

Lesson 10: The Angelic Conflict, "What Am I Up Against?"

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I. Key Scripture passages for Bibliology

II. Lesson Notes

A. Introduction

The Angelic Conflict defined

The limitations on the extent of the Angelic Conflict:

Job 1 and 2 show a limitation by God. Intensity vs. extent

B. The Origins and Record

Existence: Job 1 & 2, Dan 10, Revelation, etc.

Origin (event): The Fall of Satan

Record: 2 main passages: Ezekiel 28, Isaiah 14

C. The Fact of Satan's Fall: Ezekiel 28:4-19

vv12-15: Satan in an unfallen state. Eden is mentioned as his abode (v13), and it's on a mountain (v14). There are two or three main views regarding the Genesis record and the fall of Satan.¹

Vv16-19: The Fact of Satan's fall. All agree it was before Gen 3.

D. The Motivation of Satan's Fall: Isaiah 14:12-15

¹ See the end of this lesson for an appendix on three views regarding the timing of Satan's fall.

V12:

No Name:

In v12 the KJV called him Lucifer, but we don't have a proper name.

This is a divine insult. Analogy in naming Him as the morning star.

He weakens the _____.

Daniel 2 the nations are described as animals. The nations are deformed animals, deceived by Satan.

V13-14: The Five "I Wills"

1. I will ascend to Heaven. The idea is that he is on earth. It represents the continuity of being—the idea that the creature is on the same continuum of experience as the Creator.
2. I will raise my throne over the stars of Heaven. To rule all the angels. Failure.
3. I will sit on the mount of the assembly in the recesses of the North. Satan's desire to control history. He wants to take over god's decrees.
4. I will ascend above the heights of the clouds. Domination of nature and the earth.
5. I will make myself like the Most High. Continuity of being. Self improvement—the root of all evil motivation. I will improve myself to a point that I will be like God. All the false religious ideas are filled with this.

V15: The outcome in judgment for Satan; cf. Mt 25:41

E. **Timeline of Satan's Fall:** Lots of speculation about it.
Job 38:4-7: Unified angelic celebration at the end of creation.

Ps 104

Genesis 3: Everyone agrees that he's fallen by this point.

F. **Satan's Strategic Argumentation:** Genesis 3

This argument continues throughout history.

The serpent: Revelation 12:9 (NASB95)

⁹And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.

Gen 3:1: QUESTIONING THE WORD OF GOD. Compare with Gen 2:16.

Deception by emphasis

Concept of property and Satan's attack on it.

Gen 3:3: DIRECT REFUTATION OF THE WORD OF GOD.

1. Direct contradiction to the Word of God
2. Motivation for rebellion is a continuity of being argument. Back to Is 14 and the creature's attempt to be God. Specifically here, the desire is omniscience.
3. The very choice the serpent offers places her on a sovereign level above God. Two choices opposite one another. Once she believes she can put both options on an equal level, you have the woman in the place of arbiter of truth. This is idolatry.

The concept of idolatry and creature ideas:

1 Pet 5:6-8: Avoidance of being devoured

G. Example of Satan's Works Against Believers: Job 1

III. Questions for Reflection and Interaction:

1. Do you think most Christians believe they are in a war? Why does this matter? (Consider 1 Peter 1:13-16; Eph 6:10-16.)

IV. Looking to the Future

While this lesson has generally focused on the angelic creation and in particular the angelic, personal enemy of God known as Satan, the Bible does not focus on angels. There is not a great deal of detail in the Bible about them or their eternal destiny, but we have some very helpful statements here and there regarding the destiny of the fallen angels and the conclusion of their war of rebellion. There will certainly be an end to the war! We know how it ends:

Revelation 20:10 (NASB95)

¹⁰And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are also; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

Likewise, one of Paul's great sign-off greetings tells us that this war will soon be over:

Romans 16:20 (NASB95)

²⁰The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you.

These promises point to a very serious distinction between the biblical Christian faith and all other worldviews: there is a termination to evil. While other worldviews have an eternal struggle between good and evil, light and dark (think of the Force in the Star Wars movies), the Bible has an end-point to sin, darkness, and rebellion against God.

