

Angelic Conflict and Spiritual Warfare

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Introduction

With this lesson we begin a study that may be totally foreign to many. It may come as a shock to hear that we are combatants in a war, an angelic war. That fact is difficult for many to comprehend much less accept. Most of us have more than enough to deal with day-to-day as we go through our lives just trying to make ends meet, concerned only about getting the kids in the right schools, and paying our credit card bills in a timely manner. We face life's struggles often without the slightest inkling there is any such thing as spiritual warfare, or that this war is going on all around us. But in truth, it is, and it directly impacts the entire human race. And more importantly, it directly impacts YOU, your family, your quality of life, and the legacy you will leave to your children. How you deal with this spiritual war today will have great impact on the world you live in and what kind of world you leave for your children to live in after you are gone.

I am not speaking of war in an allegorical sense either; this is a real war with battles, campaigns, weapons, tactics, strategy, and casualties. Yes, I said casualties. This is a war that involves more than just angels, but is a war in which real flesh and blood people suffer and die. And I don't mean "real people" in some far away country or another time; I mean "real people" right now, as in people you know, in your family, or even you.

Do I have your attention yet?

If you get nothing else out of this study it should be an awareness of this war. That, for many, will be a giant step forward. But I intend for you to get much more out of this study than that. What do I want you to take away from this study?

- There is an angelic war going on.
- What are its origins of this war?
- Who are the combatants?
- What are the objectives?
- We will answer the great questions, "Why am I here?" and "What is the meaning of life?"

That is the "big picture" look at this war. In addition to this we will look at this war on a very personal level. In that regard I want you to comprehend these points.

- As a born again believer you are a combatant in this war.
- As a born again believer you can be attacked personally.
- As a born again believer you WILL indeed be attacked personally. Count on it!
- As a born again believer you have already been attacked and maybe didn't even realize it.

- As a born again believer you will be attacked again and again in the future, and you had better be prepared to deal with it or become a casualty.

I am going to try to show you this war on many levels. You need to understand the organization, strategy and tactics of the enemy. Yes, the enemy is well organized and highly disciplined, a lot more so than many Christians. The enemy takes this war very seriously, while many Christians are clueless it even exists, much less takes it seriously. And the enemy likes it that way. I intend to shine the light of Truth on them for you.

Every good military operation has an objective. Our enemy has an objective, and he has a strategy that is designed to meet that objective. The enemy has developed tactics designed to support his strategy and accomplish his objective, and he intends to accomplish his objective no matter the cost. Let me make something perfectly clear: HE WILL GIVE NO QUARTER! There is no such thing as mercy from this enemy; he is merciless and brutal and doesn't care how you feel about that.

I will spend a lot of time describing the tactics used by the enemy. By understanding the enemy, you can defeat his tactics if you deploy the appropriate force against them. This study will include a look at the equipment God has left for believers to use against the enemy. Without that equipment you are helpless; with it you can have victory.

I will also try to demonstrate what personal attacks look like and how you can identify them. And it isn't as easy or as obvious as you think. The enemy is often very subtle, and you can become a casualty before you even realize it. But if you are watchful, you can anticipate his tactics and even defeat them. I will try to show you some techniques for defeating personal attacks and getting yourself out of a very bad situation before it is too late.

You may think you can walk away from this fight. You cannot. As a believer you have been drafted into service, and to ignore your responsibilities is to surrender to the enemy, render yourself a casualty, and thus combat ineffective. If you chose to ignore this, you will pay a high price for that decision, and so will your children. For a believer it is this simple: Get into the fight or become a casualty. There is no third option.

This is an important study. Once the believer has a solid grip on his salvation, a clear understanding on how to have a functioning spiritual life, the next step is to understand this angelic conflict and the believer's role in it.

We will begin our study of the angelic conflict with a study of angels both elect and fallen.

In the beginning....

With this lesson we get into our study of the Angelic Conflict. A good place to start is to get an understanding of some of the combatants, namely angels, both elect and fallen.

