

BIBLE COURSE LESSON 14

ANGELS

GOD is the Creator. God has existed from eternity WHO and WHAT God is we learned in the last lesson. In John 1:1 we read: "in the beginning was the WORD..... that is, the Person called the Word. He is the Spokesman. "And the Word was with God..... God, then, is another Person. There are actually two divine Beings revealed in John 1:1. But notice further: "And the Word was God." The Word also is God and "all things were made by him..." (verse 3). In the Word was LIFE (verse 4). These verses in John 1 speak of none other than the two eternal members of the GOD KINGDOM. There is "God" who became the Father, and the "word" who became Jesus. They have life inherent. And they lived with each other. How did they live? The way of LOVE! God loved the Word. He said of the Word after He became Jesus the Christ: "My beloved Son..." And the son loved and obeyed the Father. This love-this WAY OF LIFE was the attitude that guided what they both did.

THE CREATION OF ANGELS

What did the God Family do? What is their occupation? God is CREATOR. But even before creating the physical universe, God first created angels.

As both members of the God Family have eternal LIFE inherent within themselves, so the Word imparted life to the angels when He created them. They have life inherent - self-contained eternal life. The angels served at the throne of God in heaven. Two of these were cherubs of high rank. And as such, their wings spread over God's throne (Ex. 25:18-20). One of them was Lucifer (Ezek. 28:14).

Later, the Word created the earth at the same time as the rest of the universe (Gen. 1:1; 2:4).

GOD'S LAW OF LOVE

All government is based on a foundational law or constitution. And the constitution or basic law of God's government is the Law of God-the way of life by which the two members of the God Family live! God's government is simply the administration of God's way of life. God's Law can be summed up in the one word love (Rom. 13:10). This is because God's very nature is LOVE (1 John 4:16), and God's Law reflects His loving character. And so the government of God is the application of the principal of love. The love of God is out-flowing toward others. God is concerned about the good and the welfare of others. God's love is the attitude of cooperation, serving, helping.

God has always loved the Word and the Word has always loved God. The Father, as we have noted,

said of the Word when He became Christ, "This is my beloved son" (Matthew. 3:17). The Son loves and obeys the Father who has always been in charge (John 8:28-29; 15:1 0). The two have lived in harmony from eternity (John 10:30). The LOVE they have for each other-this WAY OF LIFE-is the attitude motivating everything the God Family does.

LUCIFER REJECTS GOD'S LAW

The Law of God applies in principle to angels the same as to man. The principle underlying God's Law remains the same-love toward God and love toward one another. The Bible clearly tells us that the angels abandoned the way of love and sinned (2 Pet.2:4). Sin is the transgression of God's Law of love-the way of peace, cooperation and harmony-the way of giving as opposed to the way of getting. And so, because of his sin, Satan will be destroyed-that is death! Lucifer allowed VANITY to lead him into the attitudes of coveting, envy, jealousy, competition. He began to live the way of "get" instead of God's way of "give." So Lucifer rejected God and His Law of love. Lucifer finally organized a third of God's angels into an army and ascended to heaven in an attempt to "take" rule of the universe away from God. But they were repelled and cast back to earth. As a result, the earth became "without form and void" (Gen. 1:2).

It became a darkened, ruined planet!

Let's learn the full story of what happened and the steps God is taking to restore His government-His way of life- to the entire earth and eventually to the entire universe. Then we'll see what the righteous angels are doing today and how we can be protected from the wiles of the Devil and his demons.

But before we begin this important study, get your Bible so you can turn to all the scriptures given in answer to the questions in this lesson. You will also find it very profitable to copy these verses into a notebook. This will not only enable you to review your studies at any time in the future, it will also help make these scriptures become a part of your very being. Now let's begin this lesson!

LUCIFER REBELS AGAINST GOD'S GOVERNMENT

This archangel's original name in Hebrew meant "Light-Bringer"-"Lucifer" was his name in Latin. Lucifer was an awesome spirit being of majestic beauty, dazzling brightness, great knowledge, power, intellect and wisdom. But Lucifer sinned!

Two passages in Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28-tell us of Lucifer's original created state and his great sin.

1. Was Lucifer one of the anointed cherubs who covered God's throne? Ezek.28:14.

Comment: Lucifer, then, had been stationed at the very throne of God (Ezek. 28:14).

2. Did the former Lucifer decide to in an attempt to exalt his throne above all the angels ("stars") of

God? Ezek. 28:13; Isaiah. 14:12-14.

3. Did Lucifer actually want to be like the Most High God? Isaiah. 14:14.

comment: It is apparent that Lucifer had nothing less in mind than knocking the Creator God off His throne and becoming the Supreme Ruler himself !

