

GRACE BIBLE CHURCH

*Robert R. McLaughlin Bible Ministries*

The Tree of Life is a weekly teaching summary.

The Tree of Life for week ending 12/22/02.

The Angelic Conflict

**Part 8**

Galatians 4:1-7

The Heir and the Slave

One of the false teachings that has been perpetuated by the kingdom of darkness is that man does *not* have a free will or a choice, and that the Lord Jesus Christ did not die for the sins of the entire world. Therefore, we have been noting what the Bible has to say about this subject and how it relates to the angelic conflict.

**Deu 30:10-20** *“...If you obey the Lord your God to keep His commandments and His statutes which are written in this book of the law, if you turn to the Lord your God with all your heart and soul. For this commandment which I command you today is **not too difficult for you, nor is it out of reach**. It is not in heaven, that you should say, ‘Who will go up to heaven for us to get it for us and make us hear it, that we may observe it?’ Nor is it beyond the sea, that you should say, ‘Who will cross the sea for us to get it for us and make us hear it, that we may observe it?’ But **the word is very near you**, in your mouth and in your heart, that you may observe it. See, I have set before you today life and prosperity, and death and adversity; in that I command you today to love the Lord your God, to walk in His ways and to keep His commandments and His statutes and His judgments, that you may live and multiply, and that the Lord your God may bless you in the land where you are entering to possess it. But if your heart turns away and you will not obey, but are drawn away and worship other gods and serve them, I declare to you today that you shall surely perish. You shall not prolong your days in the land where you are crossing the Jordan to enter and possess it. I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that **I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse**. So choose life in order that you may live, you and your descendants, by loving the Lord your God, by obeying His voice, and by holding fast to Him; **for this is your life and the length of your days**, that you may live in the land which the Lord swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them.”*

Because of the existence of the free will in the human race the angelic conflict is perpetuated in two realms—first, in **evangelism** where mankind as a free agent in the devil’s world can believe in Jesus Christ and receive eternal life, or reject salvation and receive eternal condemnation, sharing the judgment of Satan and his fallen angels; and second, in the **predesigned plan of God** for the Church-age. As Royal Family of God, every Church-age believer can execute this plan and glorify God, sharing in our Lord’s victory in the angelic conflict, or he can live in the cosmic system and follow the trends of independence from God established by Satan. Every Church-age believer is given full access to divine omnipotence for this purpose. Through rejection of Christ or rejection of

the plan of God, mankind chooses the plan of Satan, which can include religion, legalism, socialism, all forms of arrogance, emotionalism, atheism, or any other form of independence from God.

Because of the extension of the angelic conflict into human history, the sovereignty of God and the free will of man coexist by **divine decree**. The sovereignty of God makes the decision; the omnipotence of God provides the fantastic power for us to accept His will. However, whether we are positive toward Christ and the plan of God or not, no matter how we fail or suffer, there is no way we can hinder the glory of God. God will be glorified by either our failure or our success. How you live now will determine your blessings now and in eternity. Freedom guarantees *inequality*, and the greater the freedom, the greater the inequality that will exist. This is especially true in the spiritual life; heaven is a perfect place, and in heaven there will be great inequality. Some people use their freedom to succeed in God's plan by taking advantage of divine power and living the spiritual life; some choose to use human power and live independently from God.

In the Church-age, the results of choosing the plan of God are threefold:

1. **Phase 1: Salvation.** In choosing the plan of God at salvation through faith in Christ, regenerate man is now *positionally higher* than angels since he is in union with Christ, who is now seated at the right hand of the Father and higher than angels. This is unique to the Church-age. Born-again believers are made positionally superior to angels through the baptism of the Spirit and resultant *positional sanctification*, **Heb 1:1-14**. This makes us Royal Family of God and a new spiritual species. For the first time in history, believers can live the unique spiritual life. We can choose a life of freedom in God's plan instead of an independent life of slavery. Because you are positionally superior to your elect guardian angel, that invisible angel is serving you right now, **Heb 1:14**, "*Are they not all ministering spirits, sent out to **render service** for the sake of those who will inherit salvation?*"
2. **Phase 2: Experiential sanctification.** Through the fulfillment of the predesigned plan of God in time, by means of divine omnipotence, the believer not only receives his escrow blessings for time, but also glorifies God in the angelic conflict. By living in our very own predesigned plan, we can be superior to angels *experientially*.
3. **Phase 3: Eternity.** At the resurrection of the Royal Family of God, believers become *physically superior* to all angelic creatures in their resurrection body. No other believer from any other dispensation is given a resurrection body at this point. For seven years, during the Tribulation until the Second Advent, Church-age believers in resurrection bodies are a demonstration to demons that their position was totally wrong and that God's judgment of them is totally right. The fallen angels react strongly to this, seen in their three invasions of planet earth during the Tribulation. If we were given physical superiority now in time, there would be no contest in the angelic conflict; we must be an inferior rational creation to resolve the angelic conflict. This is why we will judge angels in the future, **1Co 6:3**, "*Do you not know that we shall judge angels?*"

The apostle Paul makes a statement in **Gal 4:1** that is very applicable here: "*Now I say, as long as the heir is a child, he does not differ at all from a slave although he is owner of everything.*" Paul states that while the heir is in his youth, or immature, there is no difference between him and the slave, because the heir has not *recognized* all the

assets that belong to him. He is not old enough or mature enough to recognize it, therefore he does not know what it means to be an heir and he does not appreciate it. Even though he has great wealth in his portfolio of investments made on his behalf, he does not act any differently from the slave because he does not *know* or *recognize* or *appreciate* or *utilize* those assets! The analogy is that before born-again believers reach spiritual adulthood and understand the divine solutions, they act just as unbelievers. There is really no significant difference in lifestyle between the born-again believer who is carnal and the unregenerate unbeliever.

Paul wrote in **1Co 3:1-3**, “*And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual men, but as to men of flesh, as to babes in Christ. I gave you milk to drink, not solid food; for you were not yet able to receive it. Indeed, even now you are not yet able, for you are still fleshly. For since there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not fleshly, and are you not walking like mere men?*” When the believer is not cognizant of the available divine solutions, there is no difference between his walk and conduct of life and that of an unbeliever. Even when the believer knows the divine solutions, those solutions still must be *utilized*, or he will operate the same way in a crisis as an unregenerate person would.

**Gal 4:1** ...*As long as the heir [the believer] is a child, he does not differ at all from a slave [an unbeliever] although he is **owner of everything**.*

All believers, being in union with Christ, are joint-heirs with Christ, and are therefore adopted as sons at the moment of salvation, **Gal 3:26**.

**Gal 4:2-7** *But he is under guardians and managers until the date set by the father. So also we, while we were children, were held in bondage under the elemental things of the world. But when the fulness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, in order that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!” Therefore you are no longer a slave, but a son; and if a son, then an heir through God.*

When a believer begins to develop a personal sense of destiny and use the problem-solving devices, he attains the first stage of spiritual adulthood and enters the adult spiritual life and only then does the lifestyle and the character of the heir begin to obviously differ from that of the slave. This is why we must continue to, as **2Pe 3:18** puts it, “*grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.*”

The purpose of the ministry of the pastor-teacher is to get the born-again believer out of the experiential stage of slavery and into the experiential stage of **heirship** and **sonship**, where he will find liberty and spiritual freedom, **Gal 5:1**, “*It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery.*” Until the believer learns and metabolizes the divine solutions, he is still under the control of the circumstances and people around him; he is still like a slave, as **Gal 4:2** says, under **guardians** and **managers**. A believer lives as a slave to the degree that he relies on the human solutions used by unbelievers.

All of this applies to the angelic conflict because positionally there is a great difference between a Christian and an unbeliever, in fact even more of a difference than there is between angels and human beings. The believer's recognition of his sonship and union with the Lord Jesus Christ and his use of the divine solutions in the unique spiritual life are what experientially sets him apart from both the unregenerate man and the carnal Christian.

In the mystery doctrine of the Church-age is found every solution for every problem you could ever face, whether it has to do with people, circumstances of history, or even angels in spiritual combat. The greatest pressure a believer can experience is that which he faces when he is attacked by the kingdom of darkness, and God has a perfect solution for this as well.

