

CORNERSTONE CONNECTIONS

OCTOBER 17/2026

the SINdrome

Scripture Story: Isaiah 14:12-14; Ezekiel 28:11-17; Revelation 12:7-9.
Commentary: *The Great Controversy* (or *Love Under Fire*), chapters 29, 30.
Key Text: Revelation 12:7-9

PREPARING TO TEACH

I. SYNOPSIS

One of the greatest mysteries in the human story has to do with understanding the origin of evil. Compared to other topics in the Bible, there is very little revealed about how sin began and what elements fostered the disease of sin in the heart of Lucifer, the glorious angel in the throne room of God. The three passages that tell the story of the birth of sin are found in Revelation 12, Ezekiel 28, and Isaiah 14.

The mystery of sin's starting point is complicated by why it was even possible. The answer is typically, "Because God gave His creation the power of choice." While this is true, the presence of sin opens the door to so much pain and destruction that it is hard to see the enduring value of such freedom.

But God could not govern the universe any other way. Ellen White claimed that in order for sin to be eradicated, "evil must be permitted to come to maturity."[1] It is this topic that paints the big picture of salvation's story, and the same story is really central to the highest purpose in the universe: saving God's children and certifying His character to all.

In *The Great Controversy* chapters you will discover that the human problem with sin extends far beyond Adam and Eve, but to every creature who waits to see how God responds to the claims that Lucifer has made. In Genesis 3 the evil one draws Adam and Eve to disobey God and to aim for the same target that Lucifer made for his mark. The essence of the lie misdirects what people and angels think about the Creator. Ultimately, what people think about God becomes the most important thought any human will ever have.

II. TARGET

The students will:

- Discover the origin of sin in the fall of Lucifer. (*Know)*
- Experience a renewed sense of confidence in God's approach to the problem of sin. *(Feel)*
- Resolve to respond to God's appeal rather than stubbornly resist. *(Respond)*

III. EXPLORE

The Nature of Humanity, Seventh-day Adventist Fundamental Beliefs, No. 7

"Man and woman were made in the image of God with individuality, the power and freedom to think and to do" (Gen. 1:26-28; 2:7, 15; 3; Ps. 8:4-8; 51:5, 10; 58:3; Jer. 17:9; Acts 17:24-28; Rom. 5:12-17; 2 Cor. 5:19, 20; Eph. 2:3; 1 Thess. 5:23; 1 John 3:4; 4:7, 8, 11, 20).

TEACHING

I. GETTING STARTED

Activity

Refer the students to the What Do You Think? *section of their lesson. After they have completed it, discuss their responses.*

This week the students are invited to defend a line of thought. Both statements are defensible, but as students choose a theme to illustrate, support, or explain, they are challenged to think. Evidence of extreme evil and extreme good make it hard to deny the existence of God and Satan. In other words, do

you think about God's goodness because you see evil looming in stark contrast, or are you more likely to celebrate God's character when you see people exemplify it in acts of goodness?

Illustration

Share this illustration in your own words:

The story is told of a husband and wife who discovered their toddler had quietly meandered into the storeroom in the house and commenced to explore. When the parents finally discovered his whereabouts, they knew immediately he had ingested something poisonous. Their child's coloring was wrong. His behavior was lethargic. They called the poison control center and described what they thought the little boy had put in his mouth. The parents were urged to hurry and get their child to an emergency room and under no circumstances were they to let the child lose consciousness. To do so would be deadly.

They placed the child in the car seat and drove anxiously to the hospital. Along the way the little boy's eyes began to droop and he started to fade off to sleep. As the father drove, the mother cried out to her son to stay awake. She tried everything. After a while the only thing that would keep her son awake was to pinch him. She pinched him hard enough to bruise him at times. But he remained awake because of the pain. With tears in her eyes and only a few minutes from the hospital she was forced to drastic measures again. When her child no longer responded to pinching, she slapped him. Not out of anger, but out of desperation to keep her child awake. Never before had she ever had to do something so agonizing, and yet it was the only thing she could do to save her child's life. When they arrived at the hospital they were met by the emergency team and had the child's stomach pumped. When their son's life was out of danger they debriefed with the nurses and the doctor about how awful they felt hurting their child, just trying to keep him awake.