The Bible makes it clear that there is an order of intelligent beings besides man. They are not only distinct from man but also from the Godhead, and they occupy a position that is above man's present fallen state. These celestial beings are mentioned 108 times in the OT and 165 times in the NT. From this substantial body of information we can construct the doctrine of angels.

In the Hebrew the word for angel is *malak* and in the Greek it is *aggelos*. In both cases the words mean "messenger." These beings execute the purpose of the one whom they serve. The holy or elect angels serve God. The fallen angels are messengers of Satan.

In God's order of things, man has no ongoing intercourse with angels or even any consciousness of their presence, yet the Bible states that angels not only observe the affairs of man, but good angels minister to man's well-being. "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" (Heb 1:14) And evil angels wage warfare against God and what he produces in man. "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high *places*." (Eph 6:12)

Make no mistake; we are at war with unseen beings, which is kind of spooky when you think about that, isn't it? This activity was not restricted just to certain periods of human history. The Bible makes it clear that this war is on-going, and it is seen in Genesis all the way through Revelation.

Most "Christians" and even most born again believers today are totally clueless on this subject, and it is a subject, the understanding of which is vital to their Christian walk. Most people get their information on angels and demons from Hollywood or some misinformed inaccurate show on the History channel.

Basically there are two kinds of angels: The elect or Holy angels and the fallen angels also called demons. They are a species unto themselves, separate and apart from mankind and with attributes and characteristics very different from mankind. And let's dispel this myth right off: When man dies he does not go to heaven and become an angel – like a promotion or something. Angels were created well before man was created.

The presence of these beings has been recognized by all systems of religion, ancient and modern. Depending on the religion, they may be the souls of departed heroes or good men, demi-gods of mythology, or the genies and spirits of poems and literature of antiquity. There is abundant evidence of almost universal belief in these intelligent creatures. Socrates believed there was a good demon (that would be an oxymoron) attending him, directing him and guiding him. Plato taught that there was a higher form of beings that had never occupied human bodies and were

appointed as guardians of men. In this study we will attempt to dispel some of the confusion and bad information we have about angels.

When were angels created? According to a passage in Job, they were present at the foundation of the heavens and the earth. God created angels before He created the universe. Was that just some 6,000+ years ago or billions of years ago? To understand angels and the angelic conflict I believe we need to understand something about creation in general. The best place to start this study is in the beginning, but there are several beginnings to consider, and several ways to consider the beginning.

By that I mean there are several theories about how the universe came into being. We of course have the theory of evolution, in which we are to believe that the universe was the result of some circumstantial big bang many billions of years ago. The “big bang” part may be accurate, but it begins to become absurd after that. This theory states that the earth formed from gasses and elements coalescing from the matter from this big bang. An atmosphere formed around earth, and animal life sprang from some primordial soup. We of course descended from the apes who came from something even more primitive. You know the story. When scientists who believe in evolution are confronted with statistical evidence that this is all but completely impossible their considered and learned response is, “Yes, it is statistically absurd, but it happened!” as if that is proof. In my opinion, evolution is even more a faith-based system than what most Christians believe.

Then we have the “earth is 6,000 years old/God created the heavens and the earth in seven literal days” theory. This is the prevailing dogma in most Christian religions today. Where did 6,000 years come from? Add up the generations and years given in OT Scripture plus history, and you get about 6,000 from Adam to the present time. It seems to be scripturally supported, and God is certainly capable of doing this.

The problem with this position is that there seems to be “overwhelming scientific evidence,” such as fossils and carbon dating, that suggests the earth is a lot older than 6,000 years. True, carbon dating is not as accurate as science would like you to believe, so the supporting scientific evidence against the 6,000 year old earth theory is not as strong or conclusive as many think, but it isn’t billions of years off.

Another explanation for the earth “appearing” to be older than 6,000 years is that it was created “with age.” This one is interesting, but I have yet to see Scriptural evidence (or even scientific evidence) to support it, so it remains only an interesting theory, and in my mind one that seems a bit illogical. The presence of fossil evidence, if placed here by God, would seem to be misleading on the part of God, and that seems out of character for Him. Some believe all these fossils were created by the flood, but I haven’t seen good support for that either.