Here was the supreme masterpiece of God's creative power, as an individually created being, turning on his own Creator-as a Frankenstein monster attempting to destroy its own maker-in an attempt to assume all power to rule the vast universe!

His would not have been a government based on the principles of God's love-but rather based on competition, self-centeredness, vanity, lust and greed; on envy, jealousy, hatred, violence and destruction; on spiritual darkness and error, instead of light and truth; on ugliness instead of beauty.

4. Lucifer, the archangel, was perfect in all his ways from the time of his creation until something happened to him. What was found in him? Ezek. 28:15. Did he become vain? Did he corrupt his wisdom? Verse 17.

Comment: When Lucifer began thinking thoughts of competition, vanity, envy, lust and greed, then thoughts of resentment and rebellion, his ability to think rationally changed. His mind became perverted, distorted, twisted. His thinking became totally warped!

Lucifer wanted to rule the universe! He said, "I will exalt my throne above the stars [angels] of God....(Isaiah. 14:13). Thus Lucifer became the first rebel-the first sinner! Lucifer subtly, perhaps very, very gradually, subverted the angels over whom God had placed him until he succeeded in turning their minds to rebellion. Lucifer made the angels feel dissatisfied and wronged by God, injecting resentment and bitterness into their minds.

5. What happened to Lucifer's and his angels' attempt to wrest control of the universe from their Creator? Isaiah. 14:12; Rev. 12:3-4. How did Jesus describe Satan's fall from heaven? Luke 10:18.

Comment: Lucifer deliberately became his Maker's adversary That was his choice, not God's-yet God allowed it! And so God changed his name to what he became-SATAN, which means adversary, competitor, enemy and the angels who were cast down to the earth with him became known as demons.

EARTH BECOMES A RUINED PLANET!

God's Law is the basis of God's government. And as we learned in our previous studies, SIN is the transgression of God's Law (I John 3:4). We also learned that sin carries penalties. Notice what was the cataclysmic effect of the sin of angels.

1. Does the Bible plainly state that angels sinned? 2 Pet. 2:4.

Comment: Can you imagine angels becoming sinning angels? Yet that is what God reveals. And since sin is the transgression of God's Law, these angels transgressed-rebelled-against GOD'S LAW of LOVE-God's way of life!

2. Does the Bible clearly show that worldwide sin brings worldwide destruction? 2 Pet. 2:5-6; Gen. 6:5-13.

Comment: These verses in Genesis 6:5-13 show that worldwide human sin brought worldwide destruction to the earth's surface! All flesh worldwide had sinned. Only Noah found grace and forgiveness in God's sight. Only Noah "walked with God." So the Flood destroyed all human life on earth, except for Noah and his family.

Later, homosexuality and other sins of Sodom and Gomorrah spread over the entire territory of those two cities. And so physical, fiery destruction came from God to the entire area and destroyed everything. The sin of the angels, which occurred before man was created, unlike that of human sin was universal! Therefore the effect of their sin upon the universe brought chaos throughout the creation!

3. How does the Bible describe the extreme cataclysmic conditions on the earth that resulted from the angels' sin? Gen. 1:2. (Review in Lesson 13 the conditions on earth brought about by Lucifer's rebellion. Lesson 13 explains the meaning of the Hebrew words tohu and bohu, which are translated "without form, and void" in Genesis 1:2).

Comment: By now you might be wondering if God knew, in advance, that Lucifer and the angels under him would sin and cause this universal destruction. After all, doesn't God know everything? The answer is NO! If God were to decide to know in advance what choice they would make, He would have had to "program" their minds to do so and thus force them to make it. Instead, God gave these spirit beings, as He also gives all human beings, the power to think for themselves-to reason, to choose, to make decisions. Otherwise they, and we, would be mere automated robots doing what we were preset or made to do!

God chose to make angels, and later humans, free moral agents-capable of free choice. Otherwise neither angels nor humans could develop righteous character. God bestowed upon angels minds of their own possessing great knowledge-superior to that possessed by man. One might suppose that, endowed with such great knowledge, they would never choose, wrongly, or commit sin. Yet a third of all the angels did transgress! Their great knowledge did not prevent rebellion, sin and universal chaos and destruction. They turned from God's way of life to vanity, lust and greed, jealousy and envy, competition leading to strife, violence, war. They came to resent God's rule over them. They chose to follow their own way-the way of "get"-and rejected God's way-the way of "give". Thus by this deliberate choice they formed within themselves evil character.

But God did not leave planet earth in a state of decay and ruin after Lucifer's rebellion. God set about to restore the earth so it could support human life-the next step in His plan-as described in Genesis

chapter one.

