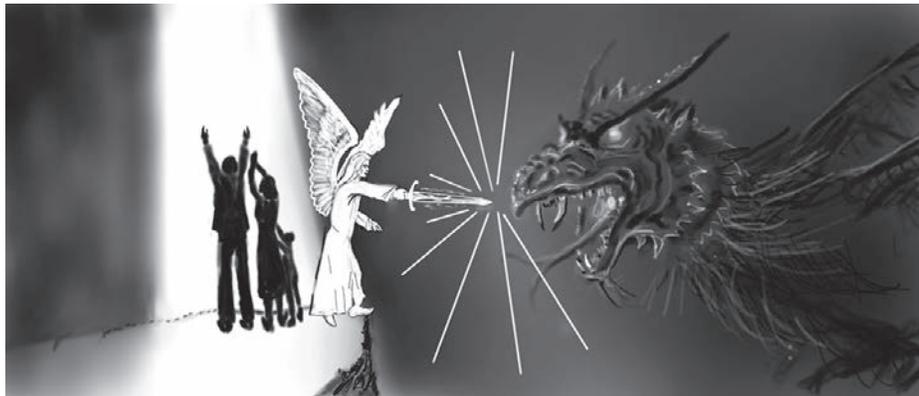


Rules for War



SABBATH—MARCH 1

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON: Daniel 10:1–14; Revelation 13:1–8; Job 1:1–12; John 12:31; Mark 6:5.

MEMORY VERSE: “The person who keeps on sinning belongs to the devil. The devil has sinned from the beginning. But the Son of God came to destroy the works of the devil” (1 John 3:8, NLV).



The false “gods” that non-Jews worshiped were really demons.

1 KINGS 18:19–40 is a powerful story. This story shows us what the worldwide war between God and Satan is all about. In this story, Elijah goes to Mount Carmel to help God win a fight against evil. Here, God wins a contest against the foreign gods that King Ahab and Queen Jezebel worship. Who were these gods? Were they make believe? Behind these “gods” that the non-Jews worshiped was something else.

The Bible gives the answer: “The people sacrificed [gave gifts] to those false gods, not to God. They hadn’t known [didn’t know] anything about those false gods. Those gods were new to them. Their people of long ago didn’t worship them” (Deuteronomy 32:17, Nlrv). Paul explains, “When food is sacrificed [offered] to idols, it is an offering to demons, not to God. And I don’t want you to share anything with demons” (1 Corinthians 10:20, ERV).

So, the false “gods” that non-Jews worshiped were really demons. This information helps us to understand better the worldwide war between God and Satan and the problem with evil.

THE ANGEL WHO WAS DELAYED (Daniel 10:1–14)

Read Daniel 10:1–14. Pay special attention to verses 12, 13. What do these verses teach us about the worldwide war between God and Satan? The angel tells Daniel that “the prince of Persia opposed [fought against] me for 21 days” (Daniel 10:13, NIV). What does the angel mean when he says “opposed” or fought against?

How can anyone fight against an angel from God for three whole weeks?! God is all-powerful. He chose to answer Daniel right away. God had the power to make an angel appear to Daniel right away, too. But the angel from God met with trouble. The prince of Persia fought against him for three whole weeks. How is that possible?

“For three weeks, the angel Gabriel fought against evil powers. These evil angels tried to stop God’s work with King Cyrus. . . . God did everything He could do to help His people. God won the fight. God stopped the evil angels from doing anything bad to His people during the time of King Cyrus and during the time his son Cambyses was in control.”—Ellen G. White, *Prophets and Kings*, page 572, adapted.

This fight between Gabriel and the evil angels happened because God wasn’t using all His power to stop it. Why not? God must allow Satan to be free to work. At the same time, God limits Satan’s actions. So, this story shows us that in the worldwide war between God and Satan there are rules. God made the rules. We will name these rules the rules for war. These rules say what Satan can and can’t do.