Another theory is that the ancestral evidence (the begets of the OT) presented in the Bible are incomplete with generations skipped, and/or time was counted in a different way back in then. Some suggest that a “year” could mean an undetermined period of time.

We have a problem! I am not willing to discount Scripture simply because “science” seems to disagree with it. I am more inclined to discount science in favor of Scripture because I trust God and His Word over a scientist any day. But the evidence against the 6,000-year-old earth is too strong to easily disregard. Some explanation is demanded. I believe it is strong enough that it at least requires us to consider the possibility, not that the Bible is wrong, but that we may not be interpreting Scripture correctly, and the earth is indeed much older than 6,000 years. I believe Scriptural evidence does exist that supports an earth older than 6,000 years, and I intend to offer that to you for your consideration.

The Gap

Among Christians there are several theories about the origins of the universe, human life, and angels. The majority position takes the Bible literally and believes it teaches that the universe and mankind were created by God about 6,000 years ago. Those who cannot accept the 6,000-year-old creation position as literal see these passages that seem to teach this as merely parables not to be taken literally.

There is yet another theory, which is commonly called the “Gap Theory of Creation.” There are very learned and highly respected theologians and Biblical expositors that both support and reject this position.

Genesis 1:1 In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth 2 And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness *was* upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.

The Gap position is that there is an undetermined period of time, perhaps as much as billions of years, between Genesis 1:1 and the creation of heaven and earth and the picture of earth we see in verse 2. If this is true, then it becomes possible for science to support rather than contradict Scripture.

How do we support this scripturally? To do so we must get into some serious word studies and find other supporting evidence in Scripture. I believe that evidence exists. Let’s first take a look at Genesis chapter 1.

Gen. 1:1 In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

The word translated as “created” is the Hebrew word *bara’ baw-raw’* and means to create something out of nothing. Other words could have been used such as *yatsar* – to make something from already existing material. God created Adam, *barah*, but he formed his body from the dust, *yatsar*. Or the Hebrew *asah* could have been used, which means to make or form something after a pattern. God said “Let us make man in our own image according to our likeness,” *asah*. Or the Hebrew *banah* could have been used, which means to build something and depicts the divine construction of the female body. The Lord fashioned, *banah*, into a woman the rib which He had taken from the man...” In this case of building from something else, biological life is part of the building elements.

But God used *barah* and created the heavens and the earth out of nothing. God is a perfect God. Clearly Genesis says this perfect God created, from nothing, the heavens and the earth. Is there any reason to believe that a perfect God with no restrictions on His materials (created from nothing) would create anything that was less than perfect? Of course not! Then we have a problem in verse 2.

Gen 1:2 And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness *was* upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.

The earth was without form and void; and darkness was upon the deep. Traditionally, it is believed this means God created the earth in a semi-finished form and needed to finish the job, which is what we see in the following verses that are called the “six days of creation.” But if we do a word study of three key Hebrew words used here we get an entirely different picture.

The earth was without form.... “Without form” is the Hebrew *tohuw to'-hoo*; and means a chaos, confusion, desolation (of surface), i.e. desert wasteland. “Void” is the Hebrew word *bohuw bo'-hoo*; from an unused root (meaning to be empty); a vacuity, i.e. (superficially) an undistinguishable ruin: emptiness, void. We add the conjunctive “wa” and we have “*tohuw wa bohuw*,” translated in the KJV “formless and void.” This is a fairly good literal translation, but when we apply our understanding of the Hebrew words without the preconceived notion that this is a picture of a “partially” formed earth, we get a translation that sounds like this, “The earth was a chaotic, desolate wasteland and in ruin.”

This doesn't sound very perfect does it?

There is more. “But the earth was” is a problem. The verse begins with a distinctive clause, “but” followed by the Hebrew verb *hayah*, which should be translated “became.” When correctly translated we have “but the earth *became* formless and void” or more appropriately, “the earth became a chaotic, desolate wasteland and in ruin.”

