

Quarter One: God's Love and Justice

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Lesson 10—Rules of Engagement

Wednesday: The (Temporary) Ruler of This World

March 5, 2025

- **Last Week:** “Cosmic Conflict”
 - Study on the Great Controversy, it's origin in heaven & on earth, & its nature
- **This Week:** “Rules of Engagement”
 - The nature of the GC & how it gives insight into the problem of evil
 - Understanding that “idolatry / foreign god” Scriptures pertain to the “cosmic conflict”

Memory Text: “He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil.” (1 John 3:8, NKJV)

The week in brief:

- 1. **Sunday:** An Angel Delayed (John L)
 - Dan 10 – God restraining His full power from being exercised to allow even Satan & his angels to exercise power; love allows for free will
- 2. **Monday:** The Dragon of Revelation (John D)
 - Rev 13:1 – 8 – Satan being behind the beast power (Roman power) & other systems that persecute God's people; yet, God limits on Satan's authority & God wins in the end
- 3. **Tuesday:** The Case of Job (James)
 - Job 1 & 2 – Satan's accusations against Job (& God's character) & claims that God has been protecting Job; God allows Satan to test his theory (but within prescribed limits)
- 4. **Wednesday:** The (Temporary) Ruler of this World (Jill)
 - Multiple Scriptures – the rules of engagement in the GC: Satan has limited & temporary rulership, that God sets & controls; yet, God chooses to morally limit His power, too, to mitigate & immediately destroy that evil
- 5. **Thursday:** Limits & Rules (SQ)
 - God's character is on trial in the GC; God's allowance for a free, open investigation of His character; limits & rules – two are faith & prayer

Wednesday: The (Temporary) Ruler of This World

John 12:31; John 14:30; John 16:11; 2 Cor 4:4; Luke 4:6; 1 John 3:8

- Rules of Engagement in the Cosmic Conflict (limited understanding)
 - God is all powerful
 - Satan is granted power
 - A temporary & limited rulership of this world
 - Satan's power is limited
 - By those rules of engagement
 - & by God's power
 - God has chosen to limit His power
 - By those same rules of engagement

- Allowing Satan limited power
 - Choosing to allow some evil to exist – the outworking of the GC
 - Lesson: “God has morally limited His future course of action (without lessening His raw power).”
 - Real strength is having the ability to do something, and choosing not to.
- Often think:
 - There are limits on Satan’s power (thus far, and no farther)
 - Not often think about: Self-imposed limits on God’s power
 - Love allows free choice
 - If humanity / Satan choose the wrong, God cannot just squelch that evil
 - Hence, God cannot immediately eliminate the evil in this world
 - Wheat & tares grow together until the harvest
 - When we see evil & suffering, can wonder
 - Is God good?
 - Does God exist?
 - Yet, understand in light of the GC
 - & the limits God has placed on how He deals with evil immediately – and free choice – love does not force – understand better the continued existence of evil
 - If God had immediately destroyed Lucifer after sin arose, the angels would have forever wondered: I’m afraid of God; He might kill me too. I actually thought Lucifer was right, but I’d better keep my thoughts to myself.... Couldn’t see the outworking of sin yet.
 - The cross is where the true identity of sin & evil was unmasked
 - 2 Pet 3:9 – “...God is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.”
 - God does everything possible to save us

Line of successorship

- **1. Adam & Eve given dominion / stewardship over this world**
 - Gen 1:26 – “Then God said, ‘Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.’”
 - Adam & Eve were given dominion over this world
 - Gen 2:15 – “Then the Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it.”
 - Given stewardship over this earth
- **2. Satan wrested that control for himself (temporarily)**
 - Adam & Eve ate of the forbidden fruit
 - Gen 3:10 – “So he (Adam) said, ‘I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked, and I hid myself.’”
 - Sin brings fear and guilt
 - Gen 3:17 – because of Adam’s sin, the ground was cursed...

- Gen 3:24 – “So He drove out the man; and He placed cherubim at the east of the garden of Eden, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to guard the way to the tree of life.”
 - Adam & Eve driven from the garden that they had dominion over
- John 14:30 – “I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming, and he has nothing in Me.”
 - No sin in Christ; no response to Satan’s attacks
- **3. Jesus’ death on the Cross, brought this world back under God’s dominion**
 - John 12:31 – “Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out.”
 - At the cross, Satan was dethroned
 - Love & selfishness stood face to face
 - The angels & unfallen worlds & humanity saw Satan exposed for who he truly is
 - And who God is
 - God = love; God’s character = love; God’s law is holy, just & good
 - Heb 2:14, 15 – “...He Himself likewise share in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the **devil**. (15) and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.”
 - Jesus’ death gained the victory
 - Jesus’ death destroyed the power of the devil = “the slanderer” (in Gk)
 - Jesus’ death corrected some of the misinterpretations of the character of God
- **4. Satan seeks to keep people under his control** (even though they can be free under Jesus)
 - 2 Cor 4:3, 4 – “But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, (4) whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them.”
 - Written after the Cross (Satan is no longer in “charge” of the world)
 - Yet, he can deceive & tempt & blind people to the gospel
 - John 1:4, 5 – “In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. (5) And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.”
 - Jesus = the Creator; the Author of both physical & spiritual life
 - We have to be open to receive & accept that life
 - Col 1:13, 14 – “He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, (14) in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.”
 - Jesus’ blood forgives us & sets us free from the power of Satan / darkness
 - We don’t have to walk in darkness
 - 1 John 3:8 – “...For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil.”
 - Jesus came to expose Satan, & ultimately defeat Satan

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