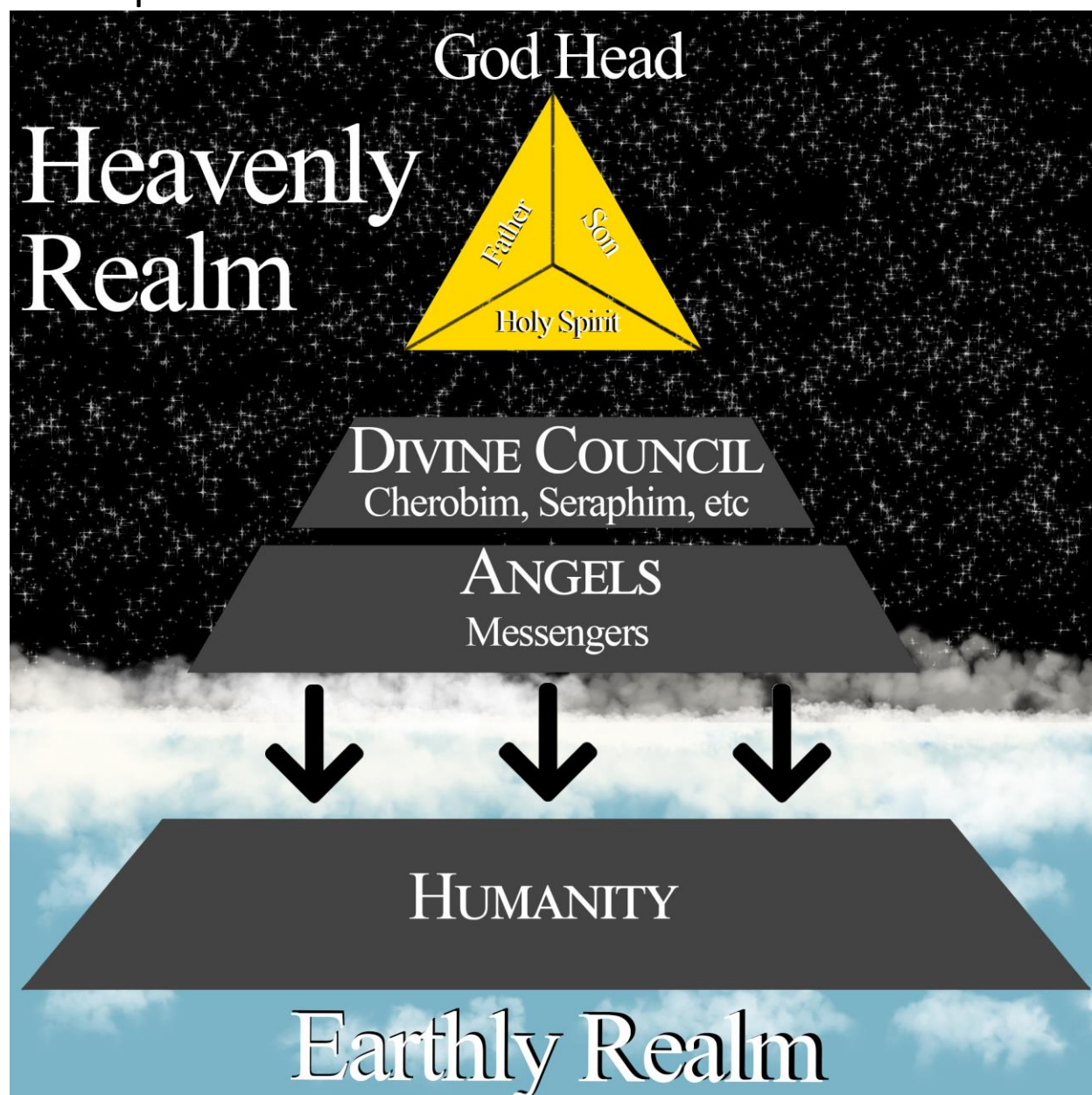


Lesson 3 – REBELLION FROM ON HIGH

Thus far we have defined the Divine council, its structure and how it works. We've also talked about how our purpose mirrors that of the divine council, showing us how we fit into God's overall plan for humanity and its redemption.