And there is more still. The word translated “darkness” is *choshek kho-shek'*; the dark; hence (literally) darkness, night, obscurity. But figuratively the word means misery, destruction, death, ignorance, sorrow, wickedness. There are several other words that could be translated as “darkness” and used here were not, and that is significant.

The Hebrew word ‘*eyphah ay-faw'* could have been used, which means darkness or obscurity (as if from covering). This would be darkness as from having a heavy blanket thrown over your head. The Hebrew word ‘*ophel o'fel*; could have been used, which refers to darkness associated with a setting sun. But these were not used. Instead the Hebrew word *choshek kho-shek'* is what we find in Genesis 1:2. Though it literally means “darkness,” this word is often used elsewhere in the OT as a spiritual darkness rather than a physical darkness.

Let's examine how this word *choshek* is used elsewhere in the OT.

In Job 5:13-14 we see that the wicked are brought to destruction, and “darkness comes upon them in the daytime; at noon they grope as in the night.” This is not a literal darkness, but a spiritual darkness.

In Job 19:1-8 we see Job in despair over his condition. In verse 8 his paths are “shrouded” in “darkness.” Job's life is full of misery and despair, not physical darkness.

In Job 29:1-3 in his discourse, Job says when God's light shines on him (blessings) by this “light” he is able to meet and deal with adversity, “by his light I walked through darkness.” This is not a literal light shining into literal darkness.

In 2 Samuel 22:29 God is depicted as a lamp that turns “darkness into light.” God is a shining light that allows Samuel to meet the darkness of death, ignorance, and adversity.

Choshek does not carry the idea of a literal darkness as in absence of light. Its uses in the OT suggest it is more a figurative darkness that represents misery, destruction, death, ignorance, sorrow, wickedness, in other words a spiritual darkness.

What we have here is an earth that is described in terms that picture it in a far worse condition than just an incomplete state. These are terms and words that are usually associated with sin and judgment. Furthermore the verse implies the earth did not start out this way but rather “became” such.

Now we have an expanded translation that looks something like this, “But the earth became a chaotic, desolate wasteland and in ruin and spiritual darkness....”

Verse 2 of Genesis chapter 1 presents the earth as being damaged, certainly less than perfect. If we accept the premise that a perfect God created a perfect earth in verse 1 of Genesis 1, and we see the earth is a severely damaged state in verse 2, then we have to ask ourselves a question. What happened between verse 1 and verse 2? If we assume that God created a perfect earth in Genesis 1:1, but the earth in verse 2 is severely “damaged,” can we support it from Scripture elsewhere? There is a passage in Job that seems to allude to this damaged earth.

Job 38:1 Then the LORD answered Job out of the storm. He said:

2 “Who is this that darkens my counsel with words without knowledge?

3 Brace yourself like a man; I will question you, and you shall answer me.

4 “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?

God is dressing down Job for challenging Him, but note the angels were present at the creation. I believe this after the creation of angelic beings but before the fall of Lucifer. More on that later. If Job is so smart, where was he when God created the heavens and the earth, “laid the earth’s foundations” (vs. 4). Now it gets interesting....

Job 38:8 “Who shut up the sea behind doors when it burst forth from the womb,

9 when I made the clouds its garment and wrapped it in thick darkness,

10 when I fixed limits for it and set its doors and bars in place,

11 when I said, ‘This far you may come and no farther; here is where your proud waves halt’?

The sea is “shut up behind doors”? The word here is *cakak saw-kak'*, which means to hedge in or to cover as in put something behind a wall or fence. Then in verse 9 God says he wrapped the earth in clouds, in a thick darkness. Verse 10, God set limits on it. The KJV uses a different translation, “And brake up for it my decreed *place*, and set bars and doors.” “Break up” is *shabar shaw-bar'* and means to crush or destroy. “Decreed” is *choq khome*, which indicates this was

intentional. “Set” is *suwm soom* and means to put something, in this case “bars and doors,” which implies restricted access. Verse 11 goes on to re-enforce this picture of restricted access.