A SUCCESSOR HAD TO QUALIFY

The very fact that Satan was in the Garden of Eden to tempt the first humans-that he is even now "the god of this world" (2 Corinthians. 4:4) and "the prince of the power of the air" (Eph. 2:2) who had "all the kingdoms of the world" to give to Christ (Matt. 4:8). But, notice what Jesus said to Satan, "You shall worship the Lord your God and Him shall you serve"! (Verse 10) In other words, Jesus was telling Satan, " I AM your Lord God"! Therefore you should worship me! (Remember that It was Jesus who had created all things!) John 1:1-3.

When Lucifer turned to rebellion and a third of the angels followed him, it became obvious that only the two members of the God Family would not and could not sin.

The next step for God was to begin reproducing Himself through human beings who would, once BORN of God's Spirit as very members of His divine Family, never sin or deviate from God's government.

The incident of the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden tells the story. It is extremely important that we understand what really happened!

WHY FIRST ADAM FAILED TO QUALIFY

1. What kinds of trees did God cause to grow in the Garden of Eden? Gen. 2:8-9. And what specific command did He give Adam regarding these trees? Verses 15-17.
2. What would happen to Adam if he ate the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil? Verse 17.

Comment: The tree of "life" and the tree of the "knowledge of good and evil" have tremendous significance for us today. These were literal trees, but they were also symbolic. The tree of life represented the Holy Spirit of God and eternal LIFE. It also represented the way of God's government, which is the spiritual Law of God. Thus by partaking of its fruit, revealed spiritual knowledge could be received and understood. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil represented the way of the Devil-the way of rebellion against God's government, the way of deciding for oneself right from wrong. It pictured sin and its penalty which for man is eternal DEATH (Rom. 6:23). It should be stressed here that to sin against God's spiritual law is death! And that applies to anyone, including the devil and his demons! Don't you think that the devil and his demons have earned their wages of sin? YES! Let's really understand. Adam was made from the ground and given a temporary, physical existence. He did not have eternal LIFE inherent within himself. Like a wound-up clock running down, he was in the process of aging with every breath he took. At any time he was, as we might say, "only one breath away from death"-cessation of existence. God therefore offered Adam the tree of

"life," which represented God's Holy Spirit and eternal LIFE. Had Adam and Eve partaken of its fruit, they would have received God's Spirit and been begotten of Him.

God does not impart immortality instantaneously. One is first begotten-impregnated by the spiritual life of God- and thus becomes an "heir" to eternal LIFE, as explained in Lesson 8. God's Spirit also would have given Adam and Eve access to God's mind-His love, faith and power, which lead to eternal LIFE! The Holy Spirit would have provided the strength to perfect the very character of God in them, and finally change their mortal bodies into spirit-born members of the God Family !

God's Spirit would have also imparted spiritual knowledge, understanding and wisdom to Adam and Eve. It would have revealed an understanding of the spiritual Law of God the way of life that leads to peace, happiness, contentment, success in life, cooperation and mutual concern for fellowman. There are, broadly speaking, two ways of living-exemplified by the two trees in Eden. The one is out-flowing LOVE. We term this for brevity and simplicity, the way of "give." The other, the way of "get." They are the two divergent ways of life, leading in opposite directions, producing opposite effects!

3. But did the wily Satan cleverly delude Eve into disbelieving God and disobeying His command? Gen. 3:1-7. Did the Devil lie by promising her that she had an immortal soul in a material body and would not die? Gen. 3:4. And did Satan subtly imply that God was hiding certain vital knowledge" from her which she ought to have? Verses 5-6 (Notice the words "make one wise" in verse 6.) Did Adam deliberately eat of the forbidden fruit? Verse 6.

Comment: Notice the wording of verse 4, this should read as, "In dying you shall not surely die"! Satan knew that Eve and Adam would die but not immediately! It would take time for them to eventually die as they would grow old and then return to the dust of the earth! (See verse 19)

4. Was Adam deceived into disbelieving God, or did he really know better? I Tim. 2:14. Did he nevertheless choose the way of disobedience to God by partaking of the forbidden fruit with his wife? Gen. 3:6.

Comment: On the first Sabbath day, the God who created the first humans and who later became Jesus Christ instructed Adam and Eve in God's way-the way of God based on the Law of God-just as Lucifer and his angels had been instructed in the way of God's government after their creation.

Soon afterward, Satan subtly deceived Eve into disbelieving what God had taught. She took of the forbidden fruit and gave some to Adam. By taking that fruit Adam chose to disobey God's command and thus rejected God's government over them. When Adam took the forbidden fruit, he took to himself the authority to determine the spiritual knowledge of good and evil. He appropriated the prerogative of deciding what is good and evil-what is right and wrong-what is righteousness and what is sin. But Adam didn't have this ability of himself.

