

**Grace Bible Church
Pastor Teacher**

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Tree of Life

Weekly Review

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Events concerning our Lord in the past, in the present, and also in the future.

We have been studying different events concerning our Lord in the past, in the present, and also in the future. In fact, there is one passage that says exactly that in REV 1:4 which is a passage that describes the past, the present, and the future of our Lord.

In REV 1:4 the apostle John writes: **John to the seven churches that are in Asia: Grace to you and peace, from Him who is** [that is that our Lord is everywhere at this present time] **and who was** [the past] **and who is to come** [future]; **and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne;**

In the doctrine of numerology, seven is a number that refers to the work being finished or the Finished Work or the completion of a goal that we set before us as Church-age believers. Notice what the apostle John writes in this passage; **“Grace to you and peace, from Him who is** [that is who He is presently] **and who was** [the past] **and who is to come** [the future]

REV 1:5, and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness [actually our Lord was the faithful witness in the Angelic Conflict in the Supreme Court of Heaven].

Within this first chapter of the book of Revelation we are told about many of the victories that our Lord won especially when He was on the Cross. And the last phrase in REV 1:5 says, **“To Him who loves us, and released us from our sins by His blood** [the blood of Christ refers to His Finished Work upon the Cross].

Then our Lord says in **REV 1:6, and He has made us to be a kingdom, priests to His God and Father; to Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.**

By the way, here is another manifestation of the grace gifts from God. And then, as our Lord reminds us in verse 7, our Lord reminds us all that He is coming back.

First of all, REV 1:7 says, **Behold, He is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him; and all the tribes of the earth will mourn over Him. Even so. Amen.**

Now, before we continue with our subject in REV 1:7, let us break down this verse when our Lord says:

- 1) Behold, He is coming with the clouds,
- 2) and every eye will see Him,
- 3) even those who pierced Him;
- 4) and all the tribes of the earth will mourn over Him.

Notice how the clouds reveal certain prophecies in the early Church. Then in REV 1:8, our Lord says, **“I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God,** Now, look at the first chapter of the books of Acts.

Therefore, look at **ACT 1:6, And so when they had come together** [the early church met daily], **they were asking Him, saying, “Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?”**

Now, I want you to learn and to notice verse 7.

ACT 1:7, He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority;

This simply means that God the Father is the one who makes the decisions of when to leave and when to come back.

Now, as I have taught you for years, we should never fall into the trap of setting dates as to when our Lord is coming back but, we should all be able to discern the times in which we live. Remember, there are a few doctrinal principles that we should know and realize the historical trends and what life will be like just before our Lord comes back to pick up His bride-the Church.

MAR 13:28, “Now learn the parable from the fig tree: when its branch has already become tender, and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near.”

The fig tree represents the restoration of the nation of Israel.

MAT 13:28-29, “Now learn the parable from the fig tree: when its branch has already become tender, and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. Even so, you too, when you see these things happening, recognize that He is near, right at the door.”

This means that GOD is ready and believers must be alert concerning the times in which we live.

MAR 13:30-37, “Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away. But of that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone.

Take heed, keep on the alert; for you do not know when the appointed time is. It is like a man, away on a journey, who upon leaving his house and putting his slaves in charge, assigning to each one his task, also commanded the doorkeeper to stay on the alert.

Therefore, be on the alert for you do not know when the master of the house is coming, whether in the evening, at midnight, at cockcrowing, or in the morning lest he come suddenly and find you asleep. And what I say to you I say to all, ‘Be on the alert!’

ACT 1:8-10, but you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth. And after He had said these things, He was lifted up while they were looking on, and a CLOUD received Him out of their sight.

And as they were gazing intently into the sky while He was departing, behold, two men in white clothing stood beside them;

These two men were actually angels who also appeared in white and they were dressed up with some type of uniform, probably as a reward to those angels who glorified our Lord and Savior in eternity past.

ACT 1:11, And they [angelic beings] also said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven.”

Notice a few of the principles of doctrine found in this passage. For example, in **ACT 1:11, And they** [referring to angelic beings]. Notice what these angels reveal when they say “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky? They were looking at the clouds while the clouds were transporting our Lord and Savior. Then we read this Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven.”

