

# The Great Controversy

## 1 THIS IS WAR

The Bible is a great big war story. It tells how, long ago and far away, a war began in heaven that continues to this day.

THE FIGHT OVER GOD

1. Once upon a time, the universe was peaceful. God lived in heaven with the angels. The beings in all the created worlds were happy, healthy, and busy. There was no sin anywhere.
2. One day, Lucifer, the chief of the angels, looked in the mirror and thought, *I am pretty awesome, and I look fabulous. I should get a promotion. I should be like God* (Ezekiel 28:17). He forgot that God had created him.
3. Lucifer didn't want to be loving and giving like God. He just wanted God's power and glory. The more he thought about it, the more proud and selfish he became (Isaiah 14:13).
4. God gave Lucifer the chance to change his mind and let go of his pride. He would not. Instead, he tempted other angels to distrust God, and one-third of them believed him (Revelation 12:4).

## WAR IN HEAVEN



Jesus and His two-thirds of the angels fought against the rebellious Lucifer and his one-third of the angels. Lucifer "was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven" (Revelation 12:8). He "was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him" (verse 9).

Lucifer, now named Satan, and his evil angels were banished to our planet. He wanted to be in charge of this world.

Satan took the form of a snake, which was a beautiful creature in Eden, so he could talk to Eve. His true appearance as an evil angel would have scared her.

He persuaded Adam and Eve to distrust God and eat fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. That way, he introduced rebellion against God into our world. It became a world of sin, destruction, and death.

Adam and Eve had given up being earth's managers. Satan took control and became "the prince of this world" (John 12:31).

## BATTLEFIELD EARTH



God had a backup plan ready before He ever needed it. Jesus was willing to die and take all of the world's sin on Himself. That way, people would not have to die for their

rebellion (Genesis 3:15). That's how much Jesus loves us, His own people.

Satan set out to keep people from receiving eternal life through Jesus. He uses every evil, selfish tool he can think of—disease, greed, earthquakes, violence, alcohol, slavery, hunger for power, stealing, pornography, apathy—the list seems endless. You might think Satan wants to hurt us and kill us. But he wants to do worse than that! He wants to separate us from God forever.



## THE TURNING POINT

Jesus came to earth as a human being (John 1:1–3) so He could offer Himself to die for our sins. Satan tried to use his lies and temptations to trick Jesus into sinning, but he failed completely.

Jesus should have been killed by evil foreigners, but instead, He was killed by His own people, the Israelites!

Because He never sinned, Jesus was a perfect human being. Because He was God, He could take the sin of the world on Himself and die for it. Then He could forgive our sin and keep us with Him forever. Satan was defeated.



## WHAT KIND OF FIGHTING?

Satan is fighting us inside our minds, using his same old lies. He wants to make God look bad—convince us that God is mean, selfish, hurtful, and untrustworthy. Here's the big lie: that's what Satan is like!

One of the first human beings, Cain, believed Satan's lie and killed his brother over the sacrifice he offered. When almost everyone on earth had turned evil, God sent the flood. He started the human race over again with Noah and his family.

God chose Abraham to start a new people, who would share God's loving character and commandments with the sinful world. A few of those special people were faithful through the centuries. But most of them were rebellious.

The big war takes place inside our minds. Who will we believe? God or Satan?



## THIS WORLD IS A STAGE

The angels and other created beings of the universe want to know how the war will end. They saw Jesus die. They've seen the terrible effects of sin. They watch to see what we will choose to do about Jesus and salvation. "We have been made a spectacle to the whole universe, to angels as well as to human beings" (1 Corinthians 4:9).

## IN PLACE OF GOD

One of Satan's cleverest tricks is to make truth and almost-truth look the same. Here are some of his tricks:

- Makes people think the church is more important than Jesus
- Makes people ignore the seventh-day Sabbath
- Makes people think they go to heaven when they die
- Makes people think they have to confess their sin to a human being instead of Jesus
- Makes people think that the wicked will burn in hell forever
- Makes people think they can get to heaven by being good
- Makes people think that being rich means God is blessing them
- Makes people think the law of God went away when Jesus died on the cross
- And many other lies.



Before Jesus comes back again, two human powers will allow Satan to direct them. They will act as though they speak for God. They will make these lies the law, and breaking the law will be punishable with prison and death.

## NOT OVER TILL IT'S OVER

When Jesus died on the cross, the biggest battle was over, and He won! But the war is not over. We are still here, fighting. Why is that?

God will give every person a chance to choose faith in Him and eternal life. He will allow the war to end when everyone has chosen. "The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9).

On the day of Jesus' second coming, He will say, "It is done. . . . Those who are victorious will inherit" eternal life with Him (Revelation 21:6, 7). The war that started in heaven will be over forever.