Adam rejected revealed spiritual knowledge from God. He made the choice that limited him to knowledge of the physical and material. He rejected the spiritual knowledge that would have

produced a happy relationship with God and with fellowman. He rejected God's Holy Spirit, God's love, God's government and eternal LIFE' He disobeyed the explicit command of his Maker. Adam SINNED and brought the penalty of sin upon himself and all his descendants! (Rom. 5:12-19; 6:23).

5. What happened to the minds of Adam and Eve after they chose to follow the way of Satan? Gen. 3:7.

Comment: The eyes of both of them were "opened". The Devil's attitude of rebellion entered Adam's mind when he took the forbidden fruit. Satan, who is a spirit, imparted to both their minds the attitudes of vanity, of selfishness, of "get," of resentment of authority. Those characteristics we call "human nature"-the carnal mind described in Jeremiah 17:9 and Romans 8:7.

6. Were Adam and Eve denied further access to the tree of LIFE and God's Holy Spirit? Gen. 3:22-24.

Comment: When Adam sinned, he cut himself off from God (Isaiah. 59:2). And God cut him and his descendants off from access to the tree of LIFE. The human family was cut off from the Holy Spirit. Man, until the second Adam came, had no access to the Holy Spirit, except for a special few whom God individually called.

SECOND ADAM QUALIFIES TO RULE

1. Who is the "second Adam" spoken of in the Bible? I Corinthians. 15:45-47.

2. Did Christ make the Holy Spirit and eternal LIFE available again? I Corinthians. 15:22, John 1:4; 10: 10; 7:37-39; 1 John 5:11-12. But since Jesus' first coming, is it only those whom God the Father calls who may receive His Spirit and become one of His "first-fruits"? John 6:44; Jas. 1:18.

Comment: Mankind since Adam was not offered eternal LIFE until Christ, the second Adam, established His Church and began offering LIFE to those first-fruits the Father would call before Jesus' Second Coming. Some of you, like Adam, are being offered LIFE today! And you have to choose.

We all have Satan's evil influence to contend with, so it is not easy to overcome now. But God helps us to obey Him through the power of His Spirit. Those who demonstrate that they want to follow God's way of LIFE will be His "first-fruits"-the first to have LIFE and a leadership role in God's ruling Family forever!

3. Before Jesus' human birth, did God reveal that Jesus was to become a ruler and be given a throne? Luke 1:30-33. Will there be not only no end to his government, but no end to the increase of His government? Verse 33; Isa. 9:6-7.

4. After Adam failed to replace Satan as the ruler of this world, did God reveal that a future descendant of mother Eve would conquer Satan? Gen. 3:14-15.

Comment: This prophecy actually foretold the birth of the second Adam who would overcome Satan-that Jesus Christ would succeed in qualifying to replace Satan ("bruise" the serpent's head) and restore the government of God on earth!

5. How did the second Adam qualify to replace Satan as ruler of this world? Matthew. 4:1 -11.

Comment: Before Jesus could replace Satan as world ruler, He had to be subjected to the supreme test to prove He would faithfully administer the government of God. As God had allowed Satan to test Adam, He now allowed him to test Jesus, but only after Jesus had fasted 40 days and nights. While experiencing extreme hunger, Jesus quoted and obeyed Scripture three times in resisting the Devil-He OBEYED GOD! Jesus proved that He was loyal and faithful to God and that nothing could move Him to defy His Father! Jesus thus qualified to replace Satan as world ruler-to administer God's government over all nations.

6. After qualifying to replace Satan and to become King over the entire earth, and after His resurrection to His former glorified state, Jesus returned to heaven (Acts 1:9-11). Until when is Jesus scheduled to remain in heaven? Acts 3:20-21.

Comment: The government of God, will be restored at Christ's Second Coming. Jesus Christ is coming to restore God's government over all nations-one supreme, divine government which will bring the world a "utopia" of lasting peace, prosperity and the knowledge of God's greater master plan for all mankind!

6,000 YEARS OF SATAN'S RULE

The CAUSE of all troubles in the world today originated in the incident of the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden! Adam, in choosing the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, chose to "go it alone" without God. As a result he got himself and his offspring into a world of trouble. Mankind has been suffering the results of that wrong decision ever since! When Adam partook of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, he rejected God's way of life. He chose instead the "get" way of Satan. God therefore set aside the first six millennial "days" of human history for a testimony to the fruits of following Satan's way of life.