Today we will begin to see what went wrong and what that can teach us. We will see how free-will in the hands of imperfect beings can be disastrous, to say the least and why God chooses to allow it anyway. This begs two questions: **1) Why God would allow it?** and **2) Why God would give us and them free-will in the first place?**

Going back to last week again, we talked about our role as imagers, along with how this parallels the divine council and their role. This was the backdrop to God's statement in **Gen. 1:26, "Let us make man in our image."**

We share His authority and represent Him as co-rulers. On one hand, that sounds great! But, as we shall see, it has/ had terrible consequences. Possessing free-will is part of being like God – being an imager. If we didn't have it, we wouldn't be like Him. Concepts like self-sacrifice and love would die on the vine without free-will. If we are but automatons, if we are programmed to love, if there is no decision in it, is it truly love at all? I think not. Scripted words and deeds aren't the real deal. (Example: Stepford wives, anniversaries, Valentine's Day)

But free-will, like so many other things in this world, is a two-edged sword. Granting it to intelligent beings, imperfect beings at that, means they can and will make wrong choices. It means they can rebel. That – over any period of time is guaranteed to happen. God is the only truly perfect being. In fact, He is the only He can really trust. And this is why things could and did go wrong very early on, in Eden.

Trouble in Paradise

Let's take ourselves back to Eden. Adam and Eve are there and have been given the "dominion mandate." As we've seen, God is there along with His council. But at that time there was at least one dissenter among them. He wasn't happy with the status these humans now had. He didn't like the fact that they were to leave the garden and subdue the planet, spreading the life of Eden to the rest of the planet.

In Gen. 3:22, just after Adam and Eve sinned, God says, "Behold the mand has become like one of us, knowing good and evil." Notice the plurals. This is akin to what we saw in Gen. 1:26, ("our image.)

The main character in Gen. 3 is referred to as a serpent, but he wasn't a literal snake, though some have tried to make it seem so. They do this only because they are unaware of the ANE context. Trying to find latent or vestigial speech organs in a snake is going down the wrong track. It's actually an appeal to evolution.

The serpent, (**Heb. - "nachash", shining one**) was well known in the ANE. The nachash was seen as a divine being with a serpentine appearance. (X files stuff)
Revelation 12:9 identifies him as the Devil, Satan.

A Wrong Assumption

Some Christians have assumed that there was a great angelic rebellion shortly after the creation, based on Rev. 12: 7-12.

Rev. 12:7-12

7 And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, 8 but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer. 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.

10 Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, “Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down. 11 And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death. 12 Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and you who dwell in them! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea! For the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has a short time.”

But that war in Heaven is associated with the birth of the Messiah.

Rev. 12:1-5, 10

1 Now a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a garland of twelve stars. 2 Then being with child, she cried out in labor and in pain to give birth.

3 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. And

the dragon stood before the woman who was ready to give birth, to devour her Child as soon as it was born. 5 She bore a male Child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron. And her Child was caught up to God and His throne.

Revelation 12:10

10 Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, “Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down.

We have no indication in the Bible that prior to any the events in Eden, that any of His imagers, either human or divine were opposed to God’s plan. But something changed dramatically in Gen. 3.

What did the serpent do wrong? He freely chose to reject God’s authority. Once again, dominion was something of a family business. Adam and Eve had brought into the family business, so to speak. They would be the ones to extend Eden on earth. But Satan didn’t like this. So he put himself in the place of God. We have his thoughts recorded in Isa. 14:13.

Isaiah 14:13

13 For you have said in your heart:

‘I will ascend into heaven,

I will exalt my throne above the stars of God;

I will also sit on the mount of the congregation

On the farthest sides of the north;

Needless to say, things didn't quite go as he had planned. He was expelled from God's home, exiled from Eden, and banished to earth, "cut down or cast down" in biblical language, (**Ez. 28:14-16; Isa. 14:12**) the place where, because of him, death now reigns, and life is not everlasting. Instead of being lord of life, he became the lord of the dead. This meant that now he had claim over all humans since the fall in Eden resulted in loss of earthly immortality. **Humanity now needed to be redeemed in order to have eternal life with God in a new Eden.**

The results of the fall were a string of curses. The curse on the serpent was somewhat prophetic. **"I will put enmity/ hostility between your seed, (offspring) and her offspring."** Gen. 3:14,15

Who are Eve's offspring? Generally speaking – humanity. Specifically, Jesus.