**Eph 6:10-11** *Be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of His might. Take up and put on the full armor of God, that you may be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil.*

We take up the full armor from God by applying the divine solutions. As a born-again believer, there is nothing that separates you from an unbeliever experientially until you take up and put on the armor of divine solutions. So much separates us from an unbeliever *positionally*, including our eternal salvation and home in heaven, but it is not until we learn the divine solutions of the unique spiritual life that we are *experientially* separated from the unbeliever.

The angels are amazed that there are more differences between them and us than between them and the unbelievers. We cannot afford to be ignorant of Satan's many devices in **2Co 2:11**. He has many means of enticing believers away from the spiritual life by setting before them other priorities, which seem worthy in themselves but become unworthy when compared to the Word of God. Satan has many means of intimidating or coaxing believers away from the unique spiritual life, away from the *provision* of the local assembly, away from the *gift* of pastor-teacher, away from the *mentorship* of God the Holy Spirit, and away from all the volitional *assets and power* that God has given in the Church-age. The believer is led into a life of such small concepts of blessing and friendship and pleasure, which they may even think in their self-deception is the Christian way of life. Therefore they will say, "*Doctrine isn't that important—I'm being blessed and promoted in this life without it!*" They may even be used as cosmic evangelists to take positive believers away from Bible doctrine.

The mystery doctrine of the Church-age is the means by which ordinary people can become invisible heroes and glorify God as a witness for the prosecution. To become a witness against Satan and the fallen angels is to have a tremendous impact that will be recognized in future ages forever and ever—but which is not recognized now in the world. Invisible heroes are as **2Co 6:9** says, "*unknown yet well-known.*" This is what glorifies God in the angelic conflict, and therefore the objective of Satanic deceptions is to blind you from the real reason you are here and drag you away from the pastor-teacher who has been assigned by God to teach you the mystery doctrine of the Church-age, **Act 20:28**.

In every generation, there are evil individuals who are used by the kingdom of darkness to try to silence the messengers of God. In **Mat 11**, John the Baptist has been imprisoned and sentenced to death, and in verses 2-6 he sends his disciples to ask the

Lord a question: “*Now when John in prison heard of the works of Christ, he sent word by his disciples, and said to Him, ‘Are You the Expected One, or shall we look for someone else?’ And Jesus answered and said to them, ‘Go and report to John what you hear and see: the blind receive sight and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them. And blessed is he who keeps from stumbling over Me.’*”

Then in **Mat 11:7**, “*And as these were going away, Jesus began to speak to the multitudes about John.*” John had spent a long time speaking to these crowds about the Lord, and now the Lord is going to speak to these same crowds about John. As a true friend, which is extremely rare to find, he speaks very highly of John in this passage. He also points out what an evil generation is—a generation that continually tries to silence messengers of God like John the Baptist.

The Lord continues in **Mat 11:7**, “*What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed [a stalk of a plant] shaken by the wind?*” This is a metaphor for a person who is made to waver or vacillate under the pressure of difficult circumstances, and this was not by any means a description of John. In **Mat 11:8** the Lord goes on, “*But what did you go out to see? A man dressed in soft clothing? Behold, those who wear soft clothing are in kings’ palaces.*” The clergy of those days wore long robes, and phylacteries and tassels on their garments; therefore John’s clothing certainly would not fit the bill. Too many people were conscious of these trivial things. They thought that John had been thrown in jail because he had been defeated and was being disciplined by God, but they are about to hear something entirely different from the Lord.

One of the truths of the word of God that is not very popular but is very real is the fact that the faithful believer *will* come into times of great perplexity and adversity and persecution as Paul said in **Phi 1:29**, “*For to you it has been granted for Christ’s sake, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake.*” The winner believer readily accepts this reality while the loser believer says, “*I know it says that in the Bible, but that’s just not realistic today!*” It is the goal kingdom of darkness to plant preconceptions in the minds of God’s people, especially concerning the one God has provided to teach them His Word. Satan always encourages the pettiness that makes personality and lifestyle the issue rather than the message.

For a more detailed study, order last week’s tapes, IA11-248 to IA11-250.