What we have had, therefore, is a world of MAN'S making, with the chief architect being none other than the invisible "prince of the power of the air" (Eph. 2:2)-the real "god" of this present evil world (2 Corinthians. 4:4)-Satan. After the sin of Adam and Eve, God adopted a "hands-off" policy toward the world as a whole. We now have had almost 6,000 years during which humanity has been cut off from God. During this time humanity has been under the invisible and unrealized sway of Satan the Devil. Human beings have been trying to organize their own societies, their own governments and their own religions according to the way that seems right to man, but which has led to DEATH! (Proverbs. 14:12). During this period God has not attempted to save the world spiritually (Heb. 9:27). All who have lived and died without understanding the truth of God will yet come into future judgment, in a

resurrection to physical life at the end of the 1,000-year rule of Jesus Christ on earth. Only Abel, Enoch and Noah are recorded as having turned to God's way during the first 1,900 or so years. After the Flood Abraham obeyed, believed and relied on God. But God never promised spiritual salvation to the nation of Israel in the days of Moses. If they would obey His government, God promised them national wealth, greatness, and power, but not eternal LIFE. (This will be thoroughly explained in a coming lesson).

Through all these millennia only the prophets and a few others were given God's Spirit-and they only to carry out special assignments from God (see Jeremiah 7 for an example). Then came Jesus proclaiming the same knowledge He revealed to Adam and Eve. But the people did not believe Him. Many believed on Him, but did not believe Him!

And so, as we learned in Lesson 1 about the 7,000-year "week" of time God allotted for human history, God turned over to Satan six 1,000-year "days" in which to demonstrate the falsity and utter futility of his "get" way. As a result this entire world's civilization has become mentally, morally and spiritually sick, and has been making progress in reverse. It has become decadent and is now bringing about its own destruction! The terrible state of this present evil world is the end result of past and present living by Satan's way of "get" instead of God's way of "give," and is traceable back to the decision of our first parents, Adam and Eve!

So God has permitted Satan to exercise dominion over the earth for nearly 6,000 years. "Six days," God said in effect to Satan, "shall thou labour and do all thy work' -in this case Satan's work of deception and hostility toward God-"but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD thy God; in it you shall not do any work' (Ex. 20:9-10). Thank God we are near the end of the six working days allotted to Satan's dominion. God's thousand-year "Sabbath day" is about to dawn!

UTOPIA AFTER SATAN'S REMOVAL!

At the return of Jesus Christ, Satan, the arch-deceiver who was responsible for the sufferings of this world and for bringing mankind to the brink of annihilation, will be totally restrained from deceiving the world for 1,000 years (Rev. 20:1-3).

War shall then be outlawed and abolished. The coming Kingdom of God will restore the laws and rule of God to the entire earth. And it will bring about a new civilization based on GOD'S way of life that will result in world peace (review Lesson 4). People will find security and happiness. Fears and worries will disappear. Sickness and disease will be eradicated. Idleness and laziness will disappear as people find purpose in and experience accomplishment from gainful employment. Families will live together not just out of a sense of duty, but in warmth, happiness and harmony. Broken homes and divorce will be a thing of the past. In this joyous world tomorrow, the whole earth will break forth in singing, dancing and rejoicing! People will learn what abundant living really is. And it is then that God will set His hand to save the world as the millions are taught the way to eternal LIFE!

Now that we have compared 6,000 years of Satan's rule to Christ's 1,000-year rule over the earth, what about the angels who long ago chose to remain obedient to God? What are they doing today?

ROLE OF RIGHTEOUS ANGELS TODAY

The Bible indicates that two-thirds of the angels remained loyal to God. These countless millions of created beings are His servants in helping to carry out His plan for mankind, as well as performing other responsibilities. Let's see what God's Word tells us about them.

1. In the Bible are described various types of angels whose appearance and function differ. Are there cherubim at God's throne? Ps. 99:1. And seraphim? Isaiah. 6:1-2. Are there other angelic creatures and "elders" surrounding God's throne? Rev. 4:2-11.

Comment: Cherubim are associated with God's throne, either transporting it about or carrying out important directives from that throne, such as guarding the tree of life after Adam and Eve sinned (Gen. 3:24). Recall that before his rebellion, Lucifer, was an "anointed cherub" (Ezek. 28:14). The best description of cherubim is found in the book of Ezekiel. In chapters one, nine and ten, we read of cherubim transporting God's throne. They are large, powerful, four-faced creatures with four wings.

The seraphim, which are said to be above the throne, seem to bear a general resemblance to humans, but are described as having six wings. The four "beasts" (or better translated "living creatures") of Revelation 4:6-8 appear to have the combined features of cherubim and seraphim. No description of the 24 elders is given in the Bible except that they are dressed in white clothing, each having a golden crown on his head.

