John saw a most beautiful woman, suitably adorned, representing the church as about to be enlarged and to become triumphant in the earth. Then he saw a great red monster, representing Satan, about to destroy the church: the pagan power, infuriated and putting forth its utmost energy for its destruction... Still, however, he [Satan or the Dragon] is permitted for a time to carry on a warfare against the church... He puts forth his [Satan or the Dragon] power and manifests his hostility in another form, that of the papacy, and commences a new opposition against the spiritual church of Christ... Still filled with rage, though incapable of destroying the true church itself, he turns his wrath, under the form of papal persecutions, against individual Christians, and endeavors to cut them off..." This verse indicates the Papacy will seek to destroy God's true church and people.

13. The **remnant of the woman's seed**. If you sew, you understand the meaning of the word, 'remnant.' A remnant is a small piece leftover from a much larger piece of cloth. A similar concept is mentioned here. The true church of God is a 'remnant' of what is thought to be the larger church. A remnant is a very small, seemingly insignificant piece of the original. In this instance, the Jamieson-Faussett-Brown Bible Commentary states, "Unable to destroy Christianity and the church as a whole, Satan directs his enmity against true Christians, the elect remnant: the others he leaves unmolested."

SECTION 4: WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT THE HEAVENLY CAST AND THE WAR IN HEAVEN?

Other verses in the Bible referring to the war in Heaven include Jude 6, which describes the rebellion of the angels, "And the angels which kept not their first estate [Heaven] but left their own habitation, he has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day [the day sin and sinners will cease to exist and the entire earth will be clean]."

Luke 10:17-24, tells a poignant story about Lucifer's fall from heaven. In a loose contextual way, this passage describes the disciples who are rejoicing with Jesus who is present, over how they are casting out devils and performing miracles. I can see them excitedly jumping around, illustrating and telling their stories in dramatic fashion. In response to their stories

about casting out devils, let's read verse 18, Jesus responds saying, "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven [Greek words: ra'ah satan naphal 'aher baraq o bamah]. Behold I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you." But Jesus goes on to say, **"Notwithstanding, in this rejoice not that the spirits are subject unto you but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven."**

This story shows a side to Jesus that we may miss unless we spend some time thinking about His words. One could read it to say that Jesus was contrasting how Satan fell from Heaven with the actions and miracles of His disciples. Verse 20, begins with the word, "notwithstanding," meaning a contrast. Jesus was possibly speaking with a measure of sadness about how Lucifer fell from heaven. Lucifer, one of God's created beings, had the highest possible standing in Heaven for a created being. We don't know how long it took for Lucifer to begin to plot against Christ, but it was likely a rough betrayal for God the Father and His Christ. After Jesus conveys this story, He goes on to triumphantly say His disciples should rejoice that Satan and his angels have NO POWER OVER HUMANS. Jesus said to rejoice because YOUR NAMES ARE WRITTEN IN the LAMB'S BOOK of LIFE in HEAVEN. In a sense, this story takes us back to Genesis 3:14-16, where right after Adam and Eve sinned, Jesus, instead of condemning them, He cursed the serpent and the ground. Then he told Eve that through her conception [a function Satan did not have], she would bring about the Saviour of the world! Jesus is 100% for us! Imagine you just made a mistake of epic proportions. You panic and don't know what to do. Then someone comes on the scene and gives you the best possible news - your big mistake will be corrected but unfortunately, you cannot avoid the consequences of your mistake. What a lesson! And that person, your best friend, Jesus Christ, is going to be with you the entire time. He will rescue the human race. Your mistake and betrayal will be voided and you are welcome in the Kingdom!

Now we know more about the War in Heaven, but does God say about creating the earth? We are told in Job 38, that the heavenly angels shouted for joy when God created the earth. This likely indicates the war in Heaven occurred before the creation of the world. In God's own words, found in Job 38, He describes the heavenly angels shouting for joy at the creation of the New World (earth). These verses are part of a larger conversation God is having with Job during Job's time of acute suffering. God said, "Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth? Tell Me if you have understanding. Who determined its measurements? Surely you know! Or Who stretched the line upon it? To what were its foundations fastened? Or Who laid its cornerstone when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy?"

Heavenly angels continuously cooperate with God the Father, His Christ and the Holy Spirit

in the redemption of the world. Another reference to the angels in heaven describes their duty to guard the Tree of Life after Adam and Eve fell. Genesis 3:24, states, "So He [God] drove out the man; and He [God] placed at the east of the garden of Eden, Cherubims and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the Tree of Life." This action kept sin from being immortalized.

David further describes angels as superior in nature to man. In Psalm 8:5, the condition of man in relation to the angels is described, stating, "for You have made him [man] a little lower than the angels, and You have crowned him [man] with glory and honor." David further describes angels, "The Lord has established His throne in Heaven and His kingdom rules over all. Bless the Lord, you His angels, who excel in strength, who do His word, heeding the voice of His word..." Psalm 103:19-21.