The nurses nodded but affirmed the couple, saying, "We know that must have been painful, but once they go to sleep we rarely ever save them without permanent damage. Just last week we lost a little girl because the parents couldn't keep the child awake. The pinches and the slaps will heal. But your son will live."

How does this story depict the way people perceive God, the presence of sin, Satan, and the reign of evil in the human experience?

What are some comparisons of this story to the plan of salvation? How does our perception of God in the way He deals with sin shape our relationship to Him during the hard times?

II. TEACHING THE STORY

Bridge to the Story

Share the following in your own words:

It is likely that God would do "whatever it takes" to get humanity to know Him and dwell with Him for eternity. God would even take us to the horror of sin coming to its full fruition if it was the only way to take us home with Him. Knowing the bigger picture enables us to see the way sin works and how our perceptions of God are crucial. As you read the following sections of Scripture, consider how they tell the story of the beginning of sin. Answer the questions provided and consider how God's plan for dealing with the problem of sin is the only way.

Out of the Story for Teachers

- As you read the portions of Scripture that depict the birth of evil, what do you think is the most important verse in the story? Why?
- What key words and phrases are used to describe Lucifer's nature before he fell?
- What does the Bible say that caused Lucifer to become corrupt?
- In this story of Lucifer's fall, how would you explain God's apparent inactivity? Why didn't God cut the work of sin short? (Read *The Great Controversy*, chapter 29.)
- In what way does this story deepen your view of God's love and expand your hatred of sin?
- Who, in the Bible or in history, seemed to fall the same way Lucifer fell?
- What warnings or examples can you take from observing the way sin began in Lucifer? How does knowing Satan's story help you live differently?

Extra Questions for Teachers:

- How would you distinguish the difference between sin, evil, and suffering?
- What would you like to know more about? Why?
- The details of what happened in heaven with Lucifer?
- More insight on the incident in the garden with Satan (the snake) and what God did to respond to their disobedience?
- Thoughts in God's mind about why He allows

this world to continue in sin?

- How would a broader understanding shape your view of God?

Use the following as more teachable passages that relate to today's story: Matthew 4; Job 1; Genesis 3; Revelation 21; Mark 5:1-20.

Sharing Context and Background

Use the following information to shed more light on the story for your students. Share it in your own words.

This week's lesson story about the origin of evil is gathered from several parts of Scripture.

The portions of the story from Isaiah and Ezekiel are similar in that they describe the internal workings of sin at its inception in one being created by God. As these two sections in the Old Testament reflect the poetic style and genre of the Hebrew literature, they posit Lucifer as "the king of Babylon" or "the king of Tyre." The book *Seventh-day Adventists Believe* claims that "the kings of Tyre and Babylon are figurative descriptions for Lucifer."[2] This is made clear when the one who is being described is:

- a covering cherub
- residing in the presence of God
- perfect, wise, and beautiful
- present in Eden

Furthermore, both Isaiah and Ezekiel describe the source of Lucifer's fall in the same way:

"You said in your heart, 'I will ascend to the heavens; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly, on the utmost heights of Mount Zaphon. I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High'" (Isaiah 14:13, 14, NIV).

"You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created till wickedness was found in you. . . . Your heart became proud on account of your beauty, and you corrupted your wisdom because of your splendor" (Ezekiel 28:15-17, NIV).

Clearly, these passages tell the story of the internal work of sin in Lucifer (who becomes Satan) that is revealed in no other place in Scripture. We see Satan at work, but the awful work that brought Lucifer to rebel is mentioned in only a few places.

The context of the third story is almost at the very center of the book of Revelation, and many scholars have discussed chapter 12 as the centerpiece or the central theme of the book. In other words, what happened in heaven with Lucifer, sin, and God's provision in Christ are the essence of what the revelator saw when he wrote the apocalypse. Those who overcome do so by "the blood of the lamb," "the word of their testimony," and because "they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death" (Revelation 12:11). These three qualities are directly opposite the attitude and behavior of Lucifer/Satan. Those who overcome are mentioned again at the end of this chapter and are described as people "who keep God's commands and hold fast their testimony about Jesus" (Revelation 12:17, NIV).

Although the story of the Fall (Genesis 3) is not

Teaching From . . .