2. Does God also have angels who continually walk through the earth to observe and report to Him conditions in the world? Rev. 5:6; Zech. 4:10; 2 Chronicles. 16:9. Are there other untold millions of angels serving God at His universe-ruling throne in heaven? Dan. 7:9-10. 3. In Hebrews chapters one and two, the Apostle Paul speaks about the difference between man and angels. Are we plainly told that "the world to come"-the Millennium and thereafter-will not be ruled by angels? Heb. 2:5. But if we become the Spirit-born children of God, are we promised ruler-ship over angels? Heb. 2:6-8; 1 Corinthians. 6:2-3.

Comment: God inspired Paul to point out that man has been made a little lower than the angels for now, but will in the future be placed OVER God's "works"-all His creation, including angels!

4. What, besides composition, accounts for the tremendous difference between angels and man? Heb. 1:5, 13.

Comment: Man, now lower than angels, has a destiny for greater! Neither animal, nor angel, nor any other creature, except man, was created to be literally begotten by God's Spirit, ultimately to be BORN

into the divine GOD FAMILY!

Angels were not, and never can be, begotten and BORN of God! No angel can ever become a literal member of the DIVINE FAMILY OF GOD!

5. What, specifically, is God's purpose for His angels? Heb. 1:7, 14. Are Spirit-begotten Christians the "heirs" Paul is talking about? Rom. 8:16-17; Gal. 3:26-29; 4:6-7.

Comment: Angels, higher than man is now, were created to be God's servants, messengers and representatives in the administration of His universal ruling government. Now, in relation to man, angels are commissioned to minister to and serve the Spirit-begotten children of God, who are His spiritual heirs. To illustrate the primary activity of God's angels today, we might consider the status of the young son of a wealthy man. While still a child, he may be under the care of an adult servant or guardian designated by his father. The servant is older, further advanced in knowledge, much more developed physically and mentally-but has much less potential. For when the son is mature, he will inherit his father's, wealth and power. Therefore the servant, older and more mature, is only a servant "ministering" to the young "heir." Likewise, angels are ministering to Spirit-begotten humans today.

6. Has God specifically assigned certain angels to look after His begotten children? Acts 12:15; Matt. 18:10.

7. Are angels powerful? 2 Pet.2:11. Do the angels of God keep close to His obedient children to protect them from accidents, calamities, plagues and other evils? Ps. 34:7; 91:1-12.

Comment: God's ministering spirits are assigned to help His heirs along the road to eternal life-to save them from premature death, accidents and to protect them from the Devil and his demons.

8. Do God's holy angels have the power to sometimes manifest themselves in order to carry out their duties? Dan. 9:21; Heb. 13:2. Also read all of Genesis chapter 18 and verses 1 to 22 of chapter 19.

Comment: Angels are also messengers. (The Hebrew and Greek words for angel also mean "messenger.") They appeared to Abraham, Lot, Hagar, Moses, Gideon and many of God's prophets and apostles. When God's angels manifest themselves to human beings, they look like ordinary men. Paul points out in Hebrews 13:2 that they sometimes travel incognito on God's business, not revealing who they are. But righteous angels never capriciously appear and disappear merely to amuse either themselves or men.

9. Why did the prophet Elisha ask God to open the eyes of his servant? 2 Kings 6:15-17.

Comment: No wonder Elisha did not fear his enemies. He knew that one of God's spirit armies was standing upon the mountain, ready to protect him and his servant from the army of the king of Syria!

10. Is Michael (one of the archangels who remained loyal to God) the chief guardian of the descendants of ancient Israel? Dan. 12:1. ("at that [end-] time shall arise Michael, the great prince

who has charge of your people," is how the Revised Standard Version renders Daniel 12:1.)

Comment: The Bible mentions by name three angels of very high rank:

Lucifer (Isaiah. 14:12), now Satan the Devil; Gabriel, who appeared to Daniel on two occasions (Dan. 8:16-17; 9:21) to Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist (Luke 1:19), and later to Mary, the mother of Jesus (Luke 1:26-28); and Michael, called one of the "chief princes" (Dan. 10:13), and whom Jude identifies as an archangel (Jude 9). Daniel 12:1 reveals that Michael is the archangel specifically assigned to protect and minister to the twelve tribes of Israel. It is interesting to note that twelve of God's angels will be the gatekeepers in the new city of Jerusalem (Rev.21:12), one for each tribe of Israel. These twelve may be assisting the archangel Michael right now.