Isaiah 45:7, states God is responsible for good and evil and ultimately will remove sin. "I form the light and create darkness: I make peace and create evil: I the Lord do all these things." God has taken responsibility for the existence of sin. Because HE is responsible, HE will provide the remedy. No one else can do so. Someday, God will remove the curse of sin. In large part, this means complete and total destruction of Satan and his angels and all those who reject God, not because God is a mean God, but because He is the definition of loving God who will not allow sin and the heinous consequences of sin to last forever.

SECTION 5: WHAT IS SATAN DOING ON EARTH?

Someday, demons on earth as well as those under the influence of demonic activities, will suffer the same fate as the "everlasting fire" prepared for the devil and his angels (Matthew 18:8; Matthew 25:41). Matthew 25:41, reads, "Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, depart from me, ye are cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels (Greek word for everlasting: aiónios or eons; Greek word for fire: pyr (literally or figuratively, specially, lightning))." Does this mean the fire never ends? These two verses are the only places in the entire Bible which places the two Greek words or concept of, "everlasting fire" together. There are over a dozen translations which do not contain this concept of eternal punishment (Tony Nungesser and Gary Amirault - <https://tentmaker.org/articles/EternalPunishmentNotTrueToGreek.html>). The word, "everlasting," is not describing something as eternal or without an ending, but it is describing an "indeterminate period of time." It could be short such as the 3 days Jonah

spent in the belly of the fish or it could be describing a wicked generation, which would be about 20 to 30 years. It could describe the length of a man's life or the period of an "age." According to Nungesser and Amirault, the Bible describes five "aions [eons]" or "forevers," indicating the word cannot mean "eternal." More about this in the study of hell, but suffice to say, we serve a loving, caring and just God! **No one, not even Satan himself, will suffer forever and without end.**

If Satan and his evil angels are roaming the earth, do we ever see them or are they disguised and invisible? Mostly, Satan and his evil angels are primarily spiritual beings, not physical. But, they can manifest in visible forms, as Eve could attest after her encounter with the serpent. 1 Peter 5:8, describes Satan as a roaring lion, "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walks about seeking whom he may devour..." There are many examples of demon-possessed humans. These people continually seek to do evil and deceive as many people as possible.

The Bible says Satan will someday soon will come as an angel of light and appear to mankind on earth. He will attempt to deceive as many people as possible. He will counterfeit God's genuine work on earth, deceiving many. Paul, in 2 Corinthians 11:14 describes this event. Satan represents himself as he once was before he fell from Heaven and not as he is today. He will disguise himself as an angel of light but he is not an angel of light (Greek words: Satan masquerades as an angel of light / photos). John 8:44, best describes Satan, the fallen Lucifer. "...He was a murderer from beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar and the father of it (Greek words say Satan was the father of lies)."

Ellen White describes the coming day when we will come face to face with Satan. "Transgression has almost reached its limit. Confusion fills the world and a great terror is soon to come upon human beings. The end is very near. We who know the truth should be preparing for what is soon to break upon the world as an overwhelming surprise". 8T 28.1. John also describes this scene which follows Satan disguising himself as an angel of light, "And I saw a great white throne and Him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them [Satan, Satan's angels, those who refused to follow Christ]. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works." Revelation 20:11,12 and 8 Testimonies, 28.2.

The judgment described in John occurs after the millennium where the redeemed spend 1,000 years judging the books. This is the final judgment before Satan, his demon angels

and all the lost are destroyed. Everyone will see the fairness of God's Plan of Salvation. Philippians 2:9-11, describes this event, "Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus **every knee should bow** of those in heaven [the redeemed] and of those on earth [the lost humans] and of those under the earth [Satan and his demonic agents], and that **every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.**"

SECTION 6: SUMMARY

In summary, how did the war in heaven lead the human race to this place?

- "Sin originated in self-seeking. Lucifer, the covering cherub [a created being], desired to be first in heaven. He sought to gain control of heavenly beings, to draw them away from their Creator and to win homage to himself. Therefore, he misrepresented God, attributing to Him the desire for self-exaltation. With his own evil characteristics, he sought to invest the loving Creator. Thus, he deceived angels. Thus, he deceived men. He led them to doubt the word of God and to distrust His goodness. Because God is a God of justice and terrible majesty, Satan caused them to look upon Him as severe and unforgiving. Thus, he drew men to join him in rebellion against God and the night of woe settled down upon the world." *Desire of Ages*, 21.3.
- "The plan for our redemption was not an afterthought, a plan formulated after the fall of Adam. It was a revelation of "the mystery which hath been kept in silence through times eternal." Romans 16:24. It was an unfolding of the principles that from eternal ages have been the foundation of God's throne. From the beginning, God and Christ knew of the apostasy of Satan and of the fall of man through the deceptive power of the apostate. God did not ordain that sin should exist, but He foresaw its existence and made provision to meet the terrible emergency." *Desire of Ages*, 22.2
- "This was a voluntary sacrifice. Jesus might have remained at the Father's side. He might have retained the glory of heaven and the homage of the angels. But He chose to give back the scepter into the Father's hands and to step down from the throne of the universe, that He might bring light to the benighted and life to the perishing." *Desire of Ages*, 22.4
- "Nearly 2,000 years ago, a voice of mysterious import was heard in heaven, from the

