

The Appeal Trial of Satan

The Basis for A Biblical Philosophy of Human History

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Introduction to Series

The fact that there is a strong interest (and occasional involvement) in human history on the part of angelic creation is a Scriptural fact that is without dispute. The following list includes just a few of the passages that document this fact.

Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth? Tell Me, if you have understanding. Who determined its measurements? Surely you know! Or who stretched the line upon it? To what were its foundations fastened? Or who laid its cornerstone, when the morning stars sang together, and all the **sons of God** [angels – see 1:6] shouted for joy? (Job 38:4-7) *The presence of angels is recorded at the creation of material things.*

For if the word **spoken through angels** proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward, how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation. (Hebrews 2:2-3a) *A reference to the Law having been delivered to Moses via angels (see Deuteronomy 33:2; Acts 7:38, 53; Galatians 3:19). Angels were present at the giving of the Law.*

Now this is the blessing with which Moses the man of God blessed the children of Israel before his death. And he said: "The Lord came from Sinai, and dawned on them from Seir; He shone forth from Mount Paran, and **He came with ten thousands of saints**; from His right hand came a fiery law for them. (Deuteronomy 33:1-2)

This is he who was in the congregation in the wilderness **with the angel** who spoke to him on Mount Sinai, and with our fathers, the one who received the living oracles to give to us, whom our fathers would not obey but rejected. And in their hearts they turned back to Egypt. (Acts 7:38-39)

What purpose then does the Law serve? It was added because of transgressions, till the Seed should come to whom the promise was made; and **it was appointed through angels** by the hand of a mediator. (Galatians 3:19)

And suddenly there was with the angel **a multitude of the heavenly host** praising God. (Luke 2:13) *Angels observed the birth of Jesus.*

Then the devil left Him and behold, **angels came and ministered to Him.** (Matthew 4:11) *Angels observed the temptation of Jesus and ministered to Him afterwards.*

And behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door and sat on it. His countenance was like lightning and his clothing as white as snow. And the guards shook for fear of him, and became like dead men. (Matthew 28:2-4) *Angels observed and were present at Jesus' resurrection.*

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And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven, as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel who also said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven." (Acts 1:10) *Angels observed and were present at the ascension of Jesus.*

When the Son of Man comes in His glory and **all the holy angels** with Him, then he will sit on the throne of His glory. (Matthew 25:31) *A description of the 2nd Advent of Christ – He is accompanied by angels. Compare this passage to the following passages that testify similarly.*

He answered and said to them: "He who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. The field is the world, the good seeds are the sons of the kingdom, but the tares are the sons of the wicked one. The enemy who sowed them is the devil, the harvest is the end of the age, and **the reapers are the angels.** (Matthew 13:37-39) *Angels are used by Jesus at His second advent to execute judgment.*

And **He will send His angels** with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. (Matthew 24:31) *Angels are used to gather the elect at the 2nd Advent of Jesus to deliver them into the glorious reign of Christ known as the Millennial or Messianic Kingdom.*

And to give you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven **with His mighty angels**, in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. (2 Thessalonians 1:7-8)

Also, I say to you, whoever confesses Me before men, him the Son of Man also will confess **before the angels** of God. But he who denies Me before men will be denied **before the angels** of God. (Luke 12:8-9)

Likewise, I say to you, there is joy **in the presence of the angels** of God over one sinner who repents. (Luke 15:10)

And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, **seen by angels**, preached among the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up in glory. (1 Timothy 3:16)

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 6)¹ *An allusion by Jude to the events of Genesis 6.*

¹ This passage must be understood in conjunction with the fallen angelic & human female copulation described in Genesis 6. Peter elaborates upon the Genesis 6 event in the following passage: For 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. (2 Peter 2:4) The angels who left their appointed domain (Jude 6) points to the fact that there were rules of engagement that God had set forth after the Fall of Satan. When Satan sinned, he convinced a third of the angelic realm to side with him (Rev 12:4). Evidently, their attempts to influence the affairs of man and human history could only go so far and did not include copulation with humans. As a result, these fallen angels were restricted from further involvement and placed in one of the compartments of Sheol (Hades) known as "tartarus." There are three compartments of Sheol: **1) "Tartarus"** This is the temporary prison of the angels that had sexual relations with women prior to the flood in Genesis 6 in violation of the rules of engagement designed by God to insure the preservation of human history until God's divine purpose is achieved (see 1 Pe 3:19-

Then a third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, "If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives his mark on his forehead or on his hand, he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out full strength into the cup of His indignation. He shall be tormented with fire and brimstone **in the presence of the holy angels** and in the presence of the Lamb. (Revelation 14:9-10)

All of these passages (and many others) attest to a keen interest in the affairs of human history on the part of the angelic realm. This fact raises an important question – "why?" Why are angels interested in the outcome of human history? Why would human history be such a focal point of attention and activity from such a superior creature as the angels? Why was a human, a lower creature, created after angels anyway?