Refer your students to the other sections of their lesson.

- **Key Text**
  Invite students to share the Key Text *with the class if they have committed it to memory.*
- **Flashlight**
  Read the Flashlight *statement, pointing out that most of the time it is from the commentary on this week's story found in the book* The Great Controversy. *Ask what relationship they see between the statement and what they have just discussed from* Out of the Story.
- **Punch Lines**
  Point out to your students the verses listed in their lesson that relate to this week's story. Have them share the verse that spoke most directly to them and allow them to explain why they chose it.
- **Further Insight**
  Ask them how the quote in Further Insight *conveys the point of the story in this lesson.*

Tips for Top-Notch Teaching

RABBI 101

Object Lessons

An object lesson is a convincing demonstration of a principle or ideal. Object lessons are extremely valuable teaching tools provided they are simple, clear, and memorable. When Jesus used the object lesson of the farmer and the different types of ground in Matthew 13:1-23, He achieved all three objectives. The simplicity is obvious to anyone who lives in an agricultural world that the environment determines whether growth is effective or not. The lesson was clear in that there are no distractions or complicated nuances to the simple work of planting and growing seeds. The exercise is memorable because people daily were engaged in farming. But even as the students can learn and remember objective lessons well, it may be better to invite them to think of their own ways to offer a convincing demonstration of a principle or ideal. Inviting them to develop their own heightens the learning experience.

included in the story, it is another passage that depicts the sly and selfish way Satan tricks God's children to follow the same path.

III. CLOSING

Activity

Close with an activity and debrief it in your own words.

An object lesson that works well for describing the origin of evil and how Lucifer fell can be used with a simple broom handle, a long, straight stick, or even a baseball bat. Try balancing the broom handle upright in your hand and have the students time how long you can keep the stick balanced. You might even get a dexterous young person to serve as a volunteer. In order to balance the pole you must look at the top of the pole as a reference point. As soon as you look down at your hand where the bottom of the stick is resting, it is only a matter of seconds before the pole will fall. Invite various students to try, first looking at the top and being able to balance the pole for a time. Then have the students shift their focus to their own hand. You might ask: How is this experience like what happened to Lucifer? How does our focus/reference affect the way we stay balanced and upright in our walk with God?

Summary

Share the following thoughts in your own words:

That sin began is troubling enough, but that God let it reign has caused many to wonder about God's character. God doesn't mind people who have questions, but when we see such a small window into what God is doing to save humanity and His name, it doesn't hurt to handle the topic with some humility. When we press God to explain Himself before we are willing to surrender, we stymie the work of faith in our lives and miss the mark on how we participate in the plan of salvation. Lucifer fell because He chose pride instead of devotion—selfishness instead of worship. As this sin made it into our world through Adam and Eve's disobedience, we tend to lean toward selfishness without even thinking about it. But the more we think about it, the more we become aware that there is another way. The message of Revelation is "the accuser . . . has been hurled down," and we overcome the evil one "by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of [our] testimony, and [because we do] not love [our own] lives to the death" (Revelation 12:10, 11, NKJV). The story of Lucifer's fall tells the story of a God who longs for us to serve Him out of love instead of fear, which is why God did not immediately eradicate the fallen angel or anyone else for that matter.

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[1] Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy,* p. 499.
[2] *Seventh-day Adventists Believe,* p. 114.



Remind the students about the reading plan that will take them through the inspired commentary of the Bible, the Conflict of the Ages Series. The reading that goes with this lesson is *The Great Controversy* (or *Love Under Fire*), chapters 29, 30.

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STUDENT LESSON

Scripture Story: Isaiah 14:12-14; Ezekiel 28:11-17; Revelation 12:7-9.
Commentary: *The Great Controversy* (or *Love Under Fire*), chapters 29, 30.

the SINdrome



Photo by Terrill Thomas

keytext

"And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon. . . . So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him."

(Revelation 12:7-9, NKJV)

flashlight

"Even when it was decided that he could no longer remain in heaven, Infinite Wisdom did not destroy Satan. . . . The inhabitants of heaven and of other worlds, being unprepared to comprehend the nature or consequences of sin, could not then have seen the justice and mercy of God in the destruction of Satan. Had he been immediately blotted from existence, they would have served God from fear rather than from love. The influence of the deceiver would not have been fully destroyed, nor would the spirit of rebellion have been utterly eradicated. Evil must be permitted to come to maturity" (*The Great Controversy*, pp. 498, 499).

what do you think?