In simpler terms, this looks like a picture of earth seen in Genesis 1:2. It is in a damaged state and is wrapped in darkness with no light reaching its surface. God shut up the waters (an extended ice age?) and placed an “off limits” sign on earth, “put it behind bars and doors.” The “sign” said, “This far you may come and no farther; here is where your proud waves halt” (Job 38:11). The earth is uninhabitable, and access to it is restricted, and all this is by divine decree of God. What we see in Job is the same picture of earth we see in the Hebrew words “*tohuw wa bohuw*” of Genesis 1:2.

There are other passages that support this.

Isa. 45:18 For thus saith the LORD that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited: I *am* the LORD; and *there is* none else.

“God himself that formed the earth and made it ... He created it not in vain.” Guess what that word “in vain” is in Hebrew? It is the same word found in verse 2 of Genesis 1, *tohuw to'-hoo*, which means a chaos, confusion, desolation (of surface), i.e. desert wasteland. Isaiah 45:18 says God did not create the world “*tohuw*.” He did not create it in the condition as it is seen in Genesis 1:2. Of course not, God would have created it perfect. It became “*tohuw*” and “*bohuw*.”

If we are seeing the earth that was created many millions (billions?) of years before in a damaged state in Genesis 1:2, then what is happening in the “six days of creation” we have in the following verses of Genesis 1? I believe what we have are not six days of creation but six literal (man-counting) days of re-creation and restoration as God restores earth to its former undamaged state and makes it once again habitable for man. Can I support that? I think so.

Refer back to our passage in Isaiah 45 verse 18 and look at the end of that verse. It says, “he formed it to be inhabited.” The word translated “formed” is not *bara'*, which means to create out of nothing and is the word used in Genesis 1:1 for “God created the heavens....” It is *yatsar*, and it means to make something from already existing material.

When you examine the original language used, Isaiah 45:18 seems to say that God originally created the earth out of nothing (*bara'*) not in vein (*tohuw*) and formed (*yatsar*) it from existing materials to be inhabited.

Take a look at Exodus 20.

Ex. 20:11 For *in* six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that *is* in them, and rested the seventh day....

This of course is a reference back to Genesis chapter one. “In six days the Lord made....” The word used there is *bara'* and means to create something out of nothing. God created the heaven and the earth out of nothing. But *bara'* is not the word used in Exodus 20:11. That word is *asah*

aw-saw, which means to make or form something after a pattern. There is no suggestion of creation out of nothing. This would imply that the six days of creation are not six days creating something but are six days *recreating* it “after a pattern.” God is using matter that already existed and is forming it into the likeness of something that already existed.

So what am I saying here?

- Genesis 1:1 shows the creation of the “heavens and the earth,” and they are created by a perfect God and thus are themselves perfect.
- There is then an undetermined period of time, perhaps millions even billions of human years.
- During that period something happens, and God decrees that the earth should be “tohuw wa bohuv,” desolate and a wasteland in spiritual darkness. That was not the way He created it.
- Earth is locked down under clouds, in darkness, its seas “shut up,” and is placed off limits.
- In Genesis 1:2 we see earth in this “tohuw wa bohuv” state.
- The six days of creation that follow in Genesis are really six days or restoration of earth to its former splendor in preparation to be inhabited by man.

I will admit this flies into the face of conventional wisdom, and it may indeed be incorrect, but you have seen scriptural evidence to support it. As I said, there are many learned expositors of the Word who agree with this position as well as those who do not. If we assume this interpretation is accurate, then we must ask the following questions:

- What happened to cause God to do this?
- Who was locked out?

Lucifer in the Garden?

We have seen how it appears that there is a gap in time between Genesis 1:1, where God creates the heavens and the earth, and Genesis 1:2 where we see the earth as a desolate wasteland as decreed by God, its seas “shut up,” and it is placed off limits. We do not know how long the gap in time was but if we look to science for an answer it could be billions of human years.