What Is Meant By A Biblical Philosophy of Human History?

Believers and unbelievers throughout the course of time have asked some of the same questions. Where did we come from? Why are we here? And where are we going? Numerous attempts have been made to answer these questions and reconcile the answers to the questions. We call each of these attempts to address these questions in a harmonious manner a philosophy. Evolution is a philosophy of history that provides the underpinnings for other derivative philosophies of history and life, e.g. humanism. Covenant theology represents one biblical philosophy of history. Dispensationalism is yet another biblically based philosophy of history. Yet, these philosophies of history (in and of themselves and as most commonly understood) do not satisfactorily address the aforementioned questions. Something is still missing even in most of the biblically based philosophies of history – something that connects the dots and provides a cohesive and synthesizing effect.

The Appeal Trial of Satan – The Reason for Man's Creation²

Scripture does not provide us a specific reason for God's creation of the first creature nor of the universe.³ However, we know that all things were created for God's glory (Psa 19:1; Rom 1:20).

20; 2 Pe 2:4-5; Jude 6). **2) "Torments"** (from Luke 16:23). This is the abode of all unbelievers prior to their sentencing to the Lake of Fire at the Second Resurrection (see Matt 11:23; 16:18; Lu 10:15; 16:19-31; Re 20:13-14; Re 1:18; 6:8; 20:13-14). **3) "Paradise"** (from Luke 16:22). This is the abode of all Old Testament saints prior to their resurrection. Nothing is mentioned in the Bible regarding the resurrection of the Age of Gentile believers; however, it is likely that they are housed in paradise (a.k.a. Abraham's bosom) with Age of Israel believers from the time of their death until their disembodied souls and spirits were transported with Christ to heaven (see Lu 16:19-31; 23:43; Ac 2:27, 31). They will receive their resurrection bodies at the Second Advent. After Christ's resurrection, paradise is seen as in heaven (2 Co 12:1-4; Eph 4:8-10).

² I have found various components of the view I present in this series in the writings of each of these men even though I have not found a clearly articulated synthesis between God's essence and the concepts expressed herein within any of these men's writings to date. See Renald E. Showers, *What On Earth Is God Doing? Satan's Conflict With God* (Neptune, New Jersey: Loizeaux Brothers, Inc., 1973); Donald Grey Barnhouse, *The Invisible War* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1965); Lewis S. Chafer, *Satan, His Motives and Methods* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Kregel Publications, 1990); Stanley A. Ellisen, *Biography of a Great Planet* (Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 1975). In addition, see Lewis S. Chafer, *Systematic Theology* (Dallas, Texas: Dallas Seminary Press, 1947), Volume II, 78-81, 85, 100-101, 103-104, 108, 110, 120-121.

³ Although not supported by any specific Scripture, I believe that it would be a reasonable conclusion that God's initial acts of creation involving angels were at least in part for the purpose of manifesting the unified function of His attributes. By manifesting the unity of His attributes in His dealings

The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows his handiwork. (Psa 19:1)

For since the creation of the world, His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, because although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. (Romans 1:20-21)

In addition, Scripture does provide us with a reference to the creation and fall of the most magnificent creature to ever come from the hand of God, i.e. Lucifer. In **Ezekiel 28:11-19**, the magnificent nature of this creature is mentioned during a section of Scripture in which Ezekiel excoriates the king of Tyre for his arrogance and compares the king of Tyre to Satan as Ezekiel predicts the fall of the king of Tyre.⁴ In **Isaiah 14:12-17**, the basis for Lucifer's fall is described in a section of Scripture in which Isaiah denounces Babylon – the center of power and false religion during Isaiah's ministry to Israel.

Ezekiel 28:12b – Thus says the Lord God; you were the seal of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty.

(28:13) You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone was your covering: the sardius, topaz, and diamond, beryl, onyx, and jasper, sapphire, turquoise, and emerald with gold. *[Nine of the twelve stones worn by the high priest of Israel]* The workmanship of your timbrels and pipes was prepared for you on the day you were created.

