

# Heaven's Crisis<sup>1</sup>: The Rebellion (War) Against God's Government



## SABBATH—OCTOBER 4

**READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON:** Genesis 3:4, 5; Job 1:8–11; Isaiah 14:13, 14; Ezekiel 28:14–17; Revelation 12:7–9.

**MEMORY VERSE:** “Before anything was created, he [Christ] was already there. He holds everything together” (Colossians 1:17, NIV).

**KEY (IMPORTANT) THOUGHT:** To show how Lucifer fell and how he brought the battle against God to earth.

**IN HEAVEN LUCIFER<sup>2</sup> HAD EVERYTHING.** He was a leader of angels. But it was not enough. He wanted more. So began the “secret power of sin” (2 Thessalonians 2:7, NIV). This was how sin began in God's universe.<sup>3</sup>

The beginning of evil within this perfect angel (Satan) will remain a mystery. There was no reason for it. If there ever were a reason, we could excuse sin. Evil began first with a small step. It started in Lucifer's heart. He felt jealous of Jesus. Lucifer also made the wrong use of his God-given freedom. His sins led to a great war in heaven. It was an open rebellion (war) against God. Today each one of us is living with the results of this war. Whenever someone dies or suffers, this is a result of the rebellion that began in Lucifer.

But do not lose hope. As we will learn in future lessons, Christ came to bring a fair and just solution to problems that caused this great war.

1. crisis—a time of great trouble or hardship.

2. Lucifer—Lucifer was Satan's name before he started a rebellion (war) against God in heaven.

3. universe—all the matter (things), light, and energy (forces in nature that do work) that have been discovered (found) or that we know of.

**SUNDAY—OCTOBER 5**

**SIN: ITS BEGINNING  
(Ezekiel 28:14–17)**

**What does Ezekiel 28:14–17 tell us about the beginning of sin? What was Lucifer (Satan) like before he fell?**

Ezekiel makes it clear that sin mysteriously started in a person who was created good: “ ‘ “Your conduct [the way a person acts; behavior] was without blame from the day you were created. But soon you began to sin” ’ ” (Ezekiel 28:15, NIV). “Without blame” (from the Hebrew word *tamim*, meaning “complete”) shows that this person was perfect when he came from the hands of God.

Notice, too, that sin began in a cherub, one of the highest-ranking classes of all the angels. Many of the cherubim were closer to God than any other class of angels. Two were placed as guardians by the gate of Eden (Genesis 3:24). Two cherubim, made of gold, were placed on the ark of the covenant<sup>4</sup> (Exodus 25:18–20). The position of the cherubim on the ark shows the high position of this cherub named Lucifer. He stood in the light of God's presence in God's throne room (Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, page 758). Sin started in a cherub who was very close to the throne of God. The wording “holy mountain of God” (Ezekiel 28:14, NKJV) shows the heavenly temple, where God lives among His angels. This is the center of His government.



**Sin mysteriously began in Lucifer, who was created good.**

Sin began in this cherub, Lucifer, when he became selfish and misused the gifts of beauty and wisdom that God gave him. Lucifer mysteriously let his emotions and feelings overcome his good thoughts. As a result, Lucifer's perfectness was spoiled. “ ‘ “You thought you were so glorious [having or given great beauty, praise, and honor] that it spoiled your wisdom” ’ ” (Ezekiel 28:17, NIV). God put the blame squarely on Lucifer himself. Lucifer did not obey God's government. His gifts were to be used to help others. Instead, Lucifer thought he was better than everyone else in beauty, glory, and wisdom. “Little by little Satan tried to glorify himself above God.”—Adapted from Ellen G. White, *The Faith I Live By*, page 66. This upset the balance of God's perfect government.

4. ark of the covenant—a gold-covered box carrying the Ten Commandments that God gave Moses.

## Lesson 2 Heaven's Crisis: The Rebellion (War) Against God's Government

How often has it been that you wanted more, no matter what you had? Whose character<sup>5</sup> are you showing—Christ's or Lucifer's? Why is that so opposite to the character of Christ?<sup>6</sup>

### MONDAY—OCTOBER 6

#### ATTACK ON GOD (Isaiah 14:13, 14)

How does Isaiah 14:13, 14 describe the true plans of the rebellious (sinful) cherub (angel)? What was in his heart? What was his real reason for doing what he did?

The strange, selfish feelings and emotions of Lucifer got the better of his higher powers and reason. Then he became bolder. He started misusing the freedom that God had entrusted to him. It was so bad that Lucifer even wanted to rebel against God's own authority (power).