11. Was Gabriel (apparently of archangel rank) sent to give the prophet Daniel understanding of visions, and to fight spiritual battles with powerful fallen angels ("princes") of the Devil so God's will would be carried out among the governments of men? Dan. 8:15-16; 9:21-22; 10:10-14, 20-21.

Comment: From these accounts in Daniel and elsewhere in the Bible, we can gather that the spirit world is teeming with activity! God works (John 5:17) and so do His righteous angelic servants who are busy helping to carry out His will for mankind. Satan and his demons are just as busy trying to thwart, tear down and destroy the plan of God.

12. What did an angel of God do when the civil rulers put some of the apostles in prison? Acts 5:17-20. Did this enable the apostles to continue preaching the truth of God? Verse 21.

Comment: We have covered only a few of the many verses showing how God's angels serve Him and His saints today. Let's be grateful to God for sending His powerful, holy and righteous angels to assist and watch over the work of His Church and those of us who are His Spirit-begotten children-His heirs soon to be born into the universe-ruling Family of God?

BEWARE OF YOUR ADVERSARY!

As this lesson has clearly shown, God did not create Satan the Devil. God created a cherub of high rank-an archangel named Lucifer-perfect in his ways, but with the power of free choice. Lucifer transformed himself into the Devil by his rebellion against the government of God' By his rebellion Lucifer became Satan. By his own choice in opposing God, he made himself God's adversary.

Recall that the great Lucifer and all the other created angels were never destined to be more than the servants of God. None of the angels can be begotten of God and born into the very Family of God as humans can be. After the rebellion of Lucifer and his angels, God created humans with the potential to become the born-again SONS OF GOD to rule this earth and ultimately the entire universe with Jesus Christ.

Satan and his demons know and hate this fact! Consequently, Satan views human beings as a grave

threat to his way of life. With his perverted and twisted mind, Satan, who tried to usurp all power and authority from God, now looks upon humans as "competitors" because God has destined man to replace him and his demons as rulers of this world! And so what could be better, Satan reasons, than to cause these "competitors" to disobey God and thereby disqualify themselves so God cannot use them' Therefore Satan's whole self-willed purpose, beginning with Adam and Eve, is to destroy all mankind and thus, he hopes, thwart the plan of God. That is why Christ called the Devil a "murderer from the beginning" (John 8:44).

Satan attempted to thwart God's plan to reproduce Himself by first succeeding in getting the first Adam to rebel against his Creator, thus disqualifying him from replacing Satan. He then attempted to have Christ, the second Adam, killed by the civil human government while He was still a young child. Then, when Christ was an adult, Satan attempted to spiritually destroy Him by tempting Him to sin.

Had Satan won this titanic spiritual battle, he would have retained world rule. If Christ won, He would depose Satan and become world ruler at His Second Coming. Christ did win that battle by proving He would obey the government of God, resist the Devil, and faithfully rule by God's Law throughout eternity. And so must we if God is to give us co-ruler-ship of the entire universe with Christ!

We, too, must overcome Satan by the Word and Spirit of God as Christ did. God shows us how we can win the battle.

1. Are we plainly told that Spirit-begotten Christians are in an all-out battle for their spiritual lives? 1 Pet. 5:8; Eph. 6:12. Can we afford to be ignorant of Satan's battle tactics? 2Cor. 2:11.

2. What is the chief weapon Satan uses in his attempt to destroy God's saints? Eph. 2:2-3.

Comment: Satan, formerly the great archangel Lucifer who was originally created perfect in his ways (Ezek.28:15), developed his satanic nature by his own reasoning and choice. Humans, in turn, acquire Satan's nature, which is part of what we call "human nature." Notice how Paul described this natural frame of mind: "The carnal mind [an attitude acquired from Satan] is enmity against God" for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be" (Rom. 8:7).

But once the Holy Spirit of God is added to a person's mind upon repentance and baptism, he has the spiritual awareness and power to resist the attitudes of self-centredness, lust, greed, vanity, jealousy, envy, resentment, bitterness and hate, which are "broadcasted" to the mind by Satan! No person is compelled to respond to and obey these impulses from Satan. The Devil has no power to force anyone to think or do wrong! But the unsuspecting automatically do so without realizing what is taking place in their minds. Most people just drift along, responding to emotions and impulses, which are often expressed in a sinful way (Gal. 5:19-21).

3. After one is begotten by God's Holy Spirit, which makes one a real Christian (Rom. 8:9), will the Devil continue to try to beguile the newly begotten Christian-to deceive his or her mind and lead the person away from Christ and His ways? 2 Corinthians. 11:2-4. Did some Christians in Paul's day begin to fall victim to the Devil's promptings once again? Gal. 1:6-8; 3:1. Does Satan also have his own

ministers through whom he works? 2 Corinthians. 11:13-15.