Choose one of the points to defend and explain your choice.

Which do you think is easier to illustrate, support, or explain:

Acts of extreme evil committed by ordinary people are compelling evidence of a supernatural conflict between Christ and Satan.

Or

Acts of extreme goodness by ordinary people are compelling evidence of a supernatural conflict between Christ and Satan.

Which do you think more vividly responds to the question people have about the goodness of God and the origin of evil?

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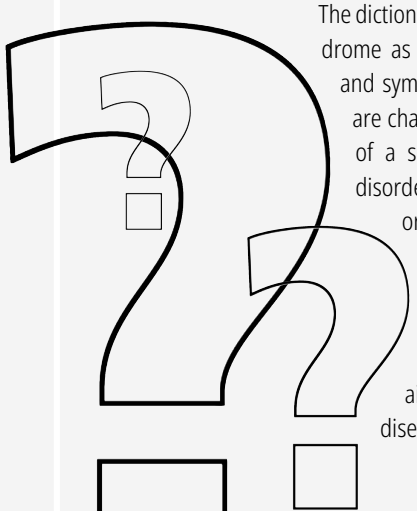
did you know?

Syndrome." It's not really a word, but it combines the words syndrome and sin; notice how they describe the birth and life of evil.

The word "sin" actually means "to miss the mark." It is a target-shooting word that conveys the idea of aiming wrong.



The dictionary defines a syndrome as "a group of signs and symptoms that together are characteristic or indicative of a specific disease or other disorder" and "a group of things or events that form a recognizable pattern, especially of something undesirable."

If you put the two words together, we have a condition in which we aim wrong, miss the mark, and the result is a disease that continues to destroy.

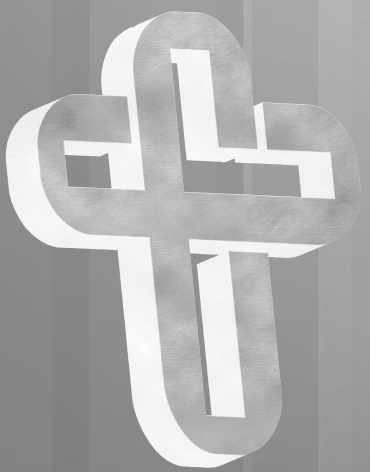
INTO THE STORY

"How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground, you who weakened the nations! For you have said in your heart: 'I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation on the farthest sides of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.'"

"Moreover the word of the Lord came to me, saying, 'Son of man, take up a lamentation for the king of Tyre, and say to him, "Thus says the Lord God: 'You were the seal of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone was your covering: the sardius, topaz, and diamond, beryl, onyx, and jasper, sapphire, turquoise, and emerald with gold. The workmanship of your timbrels and pipes was prepared for you on the day you were created. You were the anointed cherub who covers; I established you; you were on the holy mountain of God; you walked back and forth in the midst of fiery stones. You were perfect in your ways from the day you were created, till iniquity was found in you. By the abundance of your trading you became filled with violence within, and you sinned; therefore I cast you as a profane thing out of the mountain of God; and I destroyed you, O covering cherub, from the midst of the fiery stones. Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty; you corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendor; I cast you to the ground, I laid you before kings, that they might gaze at you.'"'"

"And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer. So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him."

(Isaiah 14:12-14; Ezekiel 28:11-17; Revelation 12:7-9, NKJV)



OUT OF THE STORY

As you read the portions of Scripture that depict the birth of evil, what do you think is the most important verse in the story? Why?

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What key words and phrases are used to describe Lucifer's nature before he fell?

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What does the Bible say that caused Lucifer to become corrupt?

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In this story of Lucifer's fall, how would you explain God's apparent inactivity?

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Why didn't God cut the work of sin short? (Read *The Great Controversy*, chapter 29.)

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In what way does this story deepen your view of God's love and expand your hatred of sin?

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Who in the Bible or in history seemed to fall the same way Lucifer fell?

