

The great controversy that began in heaven millennia ago was over the question of God's authority. Satan claimed that God was unfair and unjust. But obedience that flows out of a heart that loves God is at the heart of the great controversy. The Sabbath is not some arbitrary command. It is part of God's last-day message to the world.

4. What do you discover about the great controversy between good and evil? (*Revelation 14:7, 9, 12*)

Two types of worship are contrasted in these verses: worshiping the Creator and worshiping the beast. We have already discovered that the Sabbath is God's eternal sign of His creative power. Revelation 14:12 reveals that those who have the "faith of Jesus" are loyal to God in earth's final crisis. They keep His commandments in the face of ridicule, opposition, persecution, and death.

The Sabbath—A Palace in Time

The Sabbath is a place of refuge in a weary world. Famed Jewish author Abraham Heschel calls the Sabbath a palace in time. Every seventh day, God's heavenly palace descends to earth. Jesus invites us into the glory of His presence for this twenty-four-hour period to spend a time of intimate fellowship with Him. We can know that, in Christ, we are accepted by our loving heavenly Father.

When we rest on the Sabbath, we are resting in His righteousness. We are resting in anticipation of our eternal rest in the new heavens and the new earth.

At the end of creation week, God rested, symbolizing a finished work. Each Sabbath, as we rest on the seventh day of the week, we too declare, "God I am resting in the completed work of Christ on the cross."

5. How does the Sabbath relate to our spiritual growth? What does the Sabbath tell us about God's power in our lives? (*Ezekiel 20:12, 20*)

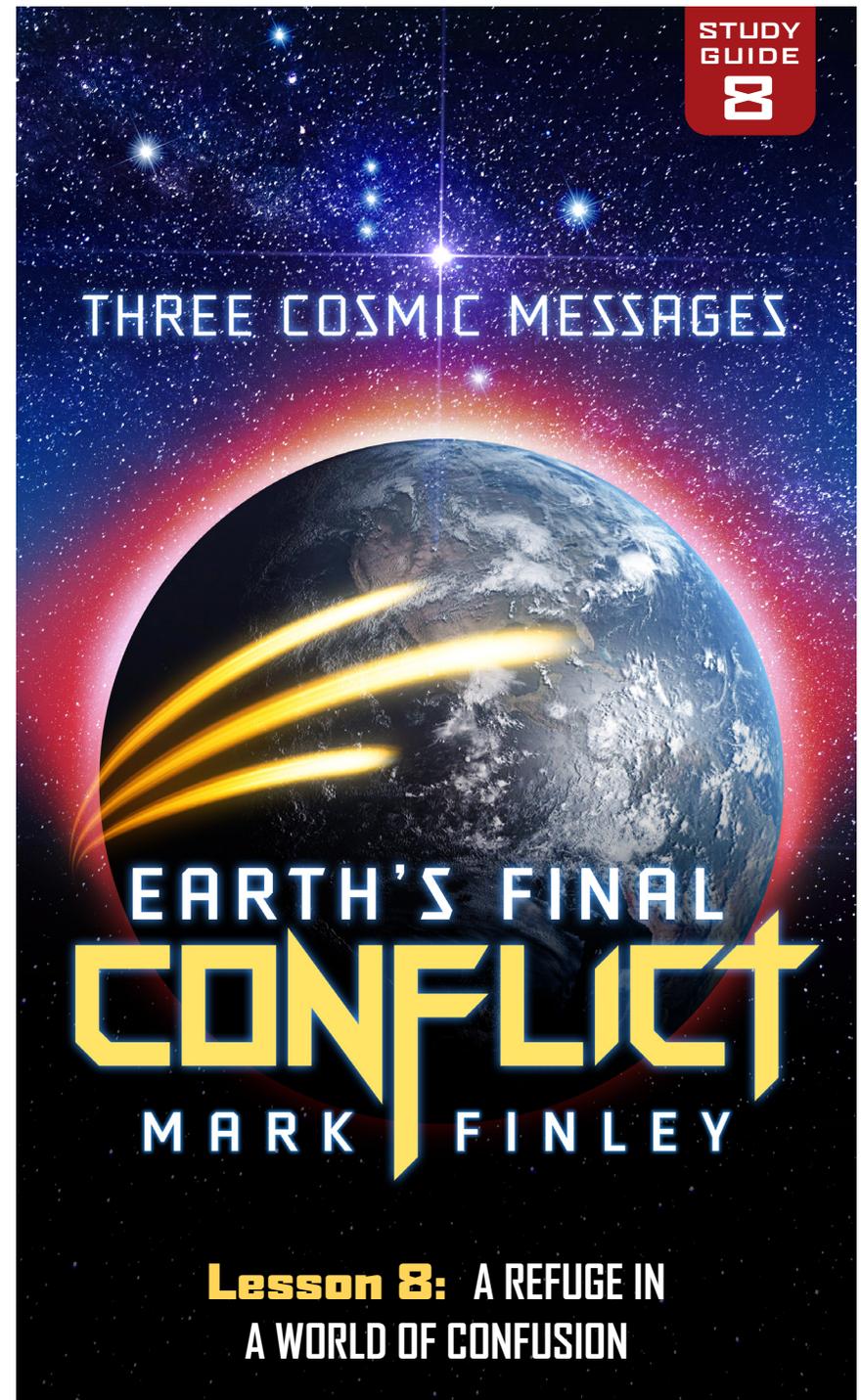
The Sabbath shows that the Lord is the One who sanctifies us. It is a continual living promise of God's ability to help us grow through tragedy and triumph.