Now, what does this passage represent? It represents the fact that angels have a free will just like human’s do. Therefore, in ACT 1:11, Dr. Luke writes, **And they [angelic beings] also said, “Men of Galilee [true humanity], why do you stand looking into the sky? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven [through the doctrine of the ascension], will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven.”** This also means that He left in the clouds of the air and He will come back in the clouds of the air. The clouds do play an important part in the Word of God.

For example, Heb 12:1 refers to the cloud of witnesses of Heb 11. Look at **HEB 12:1, Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance, and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,**

So much then for our brief introduction. Let’s continue where we left off last week. So far we have noted the first three major principles.

1. First of all, we began with a period of time before the creation of the world and the creation of the Angels; PRO 8:1-36. We know this is true because in REV 12:4 we read that **“And his tail [that is the dragon swept away a third of the stars (angels) of heaven, and threw them to the earth.”**

Eventually, every angel had made a choice to either follow our Lord or reject our Lord and follow Satan and the Kingdom of darkness. And this is why the Angels are divided into two categories, either the Elect Angels or the fallen angels and this is also why the human race is divided into two categories; Believers or unbelievers. And what is it that the angelic race has in common with the human race? Both the angels and the human race, whether fallen angels or elect angels or believers and unbelievers, the one major doctrinal issue and the similarity is Volition or the free will to choose.

2. Then we noted some of the functions and responsibility of the angels in eternity past before their rebellion when Satan convinced one third of God’s angels to rebel against our Lord, and they did so. Eventually, every angel had made a choice to either follow our Lord or reject our

Lord or and follow Satan and the Kingdom of darkness. And this is why the Angels are divided into two categories, either the Elect Angels or the fallen angels and this is why the human race is divided into two categories; Believers or unbelievers. It is extremely important for us as believers to identify what our Lord had to do because of the angelic conflict.

As far as the angelic conflict is concerned, angels exist in two categories: the elect and the unsaved angels. The angels which followed Satan had the opportunity to reverse their decision, and over a period of possibly a million years they refused to honor and worship of our Lord. Therefore, before the creation of the human race, we actually had a court being held between the fallen angels and the chosen angels.

However long it took, the trial was fair in every sense of the word. How do we know that? We know that because of the character and the nature of God. For example, God is omniscient which means that He knows all the facts. He is omnipresent - He was always an observer; He is also omnipotent (All Powerful), He has the power to execute justice. God is immutable and God is incorruptible as a Judge; and He is truth (veracity). On the other hand, Satan was a liar from the beginning (John 8:44), and those angels who went against God and followed Satan followed a lie.

Therefore, at the end of the trial, Satan and all the fallen angels were sentenced to the lake of fire (Mat 25:41). Look at **MAT 25:41**, “**Then He will also say to those on His left, ‘Depart from Me, accursed ones into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels;’**”

Notice the verb *prepared* because it tells us that God had control over all. This passage is actually in the pre-period of history. The period of angelic creation only, when a sentence was passed, but was not executed. All during human history the sentence is suspended. After the end of man’s history (the end of the Millennium with the destruction of the world and the universe), the sentence will be carried out. My friends, this information gives us the reason why there was a division in eternity past in the angelic Conflict.

Now, we can immediately infer something from this: If the sentence is pronounced before man was created but not carried out until after man’s history is concluded, then man had to have something to do and he was created by God to resolve something that happened at the end of that trial.

First of all, we all need to know our enemy. The words diabolos and Shatan’ both tell us what happened because Satan and Devil are not names for the super angel, but titles. His name is Lucifer, Son of the Morning (ISA 14:12-14). Satan and Devil means adversary, accuser or attorney - someone who goes to court and appeals. Whatever it was, we do know that Satan and all the other angels had to choose the plan that God designed but Satan appealed the case.

So, by putting together certain evidences which occur throughout Scripture, we can begin to see why man was created; REV 4:11; ISA 43:7, 21. It is true that man was also created for the glory of God; but that doesn’t explain many other questions, such as, why sin? why suffering? why free will? why establishment? After looking throughout the Word of God we realize that there is an invisible enemy called, Satan or the devil. Satan, along with millions and millions of fallen angels, knows that man was created for the glory of God.

However, this does not explain many of the other questions that we have such as:

Why sin?

Why suffering?

Why free will?

Why establishment?

Why the Church-age, etc.