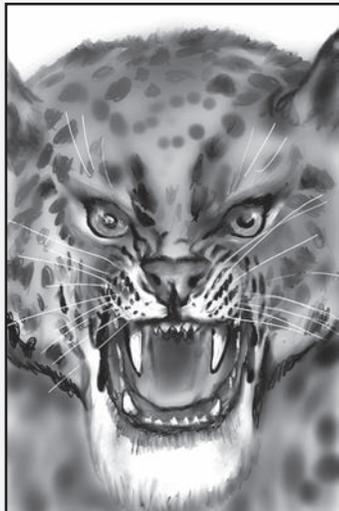
As we already saw, God does everything because of love. Love is the foundation of His government. That is why God puts limits on the things Satan can and can’t do. These ideas help us better understand the worldwide war between God and Satan.

Think of a time when you worked with a difficult person, whose heart was filled with anger or hate. Maybe this person was mean and nasty to you. But you showed them love. What did this experience teach you about the limits of power and what you can and can’t do as a Christian?



This fight between Gabriel and the evil angels happened because God wasn’t using all His power to stop it.

THE DRAGON IN THE BOOK OF REVELATION (Revelation 13:1–8)



The wild animal from the sea “was given a mouth which spoke words full of pride and it spoke very bad things against the Lord.”

The book of Revelation tells us more about the powers in the worldwide war between God and Satan. In this war, the devil is the same as the big red dragon who fights against God. The dragon “fooled [tried to trick] the whole world [everyone on earth] (Revelation 12:9, NLV).

Read Revelation 13:1–8. What do these verses teach us about how much control the dragon has?

As we saw, the dragon (Satan) wars against God (Revelation 12:7–9) and His servants (read Revelation 12:1–6 for an example). The dragon is the power behind the kings who hurt God’s people all through history.

The dragon shares his control with the wild animal from the sea. This wild animal is a symbol of a kingdom. The Bible says, “The dragon gave this wild animal his own power and his own throne as king” (Revelation 13:2, NLV; compare with Revelation 13:5; Revelation 17:13, 14). The wild animal from the sea “was given a mouth which spoke words full of pride and it spoke very bad things against the Lord. It was given much power for forty-two months” (Revelation 13:5, NLV).

So, Satan (the dragon) gives power and control to a wild animal (a word picture for a religious kingdom on this earth). The wild animal steals worship that belongs to God. The wild animal lies about God and wars against Him. The wild animal also hurts God’s people for hundreds of years during the Dark Ages. The dragon gives this worldwide power control over the earth. The dragon stole this power from God.

But God puts limits on Satan and the wild animal power. That’s why the Bible says, “ ‘So be happy, you heavens and all who live there! But it will be terrible for the earth and the sea, because the devil has come down to you! He is filled with anger. He knows that he does not have much time’ ” (Revelation 12:12, ICB).

Satan “knows his time is short” (Revelation 12:12, NIV). The happenings in the book of Revelation show certain limits to Satan’s power (read Revelation 12:14; Revelation 13:5). In the end, God wins. Then “God will wipe every tear from their eyes. No one will die. No one will ever [anymore] cry or be sad for any reason. No one will ever have trouble. The old things are gone” (Revelation 21:4, WE).

JOB (Job 1:1–12)

The book of Job gives us some interesting information about the worldwide war between God and Satan.

Read Job 1:1–12 and Job 2:1–7. What important rules about the worldwide war between God and Satan do we read about in these verses?

We can learn many important things from these verses. First, a meeting is happening in heaven between God and Satan. Angels and people from other planets are also at the meeting.

Second, God asks Satan what he thinks about Job. That question tells us that Satan is arguing with God about something. Why does God ask Satan this question? We understand why God asks the question when we learn more about what Satan is arguing with God about.

Third, God announces that Job is holy and obeys God. Satan says that Job obeys God because God protects him. Satan's words are lies about Job and God (compare with Revelation 12:10; Zechariah 3).

Fourth, Satan says that God's protection of Job isn't fair. Satan says this protection stops him from showing everyone in heaven that he is right that God does not give everyone free choice. Satan's words show us that God puts limits on Satan (the rules for war), and that Satan tried to hurt Job.

