

***Last time we looked at God's mission statement, "Let us make man in our image."***

- ◆ First, God's goal in the whole process of making man in His image is the creation of a bride who will respond willingly to His love by saying "yes" to Him.
- ◆ Second, if love is to be genuine ***it must be freely chosen.***
- ◆ Love by its very nature cannot be forced or coerced, it must be chosen.
- ◆ Choice by its nature implies an alternative, and this involves a risk, the possibility of the created agent saying "no" to God.
- ◆ This in turn opens up the possibility of evil.
- ◆ However this evil arises solely from creaturely freewill and cannot be attributed to a holy God.
- ◆ All evil proceeds from wills other than God's.
- ◆ Then we talked about the age-old question that has plagued theologians and philosophers for millennia, "If God is all-powerful, all-knowing and yet Omni-benevolent, why doesn't He do something about the problem of evil?"
- ◆ Well, as we discussed, there must be something that is more important to His purpose besides the elimination of evil.
- ◆ God's wish is to share His triune love with humanity, but love requires a response that is freely chosen.
- ◆ God is unwavering in His commitment that love will prevail despite the heavy cost of evil.
- ◆ If the free agent willingly chooses to say "no" to God, the path to God's goal becomes more torturous for both the free agent and for God, but that doesn't mean God abandons His plan.
- ◆ The story of Christianity is the story of God's response to humanity's "no"!

***There is a second aspect to this question of moral evil that now needs to be addressed as this too plays a critical role in understanding the process.***

- ◆ In preparation for the creation of the man who would be in God's image, God created other supernatural spiritual beings, angels.
- ◆ We know from the book of Job that the angels were around prior to the creation event, as they sang for joy when it happened.
- ◆ ***Job 38:4–7 "Where were you when I laid the earth's foundation? Tell me, if you understand. 5 Who marked off its dimensions? Surely you know! Who stretched a measuring line across it? 6 On what were its footings set, or who laid its cornerstone— 7 while the morning stars sang together and all the angels shouted for joy?"***
- ◆ These "morning stars" were supernatural agents or as their name implies "messengers".
- ◆ God created them with specific functions.
- ◆ They are there to worship God – ***Psalms 148:2 Praise Him, all His angels; Praise Him, all His hosts!***
- ◆ They are there to render service to humans. ***Hebrews 1:14 Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation?***
- ◆ They guard believers ***Psalms 34:7 The angel of the LORD encamps all around those who fear Him, And delivers them.***
- ◆ Watch over children ***Matthews 18:10 Take heed that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I say to you that in heaven their angels always see the face of My Father who is in heaven.***
- ◆ So scripture reveals they were created for at least two important tasks, to praise God and to minister to humans.

***But it appears from what subsequently happened that they too were given free will, because scripture reveals some of these angels exercised their free will and rebelled and sinned against God.***

- ◆ ***2 Peter 2:4 For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment;***
- ◆ If God is perfectly good and He created these angels, how is it then that they have the capacity for evil?
- ◆ In the same way human sinfulness is the result of a free decision to rebel against their Creator, so it must be with these rebellious angels.
- ◆ ***Jude 6 And the angels who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own abode, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day;***
- ◆ Jude, like Peter, assumed angels are capable of sin, just as humans are and will be held morally responsible for their sin.

- ◆ We do not know exactly what precipitated this uprising but again scripture gives us some clues as to who instigated this rebellion and why.
- ◆ **Revelation 12:7-9 And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, <sup>8</sup> but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer.**
- ◆ In this frightening heavenly battle we are introduced to the angelic leaders of the two conflicting armies.
- ◆ Michael who fought on God's behalf and a fierce "dragon" that led the rebel forces who is then identified as Satan the Devil.
- ◆ **V.9 So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.**

