



# CORNERSTONE CONNECTIONS

OCTOBER 15 2022

## 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."<sup>1</sup> 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.”<sup>2</sup> 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).

## 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

### 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.

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

<sup>1</sup> Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 499.

<sup>2</sup> *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.