God answers Satan at the meeting in heaven. God allows Satan time to show that what he says about Him is correct. Satan is allowed to give Job a test. But there are limits to the things Satan can do to Job. God gives Satan permission to destroy everything Job owns. But Satan must not hurt Job (Job 1:12). Later, after Satan says that Job cares about no one but himself, God allows Satan to hurt Job. But Satan must not kill Job (Job 2:3–6).

Satan causes terrible troubles and disasters to happen to Job and his family. Each time something bad happens, Job continues to bless God's name (Job 1:20–22; Job 2:9, 10). When Job blesses God, he shows that Satan's words against God are lies.

We learn many things from this story. We learn that there are rules for fighting in the worldwide war between God and Satan. There are limits, too, to what Satan can do. God also has limits. His love limits what He may do to show that He is innocent and to show that Satan is guilty.



When Job blesses God, he shows that Satan's words against God are lies.

THE ONE WHO CONTROLS THIS EARTH FOR A SHORT TIME (John 12:31)



The rules for war limit both Satan's actions and God's.

As we saw already, God gives Satan and his followers control over some of the things that happen on this earth. God allows Satan this control for a short time. The rules for war limit Satan's control.

The rules for war limit both Satan's actions and God's. God is limited for a time in the way that He can solve the problem of evil that Satan causes and controls. The Lord agreed to follow the rules for war. The Lord can't break His promises. So, because of the rules, the Lord must permit Satan some limited control of the earth for a short time.

Read John 12:31; John 14:30; John 16:11; 2 Corinthians 4:4; and Luke 4:6. What do these verses teach about Satan's control over this earth?

The New Testament tells us about the fight between two kingdoms: the kingdom of light and the kingdom of the dark. Satan controls the kingdom of the dark. Part of Jesus' job is to destroy Satan's kingdom: "The person who keeps on sinning belongs to the devil. The devil has sinned from the beginning. But the Son of God came to destroy the works of the devil" (1 John 3:8, NLV).

Yes, Jesus came to destroy Satan's works. At the same time, the rules for war limit what God can do. God must honor the rules of His government. The rules that limit God include (1) the freedom God gives to everyone to decide and (2) the rules for war that God and Satan agreed to. For now, these rules are secret. As humans, we don't know fully what these rules are. What we do know is that the rules that limit God's actions have a big part in what God can do to reduce and/or destroy evil on this earth. That is why many people doubt God or His love. So, we need to understand that a worldwide war between God and Satan is being fought. We also must understand that God puts limits on how He solves the problem of evil. Then we can better understand why things are the way they are right now.

Jesus says that Satan is the "king" of this earth, at least for now. How does this information help us understand the evil that is on this earth now? We should be happy knowing that Satan's control will end soon!

LIMITS AND RULES (Mark 6:5)

The worldwide war between Christ and Satan is a fight about God’s love and who He is. Satan started the fight when He said God and His government weren’t good or fair. The worldwide war between Christ and Satan is the same as there being a court case in heaven.

This court case can’t be solved with might or strength. Satan and God must offer proof to show who is correct.

If someone accuses a person in power of crimes, the best (and maybe only) way to show that the person is innocent is to hold a trial. This trial must be fair.

How do all these ideas help us better understand the worldwide war between God and Satan? Let us answer this question with another question. If God makes a promise, will He break it? Of course not! So, whatever rules God agrees to will limit His actions in the future.

Read Mark 6:5 and Mark 9:29. What do these verses show us about how God’s actions are connected to our prayers and our faith?

In both verses in Mark, we see some limits or rules for war. Our prayers and faith can give God permission to do certain things that He couldn’t do if we didn’t ask. Every day we can see proof that prayer changes things on this earth. But we shouldn’t think that prayer and faith are the only things that give God permission to act. There may be other things we don’t know about.

Read Romans 8:18 and Revelation 21:3, 4. We don’t know many things. How do these verses give you hope that we can trust that God knows and wants what is best for us anyway?



Our prayers and faith can give God permission to do certain things that He couldn’t do if we didn’t ask.



“2 Corinthians 11:14 says we shouldn’t be surprised that ‘the devil makes himself look like [the same as] an angel of light’ [NLV].”