**So let's take some time to explain just who this Satan is and what his sin was.**

- ◆ The name Satan comes from the Aramaic word "Adversary." God represents all that is holy and good while in contrast the Devil represents all that is evil and wicked, but he did not start off this way as we will see
- ◆ Scripture also gives him a number of aliases; Devil, Dragon, Destroyer, Accuser, Tempter, Roaring Lion, Serpent, Liar.
- ◆ We get a clue as to the motive for the Devil's rebellion in 1 Timothy 3:6.
- ◆ **1 Timothy 3:6 He must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil.**
- ◆ Paul, in giving advice to Timothy about appointing spiritual leaders in the church, warns against choosing someone who is new to the faith as he may fall into the same pothole of pride and conceit as the devil.
- ◆ A similar analogy is made in a prophecy against the conquering king Sennacherib after conquering Babylon in the book of Isaiah.
- ◆ In the midst of the passage is a section that would seem more appropriate of Satan than to an earthly king.
- ◆ **Isaiah 14:12-15 How you have fallen from heaven, morning star, son of the dawn! You have been cast down to the earth, you who once laid low the nations! <sup>13</sup> You said in your heart, "I will ascend to the heavens; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly, on the utmost heights of Mount Zaphon."<sup>14</sup> I will ascend above the tops of the clouds I will make myself like the Most High."<sup>15</sup> But you are brought down to the realm of the dead, to the depths of the pit.**
- ◆ While it may in fact be referring to an earthly king, the story illustrates there is a cosmic dimension which draws on a previous example of an illegitimate rebel who tried to overthrow the ruler of the heavenly realm.
- ◆ As we saw in 1 Timothy 3:6, the sin, both of Sennacherib and his spiritual counterpart are guilty of is the sin of pride.
- ◆ Also, as we will see when it comes to the situation in the Garden of Eden, we see the same motive revealed here in this "morning star" (**I will make myself like the Most High**) as the serpent who peddled the lie to Adam and Eve, that they too, could be their own gods (Genesis 3:5).

**Another example comes from the book of Ezekiel.**

- ◆ Again this passage appears to carry a double message.
- ◆ It is written to a literal King of Tyre, about whom things are said which seem to go beyond what is applicable to a human king
- ◆ The first ten verses of Ezekiel 28 are directed at a human king, but again the scene switches abruptly from a earthly king to a cosmic rebel.
- ◆ **Ezekiel 28:12-19 "Son of man, take up a lament concerning the king of Tyre and say to him: 'This is what the Sovereign Lord says: "'You were the seal of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty <sup>13</sup> You were in Eden, the garden of God;**
- ◆ So this identifies someone who was extremely wise, beautiful and was in the Garden of Eden
- ◆ The only other player in the Garden of Eden story besides God and Adam and Eve was the serpent, Satan (Revelation 12:9).
- ◆ It also tells us that if he was in the Garden, he was created prior to this event.
- ◆ **...every precious stone adorned you: carnelian, chrysolite and emerald, topaz, onyx and jasper, lapis lazuli, turquoise and beryl. Your settings and mountings were made of gold;**
- ◆ This part could literally apply to the King of Tyre.

- ◆ *...on the day you were created they were prepared.* <sup>14</sup> *You were anointed as a guardian cherub, for so I ordained you. You were on the holy mount of God; you walked among the fiery stones.*
- ◆ We know from other passages in scripture that this is a description of the throne room of God (Revelation 21:10).
- ◆ So this individual was not only in Eden but also at the very throne room of God and he was appointed as a guardian archangel.
- ◆ **V.15** *You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created till wickedness was found in you.*
- ◆ So something happened along the way to turn this beautiful created being from a source of good to a source of evil.
- ◆ So what exactly happened? It would appear he exercised his freedom to say “no” to God and rebelled against his Creator.
- ◆ **V.16** *Through your widespread trade you were filled with violence, and you sinned. So I drove you in disgrace from the mount of God, and I expelled you, guardian cherub, from among the fiery stones.*
- ◆ Greed, pride and his lust for power corrupted this archangel's thinking.
- ◆ This great angelic being who was created to worship God instead began to worship himself.
- ◆ And instead of rendering service to mankind he later became their sworn enemy (Revelation 12:9).
- ◆ We can speculate his downfall may have come about as a result of the revelation that God was about to create beings whose status would eventually be higher than that of the angels.
- ◆ **Hebrews 2:5-8** *It is not to angels that he has subjected the world to come, about which we are speaking.* <sup>6</sup> *But there is a place where someone has testified: “What is mankind that you are mindful of them, a son of man that you care for him?”* <sup>7</sup> *You made them a little lower than the angels; you crowned them with glory and honor* <sup>8</sup> *and put everything under their feet.”* *In putting everything under them God left nothing that is not subject to them. Yet at present we do not see everything subject to them.*
- ◆ It's easy to comprehend why the early church came to see these sections in both Isaiah and Ezekiel as referring to both the downfall of earthly kings and the fall of Satan.
- ◆ There is also a parallel between Ezekiel 28:17 and Revelation 12 as to the fate of these two rebels where nearly identical language is used.
- ◆ **Ezekiel 28:17** *Your heart became proud on account of your beauty, and you corrupted your wisdom because of your splendor. So I threw you to the earth; I made a spectacle of you before kings.*
- ◆ Revelation 12:4 tells us Satan enticed a third of the angels to join his rebellion and these fallen angels now called demons, were banished to this earth.
- ◆ **Revelation 12:3-4** *And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great, fiery red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems on his heads. 4 His tail drew a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth.*
- ◆ Both were thrown to the earth.