Who were the seed/ off-spring of the serpent? John answers that for us in the NT.

Jesus, speaking to the Jewish leaders who opposed Him:

John 8:44

44 You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it.

In John 6:70, Jesus called Judas, who betrayed Him a devil.

The Devil's offspring is anyone who stands against God's plan as he (Satan) did.

THE BAD SEED GERMINATES

Shortly after Gen. 3 and the exile from the garden, one of Adam and Eve's children became a murderer. Cain killed Abel, showing that he was "of the evil one." **1 John 3:12**

**As the human race grew in population, so did evil.
(Gen.6:5)**

ANOTHER SUPERNATURAL TRANSGRESSION

Shortly after the Cain and Abel debacle, we have another supernatural transgression that expanded and accelerated wickedness on the earth.

Gen. 6:1-4

1 Now it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born to them,

2 that the sons of God saw the daughters of men, that they were beautiful; and they took wives for themselves of all whom they chose.

3 And the LORD said, "My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, for he is indeed flesh; yet his days shall be one hundred and twenty years." 4 There were giants on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of men and they bore children to them. Those were the mighty men who were of old, men of renown.

This is linked with what we read in Gen. 6:5.

Genesis 6:5

5 Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

The fallen sons of God fathered their own children (family) known as the Nephilim. This is mentioned only briefly in Genesis and then the narrative moves on without any explanation. Why? What it meant went without saying in the ANE context. But the NT writers clear it up for us.

Peter and Jude write about the angels who sinned before the flood.

2 Peter 2:4-6

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; 5 and did not spare the ancient world, but saved Noah, one of eight people, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood on the world of the ungodly; 6 and turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemned them to destruction, making them an example to those who afterward would live ungodly;

Jude 5-7

5 But I want to remind you, though you once knew this, that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed those who did not believe. 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; 7 as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities around them in a similar manner to these, having given themselves over to sexual immorality and gone after strange flesh, are set forth as an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.

They both say that the fallen sons of God are doing time under the earth until the last days. They'll be part of God's final judgment, what the Bible refers to as "the Day of the Lord." I believe this is what Paul was speaking of when he said that we would judge angels. (1 Cor. 6:3) Peter and Jude's sources, one of them being 1 Enoch, a book from the second temple period, (500 BC – 100 AD) state that these fallen council members wanted to "help" humanity by teaching them dark arts such as war and psychotropic herbalism, among other things and/ or they wanted to create their own imagers, imitating God and His plan. From these sources we also get an explanation of the origin of demons. They are the departed spirits of the Nephilim who died/ were killed prior to and during

the flood. They roam the earth harassing humans and seeking re-embodiment. Other OT books refer to the descendants of the Nephilim of Gen. 6:4 as Anakim and Rephaim (**Num. 13:32-33; Dt. 2:10,11**). Some of these Rephaim show up in the underworld of the dead (**Isa. 14:9-11**) where the serpent was cast down. Later, in the NT, writers call this place Hell. These verses show us that early Jewish writers understood the threat of Gen. 6:1-4. The fallen sons of God were attempting to reformulate Eden, where the divine and humanity co-existed. They presumed to know better than God and thereby attempted to hi-jack His plan by mirroring, in a malevolent way, God's ultimate plan. This just made a bad situation worse.

As Moses was leading the children of Israel to the Promised Land (cosmic Geography) and as Joshua was leading Israel into the conquest of the Promised Land, they began to encounter clans of giants. (**Dt. 2-3**) These giants were known by various names. In Numbers 13:32,33 they are called Anakim, where they are specifically referred to as living descendants of the Nephilim – the offspring of the fallen sons of God in Genesis 6. We are told elsewhere in the OT that Israel was still fighting the remnant of these giants as late as the time of David. **David killed Goliath (1 Sam. 17)** and

some of his men killed Goliath's brothers, ending the threat in 2 Sam. 21:15-22.

How does all this apply to us?

The prophetic curse on the serpent and the spread of evil along with the supernatural transgressions of God's order are the first salvos in what theologians call spiritual warfare – the battle between good and evil, the long war against God and His people. This war is fought on two different battlegrounds, two realms: the seen and the unseen.