(28:14) You were the anointed cherub who covers; I established you; you were on the holy mountain of God; you walked back and forth in the midst of fiery stones. *[Probably a reference to the "wall of fire" that surrounded the throne room of God and points to Satan's unfettered access to God's presence as the guardian cherub].*

(28:15) You were perfect in your ways from the day you were created, till iniquity was found in you.

with His creation, God is glorified. This reasoning has a logic that is supported by God's express purpose in creation, i.e. His own glorification, and it reconciles with God's purpose in creating man as a result of Lucifer's response to God's sentence at His fall (i.e. "how can a God of love sentence me to an eternal separation from Him?").

⁴ Ezekiel prophesied for a period of approximately 22 years (ca. 593 to 571 B.C.) surrounding the fall of Jerusalem in 586 B.C. and subsequent Babylonian captivity. Ezekiel lived as an exile in Babylon. Isaiah lived and ministered around the period of the Assyrian captivity – about 150 years prior to Ezekiel (740 to 681 B.C.). The immediate context for our Ezekiel passage is a series of oracles of judgment directed to all of Judah's surrounding Gentile nations and people-groups. Ezekiel spends the greatest amount of space denouncing Tyre (especially the king of Tyre) for arrogance. The immediate context of our Isaiah passage is a series of oracles of judgment that pronounced the fall of Babylon, the crown jewel of the Assyrian empire. Isaiah compares the fall of Babylon to the fall of Satan in eternity past. "Ezekiel in his prophetic vision stood on the threshold of angelic history and saw in *prospect* on to the end of Satan's career, whereas Isaiah in his prophetic vision stood at the end of this history and saw in *retrospect* what he records." See Lewis S. Chafer, *Systematic Theology* (Dallas, Texas: Dallas Seminary Press, 1947), Volume II, 46.

(28:16) By the abundance of your trading you became filled with violence within, and you sinned; therefore I cast you as a profane thing out of the mountain of God; and I destroyed you, O covering cherub, from the midst of the fiery stones.

(28:17) Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty; you corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendor; I cast you to the ground, I laid you before kings, that they might gaze at you.

(28:18) You defiled your sanctuaries by the multitude of your iniquities, by the iniquity of your trading; therefore I brought fire from your midst; it devoured you, and I turned you to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all who saw you.

(28:19) All who knew you among the peoples are astonished at you; you have become a horror, and shall be no more forever.

Isaiah 14:12 – How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground, you who weakened the nations!

(14:13) 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;*

(14:14) *I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.*'

(14:15) Yet you shall be brought down to Sheol, to the lowest depths of the Pit.

From these passages we have an understanding of the nature of Satan's fall at a point in eternity past as well as the judgment that was pronounced upon him at the time of his fall. Obviously, the execution of his sentence is future since he has not yet been cast into the Lake of Fire (Rev 20:10).⁵ The delay between the pronouncement of the sentence and the execution of

⁵ Several passages either relate to or establish the fact that Satan's sin (fall) in eternity past did not immediately result in him no longer having access to heaven, thus they establish the fact that there has been a delay between the pronouncement of the sentence and the execution of the sentence.

By the abundance of your trade you were internally filled with violence, and you sinned; therefore I have cast you as profane from the mountain of God. And I have destroyed you, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire. (Ezek. 28:16) [Note: This is a prediction of judgment and does not teach that Satan was cast out of heaven at the time of his sin.]

How you have fallen from heaven, O star of the morning, son of the dawn! You have been cut down to the earth, you who have weakened the nations! (Isaiah 14:12) [Note: This is a description of the final judgment of Satan at the end of his career.]

Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came among them. (Job 1:6) [Note: This passage discloses the fact that Satan still has access to heaven even after his "fall" in eternity past.]

Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded permission to sift you like wheat. (Luke 22:31) [Note: This passage also substantiates Satan's access to heaven.]

the sentence is the span of time equal to human history. This fact establishes the relationship between the angelic conflict and human history.

Evidently, Satan appealed his sentence. Satan's position as the "anointed cherub that covereth" (Ezek. 28:14) demanded that God conduct a trial with all of the heavenly host in attendance. God was the judge and the prosecution; Satan was the defense. What was Satan's appeal argument? What case could he possibly construct to legitimately question the verdict of a perfectly just, omnipotent, omniscient, and righteous God? Why would God even consider entertaining an appeal from a creature of His?

We can speculate regarding the content of Satan's argument from a common objection that is voiced today by many. That argument follows this line of reasoning: "How can a God of love cast any of His creatures into an eternal place of torment?" Such a question in the presence of all of the heavenly hosts had to be substantiated with incontrovertible evidence. After human history has run its course and the decisions of billions of humans have been made, the integrated and cohesive function of God's attributes will have been demonstrated. In addition, a lower creature, man, will have vindicated the integrity of God's essence every time the lower creature responds positively to God's requirements. From the conclusion of the Great White Judgment Throne throughout all of eternity, human history will serve as permanent evidence of the integrity of God's essence. In their observation of humans, angels will witness proof after proof of Satan's own culpability and proof after proof of God's perfect justice (Job 1:6; 2:1-3; Luke 15:7, 10; 1 Cor. 4:9; 11:10; Eph. 3:10; 1 Tim. 3:16; 5:21).