2Pe 3:8* But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day *is* with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.

God exists in eternity, where time is of no consequence at all. Time, as we know it, was created for man, who measures his existence using it. Time has little or no meaning to God, at least not in the same sense it does for man.

2 Peter 3:8 But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.

To God the past is as perspicuous as the present, which is as perspicuous as the future. God views eternity in its entirety, past, present, and future as a whole, but man struggles with the here and now, and the past is at best a vague memory and the future is but hopes and dreams that often have no relationship to reality. So, while this billion-year gap in time may seem important to us, it is insignificant to God. God has no need to mark time, thus we have eternity past before man and eternity future after the Last Judgment when all of mankind enters an eternal condition. In between those two events, we have time.

On the assumption that this gap did indeed exist, we have two questions:

- What happened to cause God to do this to earth
- And who was locked out?

Short answer: The answer to the first question is the angelic conflict began, to the second, Satan and his demons were locked out.

I believe angels had access to earth prior to Genesis 1:2. While I can't prove it scripturally, I believe the “heavens and the earth” were originally created for angels. I believe the earth was either the actual scene of Lucifer's rebellion or it somehow played a major role in the rebellion. One expositor describes earth in this pre-Adamic period as a rest and recreation place for angels. I am not prepared to stand on that, but I believe I can support the contention that Lucifer had access to a pre-Adamic, pre-“tohuw wa bohuw” earth. Let's take a look at Ezekiel 28.

When we get to verse 12, there is a shift.

Ez 28:12 “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 model of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty.

13 You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone adorned you: ruby, topaz and emerald, chrysolite, onyx and jasper, sapphire, turquoise and beryl. Your settings and mountings were made of gold; on the day you were created they were prepared.

14 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.

15 You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created till wickedness was found in you.

In this passage we have a prophecy against the “prince of Tyre” (Ez. 28:2). In verse 2 and again in verse 12 the term, “son of man” is addressing the prophet Ezekiel. God is saying, “Now, Ezekiel, I want you to say this to the prince of Tyre...” This evil ruler is about to face the wrath of God, and God wants Ezekiel to warn him (verses 2-11).

Now notice in verse 2 the message is for the “prince of Tyre,” but in verse 12 the warning is directed against the “king of Tyre.” What becomes obvious in verses 12-15 is that this is directed to the true ruler of Tyre, the one controlling the “prince of Tyre” and that person is Satan. Look at the description in these verses. This is obviously no normal man; the “king of Tyre” is an anointed cherub, a specific order of angelic beings, in fact a very high ranking order and a high ranking (anointed) member of that order. Yes, my beloved, this is a description of Lucifer, the anointed cherub, before the fall and before his name was changed to Satan. How do we know it is Lucifer before his fall and not after? Because of the glowing description expressed in superlatives and hyperbole. It is a rare glimpse in the Bible of an angelic being of the highest order in his original created form.

We will come back to this passage later in our study, but for now I want you to notice verse 13, “You were in Eden, the garden of God...” Lucifer, the anointed cherub, was in the “Eden, the Garden of God.” You say, “Of course he was, as the serpent.” Is this a serpent you see here? No. It is a picture of Lucifer before his fall, and it pictures him in “Eden, the Garden of God.” If this is before the fall of Lucifer, and I believe it is, then it is after Genesis 1:1, when the “perfect” earth was created and before the imperfect earth seen in Genesis 1:2.

We know from Job 38 that the angels were present at the creation of the heavens and the earth.

Job 38:4 “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?

The “morning stars and angels” are angelic beings, specifically the leadership (morning stars) and the “troops” (angels) are in view.

It would appear from this study that angels were created first (Job 38:4-7), then the heavens and the earth (Gen. 1:1), then Lucifer, the anointed cherub, walked in “Eden, the Garden of God” (Ez. 38:12-15), and then the earth became “tohuw wa bohuw” (Gen. 1:2) sometime after that. We will pick up here next lesson.