ADDITIONAL THOUGHT: Read Ellen G. White, “The Power of Satan,” pages 341–347, in *Testimonies for the Church*, volume 1.

“Sinners are Satan’s prisoners. They are under his control because they broke God’s law. Jesus came to save sinners from Satan. As sinners, we want to follow Satan’s advice. We can’t stand against Satan’s power without Jesus. Jesus must live in our hearts. Jesus must control our feelings and give us strength. Satan goes everywhere on the earth. He doesn’t sleep for a moment. He doesn’t want to lose a chance to destroy people. God’s people must understand this important Bible truth. If we do, we may escape Satan’s traps. Satan is getting his lies and tricks ready. His final fight against God’s people will be to trick them into not knowing who he really is. 2 Corinthians 11:14 says we shouldn’t be surprised that ‘the devil makes himself look like [the same as] an angel of light.’ [NLV]. Some people are fooled and tricked into believing that Satan isn’t real. While they believe this lie, Satan makes them his prisoners. Then Satan uses them to do his work. Satan knows better than God’s people that they can have much power over him when Jesus gives them strength. When we ask Jesus for help, Jesus will give us the strength to say no to Satan. Then the weakest Christian can win the fight against Satan and all his followers. Satan is too sneaky to appear to us in person and try to get us to sin against God. If Satan did that, the Christian would see the danger he was in. So, Satan comes to us in a way that is very sneaky. He uses Christians who don’t obey God to lead God’s loyal followers away from Him.”—Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, volume 1, page 341, adapted.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- ① We are Satan’s prisoners. What does that mean? Can Satan do anything he wants to us? How is our being Satan’s prisoners connected with the rules for war in the worldwide war between God and Satan?
- ② Why does God give Satan any control in the worldwide war between good and evil? What does God’s decision tell us about how He chooses to answer Satan’s lies?
- ③ What can you say to help someone who doesn’t believe that Satan is real?

THE DOCTOR WHO DIDN'T GIVE UP: PART 2

Dr. Colette Reahl thought that Matróna looked as tall as a giant! Matróna was a 13-year-old Indian girl from Alaska.

Four months ago, Colette talked with Matróna for the first time on the phone. Now Colette drove seven hours from Anchorage, Alaska, to Fairbanks, Alaska, to meet Matróna in person. Matróna lived at a center with 19 other girls and boys. Matróna was 5 foot 7 inches. Colette was only 5 foot 3 inches.

When Colette saw the girl, she thought, "Matróna looks the same as a giant to me. Our meeting will be interesting!"

Matróna sat on the floor in a meeting room. Matróna was shy and didn't want to talk at first.

Colette sat down on a couch near Matróna. A few minutes passed. Then Colette remembered the gift she brought for Matróna. The gift was an encyclopedia about animals. Colette opened the book and slowly started to turn the pages. Matróna was very interested in the book. She moved closer to Colette. Before long, Matróna sat right beside Colette and looked at the pictures with her.

Colette and Matróna had a pleasant first visit. Their visit was three hours long.

Colette and Matróna met again the next month. Colette gave Matróna a Bible. Colette suggested that they read the Bible together over the phone. But when Colette called, Matróna was too busy to talk on the phone.

Then Matróna moved to a new center in Anchorage. Matróna was lonely and missed her friends in Fairbanks. So, Matróna started to call Colette every day to try to get Colette to adopt her.

Meanwhile, Colette started a new job. Colette's work as a doctor in Anchorage was ending. She got ready to move to Bethel, the biggest community in the west of Alaska, with 6,000 people. Colette would work at a hospital there.

Matróna wasn't excited about the news that Colette was moving to Bethel. To Matróna, Bethel was a small village. Matróna thought that life in Bethel would be very boring.

Dr. Colette Reahl is a leader at the Bethel Seventh-day Adventist Church. The church got part of a 13th Sabbath Offering, in 2024. Thank you for giving your 13th Sabbath Offering on March 29. Your offering will be used to preach the Good News worldwide. Read more about Colette and Matróna next week.

INSIDE
Story

by ANDREW MCCHESENEY



Before long, Matróna sat right beside Colette and looked at the pictures with her.



Dr. Colette Reahl and Matróna