Ezekiel 28:15 shows a sharp difference between Lucifer as a good cherub from the hand of his Creator and what he had become. Lucifer was at first "blameless" (NIV), perfect, lacking nothing. But something new was formed within him: The verse says that "wickedness" (NIV) was found in him. This word in the Old Testament can be used to mean lying, unholy ambition, and backsliding.

Ezekiel also said: " ' "Your heart became proud [from the Hebrew word *gabah*, meaning 'to be high,' 'to be exalted (highly honored)']" ' ' " (Ezekiel 28:17, NIV). One could easily decide that Lucifer was being disloyal to God, attacking Him, speaking lies, and acting falsely.

How did the serpent give Eve a false picture of God in Genesis 3:4, 5?

Satan tried to encourage Eve to disobey God by attacking the character of God. Satan said that God was selfish by trying to limit the growth of His people. Satan claimed that God was using force upon them through the threat of death. Satan gave a false picture of God by saying that He was not a God of love. Satan said that God was hiding His true nature<sup>7</sup> by pretending to be a God of love. Satan was trying to shift the blame from his own sinful heart and character to God. Satan's attack in heaven against God and God's loving nature was now being moved to this planet.



Satan lied to Eve to get her to disobey God.

5. character—who you are; all the things that a person does, feels, and thinks are what a person is made of; your character is the sum of the choices you make, such as a choice to be honest or to cheat.

6. character of Christ—who Christ is; having and understanding the character of Christ is the same as being kind, loving, honest, and so on. God's law (Ten Commandments) shows us His character.

7. (God's) nature—the way something or someone really is.

## Lesson 2 Heaven's Crisis: The Rebellion (War) Against God's Government

"If Lucifer had really wanted to be like the Most High, he never would have left his place in heaven. This is because the true spirit of the Most High is shown in unselfish ministry [work done for God]. Lucifer wanted God's power, but not His character." —Adapted from Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, page 435.

**How can we avoid falling into this same spiritual trap as Lucifer?**

### TUESDAY—OCTOBER 7

#### SIN AND THE LAW OF GOD (Psalm 40:8)

The law shows the character and will of the Lawgiver (Jesus). The writer of the psalm wrote, "My God, I have come to do what you want. Your law is in my heart" (Psalm 40:8, NIV). This shows that the writer of this psalm (song) has thought so much about God's law that it has become part of his character. In other words, the character of God is being developed through surrender (giving oneself completely) to God's will (plan) as shown in His law.

**How do Matthew 22:37–40; John 3:16; John 14:15, 21; and 1 John 5:3 help us understand the connection between God's love and His law?**

The opposite of loving obedience is lawlessness (read 1 John 3:4). The word *lawlessness* (*anomia*) means a long-held attitude (feeling) in the heart of rebellious humans (people). It speaks of rebellion as the substitute<sup>8</sup> for God's law and for what it stands for, the character of God. Satan's war is against God and what He is in Himself. Paul describes the end-time antichrist<sup>9</sup> as "the man of lawlessness" (2 Thessalonians 2:3, NIV). He speaks of sin as the "mystery of *anomia*" (verse 7).

**Review God's command to Adam and Satan's words to Eve (Genesis 2:17; Genesis 3:4, 5). What was going on here?**

Genesis 2:17 was a clear example of God's love for Adam and Eve and His great desire to enjoy their fellowship forever. He did not want them to experience death. This is why He warned them about it. Adam and Eve were created with the freedom to choose. For this reason they had to show their willingness to enjoy eternity (life without end) with the Creator (Jesus). Adam and Eve's obedience to God's command would show that they were freely choosing to enjoy eternal life with Him. It is very clear that Satan attacks God's will. Instead, he wants total "independence [freedom]" from God. This was his basic goal in heaven: independence

8. substitute—someone or something that takes the place of another person or thing. Jesus is our Substitute because He died for our sins.

9. antichrist—someone who is against Christ.

## Lesson 2 Heaven's Crisis: The Rebellion (War) Against God's Government

from God's command. He wanted to be his own law without being responsible to anyone.

**In what clever ways is Satan still trying to get us to be “independent” from God? How can we protect ourselves from this deadly danger?**

### WEDNESDAY—OCTOBER 8

#### SIN AS REBELLION (WAR) AGAINST GOD'S GOVERNMENT (Colossians 1:16, 17)

**How does Paul describe the heavenly work of Christ in Colossians 1:16, 17?**

The power of a loving God in the person of Christ unites (joins as one) creation into a harmonious<sup>10</sup> whole. Love is the tie that keeps Christians united (joined together as one) (Colossians 3:14). But it is also the tie that holds the universe together. It is not an impersonal force but God Himself. An attack against God is an attack against the way He rules the universe. So, such an attack tries to upset God's government.