Comment: When Jesus spoke of overcoming, He referred to overcoming Satan's way, which is contrary to God's way. Those who have turned from Satan's way are to be on guard against him and must FIGHT TO OVERCOME his subtle urgings and remain true to God's way! Before Jesus Christ could qualify to restore the government of God and rule all nations, He had to withstand Satan's most severe temptations. Jesus overcame the Devil's wiles by the spiritual Word and power of God. He knew God's will. Therefore, the Devil could not deceive Him! He responded to the Devil's temptations by citing the scripture that applied in each situation. He knew the Word of God thoroughly. Which is why we should know the word of God that He has given us-that being the Bible!

4. Are Christians today also to resist the Devil by remaining firm in the truth God has revealed to them? 1 Pet.5:9. What must the Devil do if we resist him steadfastly? Jas. 4:7.

5. The Apostle Paul gives us specific instructions on fighting against the impulses and attitudes of the Devil. What are Christians to put on in order to fight this spiritual battle? Eph. 6:10-13. Of what does God's spiritual armour consist? Verses 14-17.

Comment: "Truth" refers to the inspired Word of God (John 17:17), the first piece in the Christian's spiritual armour. The "breastplate of righteousness" is obedience to God's commandments (Ps. 119:172); the "gospel of peace" is the message of the soon-coming Kingdom of God that will rule this earth and bring it peace. The "shield of faith" refers to the faith of Jesus Christ, which can be within us (Gal. 2:20; Phil. 3:9), not just to our own human faith. This faith is God's gift imparted by His Spirit (Gal. 5:22). And it is this faith-Christ's faith put within us-that will enable us to conquer and overcome Satan and sin! The "helmet of salvation" is the knowledge of what salvation is, what it involves-the purpose of life, the true goal and potential of mankind-becoming divine members of the Family of God! The "sword of the Spirit" refers to the written Word of God (Heb. 4:12). It is the Christian's offensive weapon in fighting against the wiles of the Devil. To rightly use this weapon in waging a winning battle against the crafty rulers of darkness, we must study the Bible and learn God's will and His promises!

What Paul finally mentions in withstanding the attacks of Satan is prayer (verses 18-20). Christians are to draw close to God in persevering prayer (1 Thessalonians. 5:17)-praying for God's Church, its work and its ministers, for all of God's people and for themselves.

This is the way to overcome Satan and force him to flee! This is the perfect strategy for defeating the Devil's army of demons. If you diligently follow this formula, your success in overcoming these satanic foes will be guaranteed!

SATAN'S FINAL ATTEMPT TO WREST DOMINION FROM GOD

Satan, aided by millions of fallen angelic demons, is the "god of this world" (2 Corinthians. 4:4)the invisible world ruler who incites mankind to disobey God.

Although Satan and his demons were cast back to the earth after their attempt to dethrone God, they still seek to wrest dominion from God. These are the inordinately ambitious, unscrupulous and ruthless

angels who, not being members of the God Family, seek by any and every way they can to make themselves the universe-ruling "gods" over and above the Supreme CREATOR God and His Family-the Kingdom of God!

1. Did Jesus reveal that Satan would make another attempt to wrest dominion from God? Rev. 12:7. Would he be cast back down to earth again? Verse 9. Does verse 10 show this happens shortly before Christ's coming to establish the Kingdom of God? Will Satan be permanently cast out of God's presence and from ever having a part in the government of God? Verse 8.

2. Will the Devil then bring great wrath upon the whole world? Rev. 12:12. Will he be especially wrathful against the end-time Church of God? Verses 13-17. Why will he be extremely angry at this time? Verse 12, last part. "A short time" before what? Rev. 20:1-3.

Comment: Once cast back to the earth for the second and last time, Satan will know that only a very short time remains before he will be completely restrained from further deceiving the world for a thousand years, and he knows that after the thousand years he is let loose for a short time and then he and his demons will be destroyed completely! They will no longer exist!

3. Revelation 12 speaks of God's end-time Church, personifying it as a woman. Will God provide His Church with shelter away from the wrath of the Devil? Rev. 12:14-16. (Also read Revelation 3:10). However, will a "remnant" that is, "the others" or "the rest of them" that keep the testimony and commandments of Jesus, be at a "war footing" with Satan the devil? Rev. 12:17.

Comment: This end-time prophecy tells of an "escape" for God's faithful servants from the terrible tribulation caused by Satan the Devil. All of God's people wherever they are will be protected by God so long as they remain faithful to Him.