Though these stories may seem strange, they teach us some important lessons.

- 1. God had divine competition when it comes to human destiny. And He still does.** This opposition is alive and well, both with mankind and the spiritual realm. But God has a plan.
- 2. Hostile interference and rebellion won't go unpunished.** God's plan won't be altered or overturned.
- 3. They also teach us that God is not the cause of evil.** While this war has its roots in God's decision to create imagers, both human and divine, He doesn't

cause the evil which comes from His creation. There is no evidence that God goaded His imagers to disobey or that their rebellion was predestined.

4. The fact that God knows the future doesn't mean it's predestined.

Example: 1 Sam. 23:1-14

- David saved the walled city of Keilah from the Philistines.
- Saul learned that David and his men were in the city.
- Saul was afraid that David was going to take his throne and sought occasion to kill David. He hoped to lay siege to Keilah and trap David within its walls.
- David heard about Saul's plan and prayed to God.

1 Sam. 23:10-13

10 Then David said, "O LORD God of Israel, Your servant has certainly heard that Saul seeks to come to Keilah to destroy the city for my sake. 11 Will the men of Keilah deliver me into his hand? Will Saul come down, as Your servant has heard? O LORD God of Israel, I pray, tell Your servant."

And the LORD said, "He will come down."

12 Then David said, "Will the men of Keilah deliver me and my men into the hand of Saul?"

And the LORD said, "They will deliver you."

13 So David and his men, about six hundred, arose and departed from Keilah and went wherever they could go. Then it was told Saul that David had escaped from Keilah; so he halted the expedition.

When David got his answer, he fled the city. This tells us that God's foreknowledge of events doesn't necessitate predestination.

In this passage we have God foreknowing two events that never took place. The first was that Saul would come down to kill David. The second was that the people would turn David over to Saul. Why don't they take place, even though God said that they would happen? Because David exercised his free-will armed with God's foreknowledge of what Saul WOULD do. David then fled the city, foiling Saul's plan.

That God foreknew there would be divine and human rebellion doesn't mean He made those things happen. Foreknowledge doesn't require predestination. (Georgia vs. KSU – a crude example)

And it is with this knowledge that we need to view the failure of Adam and Eve. God knew they would fail. He wasn't surprised. He knows all things, both real and

possible. But the fact that He could foresee rebellion in His imagers doesn't mean He caused it.

We should view the evil in our lives and in our present world in the same light. God foresaw the fall and had a plan to rectify the situation – to redeem the humanity and the world.

We sin because we choose to sin. We can't say God willed it or that we had no choice.

God also knew that we would be born sinners and that we would fail – and do so often.

Rom. 5:6-8

6 For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. 7 For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. 8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

He loves us despite the fact of His knowledge of our failures, past and present. That is grace! He not only gave us the freedom to choose rebellion or disobedience, but

He also gave us the freedom to believe the Gospel of the kingdom and live for Jesus. (Dominion Mandate)

God knows, as we know by experience, that bad things happen to everyone – even Christians. Evil is in the world because both divine beings and humans choose to do evil. God is just. He doesn't need to predestine evil in order to that people sin so as to be able to work out His plan. His plan will move forward whether evil is present or not.

So why doesn't God just eliminate evil? Good question. There's a good answer. **For God to eliminate evil, He would have to eliminate His imagers, both divine and human. They are the source of evil through their decisions.** His imagers aren't perfect, as He is.

But, while this would solve the problem of evil, it would require that God not have anyone created in His image. God is free and therefore so are His imagers. We must have that same freedom also. In choosing to give us freedom, God chose not to make us mindless robots. That's the only alternative to free-will. But since freedom is an attribute of God, without it we couldn't be imagers of God.

God loved the idea of humanity – His human family too much to do it any other way. And so, God had a plan to redeem humanity after evil entered His creation. He would renew His creation. He would renew Eden and wipe away every tear.

Revelation 7:17

17 for the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them and lead them to living fountains of waters. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.”

Revelation 21:4

4 And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.”

So, the long war against God is underway. But God has a battleplan. However, like most things under reconstruction, things will get worse before they get better.