A Forever Relationship with God

The Sabbath stretches from paradise lost to paradise restored. The message of three angels flying through the heavens calling for us to worship the Creator points us to assurance in Jesus today, tomorrow, and forever.

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THE CASUALTIES ON BOTH SIDES WERE HIGH. THE SHELLING WAS INTENSE.

The ground shook violently from the incessant pounding of the German aircraft. The Allied Forces responded with a firefight of their own. Rival armies faced each other across the trenches.

Joe, an eighteen-year-old American G.I., leaned back, exhausted, against the earthen wall of his freshly-dug trench. Another day had passed, and he was still alive. It was Christmas Eve 1914. Thoughts of home flooded into his mind.

The battlefield was quiet now. The air was crisp and clear. The stars twinkled in a moonlit sky. Then he heard it.

The sounds of a familiar Christmas carol gladdened the night air. Although sung in German, the tune was unmistakable. “Silent night, holy night . . . All is calm . . . All is bright.” German soldiers were singing Christmas carols just a few hundred yards away, in full view.

Spontaneously, Joe began singing with them. His fellow soldiers began singing along as well. For just a moment, enemies became friends.

1. **What profound truth do we discover about where God dwells, and how He is worshiped?** (*Acts 17:24–26*)

Created by the Same God

The fact that we are uniquely created by God places value on every human being. We belong to the same family. We are all fashioned, shaped, and molded by the same God.

Creation provides us with a true sense of self-worth. Each one of us is special—a one-of-a-kind creation. This is the hope-inspiring message of the three angels that calls us to worship our Creator.

If we truly worship Christ as the Creator, we will value life as He values life. We will be concerned about others as He is concerned about others. We will be sensitive to the needs of the marginalized and the poor because they are His children too.

Evolution Is Dehumanizing

The theory of evolution is dehumanizing. If we are merely advanced animals, products of chance and natural selection, there is no basis for morality. Creation provides a moral imperative for living. The one who made us holds us responsible for our attitudes and actions.

Revelation 14:7 announces that the hour of God’s judgment has come. Since we were created by God with the capacity to make moral choices, we are responsible for the decisions we make.

The concept of creation leads us back to the Creator. It forges ties with all humanity. It inspires confidence in a God who cares. It links us to God’s inexhaustible power and encourages us with the hope of life after death.

Creation and the Sabbath

It is because our world so desperately needs the reassuring message of creation that God gave us the Sabbath. In the mid-1800s when the evolutionary theory was taking the intellectual world by storm, God sent a message of incredible hope.

2. **Carefully summarize the first angel’s message.** (*Revelation 14:6, 7*)

Satan has made every attempt to distort the idea of creation, because he hates Jesus and does not want Him to receive the worship due Him as our Creator and Redeemer. The Sabbath is at the center of the great controversy over Christ’s worthiness to receive worship. If Jesus has not created us, there is absolutely no reason to worship. The Sabbath is an eternal symbol of God’s creative power and authority.

The Sabbath—A Link to Our Family of Origin

The Sabbath calls us back to our roots. It is a link to our family of origin. The Sabbath has been observed continuously since time began. It is an unbroken connection back through time to our Creator. It keeps us focused on the fact that we are children of God and calls us to an intimate relationship with Him.

The devil has introduced a not-so-subtle counterfeit. It goes something like this. God is the prime cause of creation, but He took long ages to bring the world into existence. This approach attempts to harmonize so-called “scientific data” with the Genesis account. It asserts that the days of creation are long, indefinite periods of time. It accepts the evolutionary viewpoint that the earth is hundreds of millions of years old. This synchronistic viewpoint creates far more problems than it solves and disregards the clear teaching of Scripture.

3. **According to David the Psalmist, how was this world created?**

(*Psalms 33:6, 9; Hebrews 11:3*)

God created the world by His word in six literal days of twenty-four hours each, and He rested on the seventh day. To accept the false idea of long, indefinite periods is to challenge the very reason for the Sabbath. If God did not create the world in six literal days, what significance does the command “Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy” have? It would make absolutely no sense at all to have the Sabbath as an eternal legacy of a six-day creation week if a six-day creation week never occurred. To accept long ages of creation is to also challenge the authority of the Bible.