War has been declared. The great, governing cherub had become the malignant enemy. Our God was neither surprised nor astonished, for, of course, He knew before it happened that it would happen, and He had His perfect plan ready to be put into effect. Although the Lord had the power to destroy Satan with a breath, He did not do so. It was as though an edict had been proclaimed in heaven: "We shall give this rebellion a thorough trial. We shall permit it to run its full course. The universe shall see what a creature, though he be the highest creature ever to spring from God's Word, can do apart from Him. We shall watch this experiment, and permit the universe of creatures to watch it, during this brief interlude between eternity past and eternity future called time. In it the spirit of independence shall be

Put on the full armor of God, that you may be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. (Eph. 6:11)

Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. (1 Peter 5:8)

And to the angel of the church in Pergamum write: The One who has the sharp two-edged sword says this: I know where you dwell, where Satan's throne is; and you hold fast My name, and did not deny My faith, even in the days of Antipas, My witness, My faithful one, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells. (Rev. 2:12-13) *[Note: These passages establish the fact that Satan has free access to earth and heaven.]*

And there was war in heaven, Michael and his angels waging war with the dragon. And the dragon and his angels waged war, and they were not strong enough, and there was no longer a place found for them in heaven. And 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. (Rev. 12:7-9) *[Note: This is the first reference to Satan actually being banished from heaven. Satan is evidently to be cast out of heaven during the middle of the Tribulation period to initiate what is known as the "great Tribulation". One thousand, two hundred and sixty days in verse 6 is equal to three and one half years.]*

allowed to expand to the utmost. And the wreck and ruin which shall result will demonstrate to the universe, and forever, that there is no life, no joy, no peace apart from a complete dependence upon the Most High God, Possessor of heaven and earth.”⁶

Why Satan is thus allowed to continue his reign is perhaps but partly revealed. The real Church which is the Bride of Christ, is to sit with Him upon His throne (Rev. 3:21; 1 Cor. 6:2, 3; Matt. 19:28), and the present age [*the Church Age*] must continue until that glorious heavenly people are gathered out from the world [*Rapture of Church Age believers to rule and reign with Christ during the Millennial Kingdom*]. Again, it seems the course of God’s purpose to make a sufficient and final trial of every claim of His adversaries; and when this age, with all its developments, shall have passed by, every mouth will be stopped, and the whole world and Satan will know their own failure and sin before God. They will stand self-condemned, and nothing could accomplish this but the testing, by actual trial, of all the self-sufficient claims of Satan and man.⁷ [*Italics and bold are mine*]

God responded to Satan’s objections by creating a creature lower than Satan or the angels with the desire of providing evidentiary material in Satan’s appeal trial. That evidentiary material consists of the obedient acts of a lower creature, i.e. man, combined with the unified function of God’s essence attributes in dealing with the lower creature. If the lower creature with less intimate knowledge of God than Lucifer had at his disposal can make decisions consistent with the will of God, then certainly Lucifer had an even greater capacity to do so.

God, in the rebuttal phase of this trial, has presented incredible evidence of the integrity and unified function of His attributes. God’s perfect love was manifest in His sinless Son’s undeserving death on the Cross in total satisfaction of God’s righteousness and justice. Satan had desperately attempted but failed to prevent the 1st Advent of Christ. These Satanic attempts to thwart God’s plan and prevent Christ from coming to offer the kingdom of God began with the fall of Adam and manifested themselves in many ways up to the death of Christ.⁸

⁶ Barnhouse, *The Invisible War*, 51.

⁷ Chafer, *Satan: His Motives and Methods*, 24.

⁸ Examples include: 1) the motivation of Cain to murder Abel thus hoping that the human race would quickly eliminate itself; 2) fallen angelic infiltration of the human race prior to the flood in Gen. 6; 3) the attempt to annihilate the nation of Israel (and the Jews) through the Pharaoh of Egypt; 4) destruction of the nation of Israel via apostasy and amalgamation into the surrounding cultures during the period of the Judges and Kings; 5) attempts to exterminate the Jews through the evil plans of Haman, prime minister of Persia; 6) inspiration of Herod to kill the infant Jesus; 7) influence via “religion” upon the Jewish leadership to reject Christ as the Messiah; 8) plus many other examples too numerous to mention here.