**How does Job 1:8–11 show an attack on God Himself by Satan?**

The charges Satan raised against both Job and God show the charges he raised against God in heaven. Satan argued that Job served God out of selfish reasons, not out of love. Satan argued that Job served God in

10. harmonious—being in perfect agreement.

order to get things from Him. And Satan also argued that God provided for Job in order to gain Job's service. Satan argued that God's government was based on selfishness—not on selfless love, as God claimed. Satan claimed that the true nature of humans is shown in the midst of confusion. So if given the chance, the humans would rebel against God.

“All things Christ received from God, but He took to give. So in heaven through Jesus' work among humans, the Father's life flows out to all. Through the Son it comes back, in praise and joyous service, a tide of love, to God. And thus through Christ the circle of goodness is complete. This represents the character of God, the law of life.”  
—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, page 21.



The Father's life flows out to all through His Son and flows back to God in a tide of love.

**How can you better fit in with this “circle of goodness”?**

### THURSDAY—OCTOBER 9

#### WAR IN HEAVEN (Revelation 12:7–9)

## Lesson 2 Heaven's Crisis: The Rebellion (War) Against God's Government

Ezekiel used two words that could help us understand the plan of Lucifer's attack against God.

The first one is *trade* ("your widespread trade" [Ezekiel 28:16, NIV]). Satan was involved in "widespread trade." The word translated "trade" also could mean "lies." This suggests that in heaven Lucifer was involved in raising lies against God. "Slander" is evil speech planned to damage the reputation<sup>11</sup> of others. And it can describe the behavior of a person who has chosen to rebel against the will of God and who stands under His judgment (Leviticus 19:16; Jeremiah 6:28–30). Sin leads to separation and disorder (2 Corinthians 12:20). Satan is described in the Bible as the accuser (one who blames another; a blamer) of God's people, the enemy (Zechariah 3:1; Revelation 12:10).



**Satan caused death and violence to come to God's creation.**

Satan did not hold " 'to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies' " (John 8:44, NIV).

Spreading lies led Satan to *violence*,<sup>12</sup> the second important word (Ezekiel 28:16). *Violence* shows an evil action that breaks God's peaceful government. Violence is sparked by hate or egotism<sup>13</sup> and can lead to attacks on other people. In some cases it leads to murder or taking advantage of<sup>14</sup> others for personal profit (gain; reward) (Genesis 49:5; Micah 6:12). Satan was a " 'murderer from the beginning' " in that he introduced violence and death into God's creation (John 8:44).

**What finally happened because of the "anti-God" behavior (action) of Lucifer in heaven? Revelation 12:7–9.**

Slowly and mysteriously Satan's selfish feelings were changed into a behavior (action) that was an open attack against God and His Son. What was at first hidden soon could be seen. This caused confusion and disorder. There was war in heaven. This was the beginning of the great war in which we all are involved. Satan and his supporters were defeated in heaven and on the cross. And they will be removed from the universe at the right time. At that time the sin problem will

11. reputation—what other people think of you.

12. violence—cruel attacks against people that often can cause a lot of blood shedding and suffering.

13. egotism—the belief that you are better or more important than you really are; being full of thoughts about yourself instead of thinking of others.

14. taking advantage of—making use of someone or something for one's own gain.

## Lesson 2 Heaven's Crisis: The Rebellion (War) Against God's Government

be solved. God will then restore the fallen human race to perfect and permanent (lasting forever, without change) union<sup>15</sup> with God. And it will reestablish a perfect unity<sup>16</sup> and peace throughout all of God's creation.

**First there are bad thoughts, which lead to bad words, which lead to bad actions. This happened to Satan. And now, if we are not careful, it will happen to us. What is our best defense (read Philippians 4:8)?**

### FRIDAY—OCTOBER 10

**ADDITIONAL STUDY:** “Lucifer in heaven had sinned in the light of God's glory. To Lucifer was given the greatest example of God's love. Satan understood the character of God. And Satan knew His goodness. But, instead, he chose to follow his own selfish, independent will. This choice was final. There was no more that God could do to save him.”  
—Adapted from Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, pages 761, 762.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- ① Think about the fact that Lucifer was a “perfect” angel. But he was found to be wicked. What does that tell us about the kind of freedom God has given to His people who can think? What kind of responsibility toward God does this freedom give to each of us?
- ② Keeping the idea of our freedom in mind, discuss the role of the law. Why would law be so important for people with free choice? If we were not free, why would there be no need for law? What is the purpose of a law for people who do not have choices to begin with?
- ③ Go back to the question at the end of Tuesday's lesson. What are the different ways Satan tries to make his character show in us, both as church members and as a church group? What are the things we do that show, at times, just how successful Satan has been?

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15. union—the act of joining together as one.

16. unity—when two or more people or things are joined together as one; when two or more people are in agreement in ideas, feelings, and so on.