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punch lines

"Consequently, just as one trespass resulted in condemnation for all people, so also one righteous act resulted in justification and life for all people. For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous" **(Romans 5:18, 19, NIV).**

"And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel" **(Genesis 3:15, NIV).**

"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world" **(1 Peter 5:8, 9, NKJV).**

"Inasmuch 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, and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage" **(Hebrews 2:14, 15, NKJV).**

"I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. They will come in and go out, and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full" **(John 10:9, 10, NIV).**

further insight

"In the final execution of the judgment it will be seen that no cause for sin exists."

—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy,* p. 503

connectingtolife

Sabbath

Read Genesis 3:14, 15.

Read and respond to the either/or activity in the *What Do You Think?* section of this week's lesson. What do you think more effectively exposes the reality of good and evil? It is clear that there are two sides. In your reading today, God draws a line in the sand and pits two sides against one another. Adam and Eve, and all the children of God, stand opposed to Satan in the conflict between good and evil. Enmity. Hostility. Opposition. What does God promise about how this conflict will end?

Sunday

Read 1 Peter 5:8, 9.

As you read the *Into the Story* section and answer the questions in *Out of the Story*, notice that the three passages form a composite story of the origin of evil. Even though there is little information in Scripture about how sin began, there is ample evidence of the effects of sin on people and the world. How does reading the story of Lucifer's fall affect the way you see God's character revealed in the Scripture? How does knowing how it all began help you understand how to make choices today? If God is speaking to you in these snapshots of sin's birth story, what message do you think He is trying to convey to you?

Monday

Read Revelation 12:7-9.

The *Key Text* from this week's lesson and today's reading where we see a battle that begins in heaven—a rebellion that ensues in the very presence of God's throne and ends up here on earth. Which phrase speaks to you?

- "and war broke out in heaven"
- "Michael and his angels fought with the dragon"
- "the dragon and his angels fought, but they did not prevail"
- "nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer"
- "the great dragon was cast out"
- "that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world"

As you think of believers who have a keen awareness of how sin began and where it is headed, whom do you know who lives with the attitude that God has won and Satan has lost? How does it show up in their life?

Tuesday

Read John 3:16; 2 Peter 3:9.

Read the *Flashlight* quote for this week's lesson and consider the questions this passage from *The Great Controversy* answers for people today. God's plan to answer the presence of evil had to result with sin being "fully destroyed" and "utterly eradicated." How does God's decision to deal with sin differ from the way the human mind works? How does God's approach to the sin problem stand in contrast to the way Satan accomplishes his goals? As you look more fully at the truth of how sin began and where it is going, God's way of love is by far the most supernatural thing anyone will ever see. Think of all the things in life today that are considered "supernatural." What does that mean? How might you connect the way God solves the problem of sin to the world you live in today?

Wednesday

As you read the passages listed in the *Punch Lines* section of this week's lesson, which verse speaks to you today about where you stand in reference to the war that rages between Christ and Satan? How might these verses speak to some of the questions people have about the character of God in a world that seems to be full of evil?

Thursday

Read Romans 16:20.

In today's reading Paul says, "And the God of peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen" (NKJV). How does this work? In what way does how we live "crush" Satan? How do our acts of love, kindness, mercy, and justice serve to strike devastating blows to the kingdom of evil? Do such demonstrations of God's loving ways dispel the perceptions and lies Satan has told about God? As you serve God this week, think about how Satan's deadliest tool is to get people to think something wrong about God. The devil's primary tool is deception. What are some things you can do to tell the truth about God's character to others?

Friday

Read John 10:9, 10.

Think about how your perceptions of God have changed over the years? What did you know about Him as a little child? How has your understanding of who God is and His plan for your life transformed over time? How is our understanding of God's character important in making it impossible for sin to return after Christ puts a final end to it?

this week's reading*

The Great Controversy (or *Love Under Fire*), chapters 29, 30.

**Love Under Fire* is a special adaptation of *The Great Controversy,* created for you by the Ellen G. White Estate and Pacific Press. Get more information about it at http://www.cornerstoneconnections.net/article/191/about-us/conflict-of-the-ages-companion-books#.URlhF1rBO9s. By following the weekly reading plan, you will read at least one book of the Conflict of the Ages Series each year.