We must dig a little deeper for a more detailed explanation. Under the grace plan, God can be glorified; but there is only one thing that really answers all the why's, and that's the angelic conflict. It is important for us to understand the angelic conflict because our existence on the earth after salvation is directly related to it more than any other passage in the Word of God. So are the doctrines, the promises, the commands and the provisions of Scripture. The greatest attacks Satan has made against God were made before man came into the picture. Satan is a super genius; he is smarter than any created being who ever lived!

So, Satan and his kingdom of darkness was based upon a knowledge and understanding of MAT 25:41, concerning what many call Hell. Also in REV 20, his objection can be explained very simply by a simple question such as: "How can a loving God cast His creatures (fallen angels in this case) into the lake of fire?" The answer is interesting to us, because as human beings, we have become involved in the same type of objections from every loser believer who lives for themselves and not others.

Angelic free will had an opportunity under grace and rejected it. Therefore, while the fallen angels were saying, not fair. God created man in order to demonstrate to them that His position in grace was valid, that love can only express itself through grace, and that God cannot change His character to accommodate any creature, whether angel or human being. God's perfect character included love for the angels; but God cannot love in a way that is inconsistent with His other characteristics. When Satan went negative and said, "**I will be like the most High**" (ISA 14:12-14), God had to make a decision, one that was compatible with His righteousness and justice, as well as with His love.

So God created man to show Satan how a loving God can SAVE a creature and maintain His righteousness. Since Satan had implied that God would lose His righteousness if even one of the fallen angels goes to the lake of fire, Satan concluded that God was no longer God, but that he (Satan) was. That is the epitome of arrogance. The great underlying issue in history is always the character of God, of which His love and righteousness are a part of.

When you understand reconciliation and propitiation, you can see that God has done some of the most astounding things and yet never lost or compromised one bit of His character.

Reconciliation is the removal of the barriers between perfect God and sinful man. Reconciliation means that our Lord restored us back to our standing with God. Propitiation means satisfaction. God the Father is satisfied with the Sons work upon the Cross.

You can see that God has done some of the most astounding things and yet never lost or compromised one bit of His character. In other words, the Devil was ACED BY GRACE! There is no way the Devil can win! He couldn't change God, and you can't change God, nor can any other human being. In fact, our security is in the fact that He cannot change; **MAL 3:6, "For I, the Lord, do not change; therefore you, O sons of Jacob, are not consumed."**

That's why we have the assurance, "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and today and forever" (HEB 13:8). Yesterday refers to the angelic conflict; today - human history and the extension of the angelic conflict; forever - eternity. The big issue in the angelic conflict is God's character!

3. Why many of the Jews followed our Lord as He was presented the doctrinal views in the Old Testament especially under the Mosaic Law. This is why we have a lot of prophecy used in the Word of God. Why prophecy?

Because, in **1CO 1:22, For indeed Jews ask for signs, and Greeks search for wisdom;** Because the Jews look for signs and wonders and miracles. Even though MAT 16:4 tells us "**An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign; and a sign will not be given it, except the sign of Jonah.**" Also, look at what the apostle Peter and Mark writes **MAR 8:11, And the Pharisees came out and began to argue with Him, seeking from Him a sign from heaven, to test Him.**

And you can just see our Lord sighing deeply and therefore in **MAR 8:12, And sighing deeply in His spirit, He said, "Why does this generation seek for a sign? Truly I say to you, no sign shall be given to this generation."**

Our Lord used prophecy because the Jews are said to be a nation that seeks after signs and wonders. Therefore, the Lord revealed a lot of prophecy that was used by the Old Testament Prophets to reveal truth as it is found by the Old Testament prophets. If you don't know some of these things by now then you probably will never know. No matter what we face Our God is an awesome God! In fact, throughout the word of God, especially in the Old Testament, many prophecies were ready to explode right on time. And not only is this the truth but there are a lot of passages where our Lord is revealing who He is even though they may be missing Him.

JOH 1:11, He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him.

1CO 2:9-14, but just as it is written, "Things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard, And which have not entered the heart of man, All that God has prepared for those who love Him." For to us God revealed them through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God. For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the spirit of the man, which is in him? Even so the thoughts of God no one knows except the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things freely given to us by God, which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words. But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised or literally spiritually judged or spiritually evaluated.