**Again the scene abruptly changes back to the literal King of Tyre.**

- ◆ **Ezekiel 28:18-19** *By your many sins and dishonest trade you have desecrated your sanctuaries. So I made a fire come out from you, and it consumed you, and I reduced you to ashes on the ground in the sight of all who were watching.* <sup>19</sup> *All the nations who knew you are appalled at you; you have come to a horrible end and will be no more.”*
- ◆ Even though this incineration may refer to a human king it also bears a close description of what is eventually going to happen to Satan the devil.
- ◆ **Revelation 20:10 (NKJV)** *The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.*

**So what have we learned about this adversary, this dragon, this devil?**

- ◆ He was created sometime before the creation of man.
- ◆ He was most likely a cherub, the highest rank of angel.
- ◆ He was extremely beautiful and gifted.
- ◆ He had an honored position standing at the very throne of God.
- ◆ However he allowed pride, ambition and greed to pervert his thinking, and with the aid of one third of the angels he mounted a rebellion against God Himself (Revelation 12:3-4).
- ◆ He, of course, failed. A created being is deceiving himself if he thinks he can defeat His Creator.

## [IN GOD'S IMAGE 4 – THE HEAVENLY REBELLION]

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- ◆ As a result of his rebellion, he was banished to this earth.
- ◆ And eventually he will be punished for his rebellion and thrown into the lake of fire.

***We should not underestimate the seriousness of this rebellion on the part of this archangel and the affront this was to God.***

- ◆ He was in the privileged position of experiencing the ecstasy of heaven, yet even in this privileged position, decided to say “no” to God.
- ◆ We talked earlier about being washed over by a flood of God’s love, of never having a doubt of being loved, the security and assurance of never wanting for anything, of literally experiencing the beauty of the heavenly realm.
- ◆ For this extremely talented being to then turn his back after experiencing the honored privilege of serving at God’s court in the heavenly realm is an unpardonable insult.
- ◆ And perhaps this is why there is no redemption available to these supernatural beings that have already experienced the life and love of almighty God and willingly rejected it.
- ◆ This story of rejection on the part of created beings will be a recurring theme throughout the story, as we shall see.
- ◆ Later God leveled the same criticism at the children of Israel when they rejected Him as their Father and Creator.
- ◆ ***Deuteronomy 32:5-6 They are corrupt and not his children; to their shame they are a warped and crooked generation. 6 Is this the way you repay the Lord, you foolish and unwise people? Is he not your Father, your Creator, who made you and formed you?***
- ◆ As we will go on to see these two titles of God, both Father and Creator will play a crucial role in the events that unfold in our story.
- ◆ And what was their sin?
- ◆ ***Deuteronomy 32:20 “I will hide my face from them,” he said, “and see what their end will be; for they are a perverse generation, children who are unfaithful.”(See also Malachi 1:6)***
- ◆ Their sin was a failure to trust their Creator and Father who had created them for the purpose of sharing in His love.
- ◆ Faithfulness or allegiance to God is also going to play a crucial role in our story.

***So the stage is now set for the introduction of man into this scenario.***

- ◆ But it’s interesting that prowling around on this same earth is this adversary, this roaring lion as the apostle Peter calls him, and although he is a defeated devil with limited power, he is permitted by God to play a key role in the drama which is about to unfold.