What about us? This lesson has been about your adversary, the devil, and his war against God and thus against you. Certainly the verses above give us encouragement for our present struggle of Eph 6:10-17. But there is more involved with angels and Church age believers than the end of the war. In **1 Cor 6:3** we have an interesting statement about the believer's destiny and the judgment of angels. This is a verse about rulership and governance. We will judge the angels.

In **1 Peter 1:12** we read that the angels long to look into our salvation—a salvation which continues into eternity. This verse and 1 Cor 6:3 are like biblical teasers, tantalizingly suggesting so much more than they reveal. Apparently, for example, mankind continues into the eternal state with the elect angels. Both serve and glorify the Living God. Will we be in fellowship with the angels such that we spend time with time, get to know them, etc? The Bible doesn't tell us.

We need to pay close attention to what it *does* tell us. The war is going to be over soon. Our opportunity to suffer its privations for our Savior's glory are only for this short phase of history. Our privilege of ruling with Christ in His Kingdom will far exceed in beauty and joy any suffering in this time of darkness and rebellion against God.

V. For Further Reading (works suggested/cited)

You might enjoy the following lessons, books or articles on the Angelic Conflict:

Barnhouse, Donald Gray. *The Invisible War*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1980.

Chafer, Lewis Sperry. *Satan*. New York: Gospel Publishing House, 1909.

Chafer, Lewis Sperry. *Systematic Theology*. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1993.

Dean, Robert L. Jr. and Thomas Ice. *What the Bible Teaches About Spiritual Warfare*. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2000.

Morris, Henry M. *The Long War Against God*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publishing Group, 1989.

Pentecost, J. Dwight. *Your Adversary, the Devil*. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 1997.

Ryrie, Charles Caldwell. *Basic Theology: A Popular Systematic Guide to Understanding Biblical Truth*. Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1999.

-- *Ryrie Study Bible: New American Standard Bible, 1995 Update*. Expanded ed. Chicago: Moody Press, 1995. See the summaries in the back of the Bible for a good presentation.

Appendix: Three Views on the Timing of Satan's Fall (Held by Various Young-Earth Dispensationalists)

View 1: Satan fell before the creation in Genesis 1:1. Against this idea is Job 38:7, where the angels are all singing. Those who hold this view say that the "sons of God" in Job 38:7 refers to elect and not fallen angels.

View 2: "One Eden View." Satan fell after Genesis 1:31, where everything was "very good," but before Genesis 3. This view has several points which recommend it. First, "very good" describing earthly creation would not seem to be so if Satan were fallen on earth in rebellious sin. The idea is that Satan must have fallen after God said His works were "very good." Opponents to this view see "very good" as a non-moral judgment which would not include sin one way or another. This view equates Eden of Ezek 28 with that of Genesis 2-3. The second support is that the Eden of Gen 2 seems to be on a mountain, as in Ezekiel 28:14 because the four rivers begin there, as they would on a mountain. Eden is called the Garden of God in Ezekiel 28, and we find that God planted

it as a garden in Genesis 2. Opponents of this view see two different Edens because of the differing descriptions of the two places Eden is mentioned.

View 3: “Two Eden View.” Satan fell in time after Genesis 1:1 but before Genesis 1:2. This young earth gap view says that the threefold references to items associated with judgment in Gen 1:2 (formless and void + darkness + deep) seem to indicate that something happened between verse 1 and verse 2. The verse offered in correlation is Isaiah 45:18, where God did not create the world a waste (TOHU in Hebrew). Opponents interpret the verb in this verse to indicate purpose, “God did not create the world *to be* a chaotic waste.” Finally, the Eden of Ezekiel 28 seems to be a rock garden, while we have a garden of vegetation in Genesis 2-3.

All three views are young-earth, and proponents of all three views reject evolution outright. All three views recognize a fall of Satan prior to Genesis 3 and the serpent. All three views recognize that the thrust of Genesis Chapter 1 is not Satan’s fall but God’s creation. The fact of Satan’s fall prior to the temptation in the Garden in Genesis 3 is the key issue; **the timing of the fall of Satan is not.**