throne of God, "lo, I come." Sacrifice and offering Thou wouldest not, but a body hast Thou prepared Me... Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God." Hebrews 10-5-7. "In these words is announced the fulfillment of the purpose that had been hidden from eternal ages. Christ was about to visit our world and to become incarnate. He says, "A body has Thou prepared Me." Had He appeared with the glory that was His with the Father before the world was, we could not have endured the light of His presence. That we might behold it and not be destroyed, the manifestation of His glory was shrouded. His divinity was veiled with humanity - the invisible glory in the visible human form." Desire of Ages, 23.1

- In regards to how Lucifer, the covering cherub, fell, Isaiah 14:12-15 states, "How you are fallen from heaven, O day star, son of dawn! How you are cut down to the ground, you who laid the nations low! You said in your heart, 'I will ascend to heaven; above the stars of God I will set my throne on high; I will sit on the mount of assembly in the remote parts of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High. But you are brought down to Sheol, to the depths of the pit."
- Luke 10:17-19, "And the seventy returned again with joy saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name. And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven. Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you. Notwithstanding in this rejoice not that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice because your names are written in Heaven."
- John sets the scene in Revelation 12:7-17. He starts with the most important aspect of the Great Controversy, Jesus coming to earth and Satan's efforts to thwart His mission. "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 I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down which accused them before our God, day and night. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto death. Therefore, rejoice ye heavens and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! For the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time. And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the

woman which brought forth the man child. And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times and half a time, from the face of the serpent. And the serpent cast out of his mouth, water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood. And the earth helped the woman and the earth opened her mouth and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth. And the dragon was wroth with the woman and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.”

- The verses in Genesis 3 are the John 3:16, of the Old Testament. It is the protoevangelium given by the God who created us, with the message that He will redeem us. He will pay the price to restore man back to the Garden of Eden. God did not curse Adam and Eve. He cursed the serpent and the ground. What a beautiful scene of redemption given to man immediately after they sinned. God wants to spend eternity with us! Genesis 3:1-19, “...And the Lord God said unto the woman, ‘what have you done?’ and the woman said, ‘the serpent beguiled me and I did eat.’ And the Lord God said unto the serpent, ‘Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go and dust shalt thou all the days of thy life: and I will put enmity between thee and the woman and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head and thou shalt bruise His heel.’ Unto the woman He said, ‘Multiplying I will multiply your sorrowful toil and your conception. With effort you will bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.’ And unto Adam He said, ‘Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife and hast eaten of the tree of which I commanded thee, saying, thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it was thou taken; for dust thou art and unto dust shalt thou return.’ ”
- Someday soon, the great controversy will be over. Someday soon, sin and sinners will be no more. Someday soon, the entire universe will be clean. Someday soon, one pulse of harmony and gladness will beat through the vast, illimitable creation. Someday soon we will experience the direct flow of life and gladness as we join and unite with Christ in Heaven. Someday soon, everything from the minutest atom to the grandest world - all things animate and inanimate - in their unshadowed beauty and perfect joy, will declare GOD IS LOVE. Last chapter of Great Controversy (1911), 678, p 577, adapted.

SECTION 7: QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS

1. Why are we here? Do we exist because there was a war in heaven?
2. Describe your view of the perfect order in Heaven. What does it mean? What was Heaven like before Lucifer rebelled and took a third of the angels with him?
3. Was the “war” a literal war or a figurative war?
4. Was the war a single encounter or a series of battles?
5. Who is given power over Satan and his angels and how is this power exercised?
6. Was God sad when Lucifer rebelled?
7. How does the war in Heaven and the creation of the world and the human race lead to vindicating God’s character?
8. Why did God guard the Tree of Life after Adam and Eve sinned and why did He send heavenly angels to do this task?
9. What is our individual role in the plan of Salvation?
10. Who are the casualties of this war in Heaven?
11. Is there any way to opt out of this war?
12. What are the battle scars and consequences of this war in Heaven?
13. EGW tells us that about half of the angels initially sided with Lucifer but then some reconsidered and only about a third of the angels were cast out with Lucifer. Consider for a moment how close these angels were to losing out.
14. Is it possible the redeemed humans will perfectly replace the fallen angels in Heaven?
15. Consider if there had never been a war in Heaven, we would not exist. There would have been no need for the human race.

The Invitation by Morris Venden (adapted)

There is not a sin God doesn’t hate!

There is not a sin God doesn’t want to forgive (except for grieving the Holy Spirit)!

There is not a sinner God doesn’t want to rescue and take to Heaven!

There is no better time than now to get to get to know and accept God!

Author: Crystal Whitten, PhD, MS, RDN, Chaplain

Reviewed by: Grace Oh Iacono, MD