

What the Battle is About

What was the original struggle in heaven all about, and what were the means by which it was transferred to this earth?

Primarily, Lucifer developed some different ideas about himself, and about God's character. He thought he could reach his best potential by departing from the way that God had marked out for him.

Initially, this would not have been directly against the Father, but against the Son, by whom the Father was known. We see this clearly in the rebellion of the children of Israel in the wilderness, who mainly blamed Moses (the one who represented Christ to them). They doubted whether Moses got the directions right, and supposed that they were just as able to follow God on their own. We also see this in the attitude of the Jewish leaders, who thought they could follow God without following Christ.

Then Satan marketed his rebellion to Eve in the same manner, convincing her that to completely abstain from those things God had warned them not to eat, would restrict her development (interesting that here again he bypassed the middle man, Adam). Although Satan didn't use the word, it was the first recorded charge of "legalism" laid against obedience to God's laws.

After the fall of mankind, in the promise God gave of the seed, He also said "cursed is the ground," and there would be sorrow and sweat and pain, but this was all "for your sake." In other words, these were part of the means by which the seed of the woman would conquer the seed of the serpent. These hardships would provide a ground where patience, faith, fortitude, and courage would be developed.

Those who followed God, and believed His way was best, accepted this life of hardship, and offered their sacrifices in

faith of the Redeemer to come. Their emphasis was to develop a holy character.

Those who did not want to follow God so “legalistically” (as they would have called it), developed their own way of avoiding the hardships and “enjoying” this life. Minimizing the importance of character development, they instead devoted themselves to the pursuits of temporal greatness. Cain’s descendants are mentioned as the developers of musical instruments and metal work, for example. No doubt in the beginning they would have claimed that this was being done “for the glory of God,” as is often done today.

Their way consisted of conglomerating in cities, where life would be easier, and there would be more social distractions and less time for serious reflection. As these cities became bigger, the pride and self-sufficiency of man grew. He thought there was nothing he couldn’t accomplish. Mighty leaders arose, such as Nimrod, who gained the throne by killing, lying, stealing, and lifting themselves above their neighbor. Law-breaking was the established way to success.

This culminated in the crisis of the flood, where only a few were willing to hear the Lord’s warning and join His side of the argument, while the rest clung to this earthly life, and cast their vote on the side of the great rebel.

Therefore, the battle is between God’s claims and Satan’s claims. By joining ourselves to Christ, we take a stand that we are going to justify God’s ways before the universe. To take this stand requires two things:

1. The death of the old spiritual nature, and a new birth in its place of Christ’s spiritual life, and
2. Retraining of the mind so that we give up any of those ways, arguments, theories, or practices which tend to support Satan’s scheme to change God’s laws.

We must fully accept the Lord’s school, devote ourselves to

the work of character development (being changed back into the image of Christ), and minimize (ie, “put to death,” “count as dung”) those things which the world, and worldly Christians, look upon as the “essence of life.”

The Lord, in His word, reiterates over and over, “My way leads to life”, “give up these things and you will have treasure in heaven,” “godliness is even profitable for this life,” etc.

Why does He need to do this? Because we believe the contrary: namely that God’s ways lead to restriction, deprivation, and death, and so we go about to establish our prosperity by departing from His commandments. “Religion is good, but if you want to survive in the business world, you have to do this or that, etc...”

Jesus said, when He would return, “would he find faith in the earth?” I think in these last days, our faith, if it is going to survive, must take on a much more aggressive aspect. That is, we must be willing to venture all in strict obedience, in the face of not only imaginary, but real disasters. As the situation becomes more dire, our faith must become more bold. Man is bringing upon himself huge problems of a tragic nature, and if we find it difficult to act from principle now, it will be 100 times harder then.

It will certainly become a question, if it isn’t already, whether we can survive without lying, stealing, coveting, killing, or denying our faith.

But in spite of this immense pressure, the book of Revelation predicts that there will be a class of people who are “sealed in their foreheads” (*Revelation* 7:3) with the Father’s name (*Revelation* 14:1), which represents His character, perfectly reproduced in them. These will comprise the Lord’s final army, by whom Satan’s lies will be overthrown.