
WAR
IN
Heaven

Heaven? That seems like the least likely place for a war. Yet the Bible tells us that "war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer. So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him" (Revelation 12:7–9). How did this conflict begin, and what was it about? The answer to these questions reveals the reason behind the unrest plaguing earth—and even every human heart.

Before his fall from heaven, Satan was an angel named Lucifer. The Bible says he was "the anointed cherub [angel] who covers" and was "perfect" until "iniquity was found" in him (Ezekiel 28:14, 15). His position as the anointed angel was highly significant. God gave His ancient people instructions on how to build a miniature model of His throne room in heaven's sanctuary (Exodus 25:8; Hebrews 8:5). Inside was a special room called the Most Holy Place that contained the Ark of the Covenant, which held the Ten Commandments. On top of the Ark

was a "mercy seat," and on either side an angel "covering the mercy seat" (Exodus 25:16–22; 1 Kings 8:7). This picture reveals that God's throne is the source of mercy and that His kingdom is governed by His law.

Lucifer was originally the leading angel beside God's throne. This high position made him the first one responsible to uphold and protect God's law. But rather than defend it, he rebelled against it. Notice this powerful insight given by the prophet Isaiah: "How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! . . . For you have said in your heart: 'I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; . . . I will be like the Most High'" (Isaiah 14:12–14). Lucifer rebelled against God's throne and authority. He worked to establish his own government. He believed he could be righteous like God without needing to obey God's law. He thought he was above God and could better determine what was right and what was wrong. In other words, Lucifer's rebellion was one based on self-righteousness. He argued that God's law was restrictive and that free, intelligent angels needed no such rule. This argument deceived a great number of angels. Consequently, Lucifer

and these angels were thrown out of heaven to the earth, where they brought their hostility against God's law of mercy and truth.

War in the Human Heart

On earth, Lucifer (now known as Satan) continued to wage war against God's law, the foundation of God's government. He approached Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden and tempted them with the deception that they could be "like God" without having to obey God (Genesis 3:1–5). The same deception that led to the fall of the angels in heaven led to the fall of Adam and Eve. And just as angels were removed from heaven, Adam and Eve were removed from the garden. "So He drove out the man; and He placed cherubim [angels] at the east of the garden of Eden, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to guard the way to the tree of life" (Genesis 3:24).

Adam and Eve's minds were twisted by Satan. They now had a "carnal mind," which "is death. . . . Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be" (Romans 8:6, 7). With this insight, we can better understand why the human heart

so often experiences unrest: It is at war with God's law of love and mercy.

But God did not leave humanity to die in sin. He sent His Son into the world. Jesus "condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us" (Romans 8:3, 4). We have been given a second chance. We can be forgiven for our sins and once again become citizens of God's kingdom if we are willing to abide by the laws of heaven. God makes this promise to us: "'This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the LORD: I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds I will write them,' then He adds, 'Their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more'" (Hebrews 10:16, 17).

All unrest on earth and in the human heart is a result of believing Satan's lies that humans do not need to obey the law of God or that they can be righteous without God. Satan has gone so far as to disguise these lies under a Christian cloak. Professed Christians teach that the law of God is obsolete—that grace somehow cancels the need to obey God's commandments. John warns against this deception when he writes, "Now by this we know that we know Him, if we

keep His commandments. He who says, 'I know Him,' and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him" (1 John 2:3, 4).

War on Earth

Satan is angry with those who do not fall for his deceptions. He goes "to make war with the rest of her [the church's] offspring, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ" (Revelation 12:17). Bible prophecy reveals how Satan will work to deceive people concerning the law of God. The prophecies of Daniel reveal how Satan has used earthly powers to attempt to "change . . . the law" (Daniel 7:25, ESV). Why? Because Satan knows that to disregard one of the Ten Commandments is to be guilty of breaking them all (see James 2:10–12).

Indeed, Satan has cunningly tried to change one of the Ten Commandments, and few people seem to realize it. He has done this right within the church! We encourage you to prayerfully read the Ten Commandments as recorded in Exodus 20:1–17 and discover which commandment has been replaced by human tradition. If Satan can lead Christians to disregard any of

God's commandments, he is, in effect, leading them to rebellion against God and His law.

In the last days, God will have a group of people who will withstand the devil's deceptions and remain loyal to the kingdom of heaven. They will love God and obey His law. The first war ever fought was over the law of God. The last war on earth will be over the same issue. The Bible tells us about these victorious people who overcome the devil: "Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city" (Revelation 22:14). Would you like to be part of this group? If so, check out the free Bible study resource on the back of this pamphlet to learn more.

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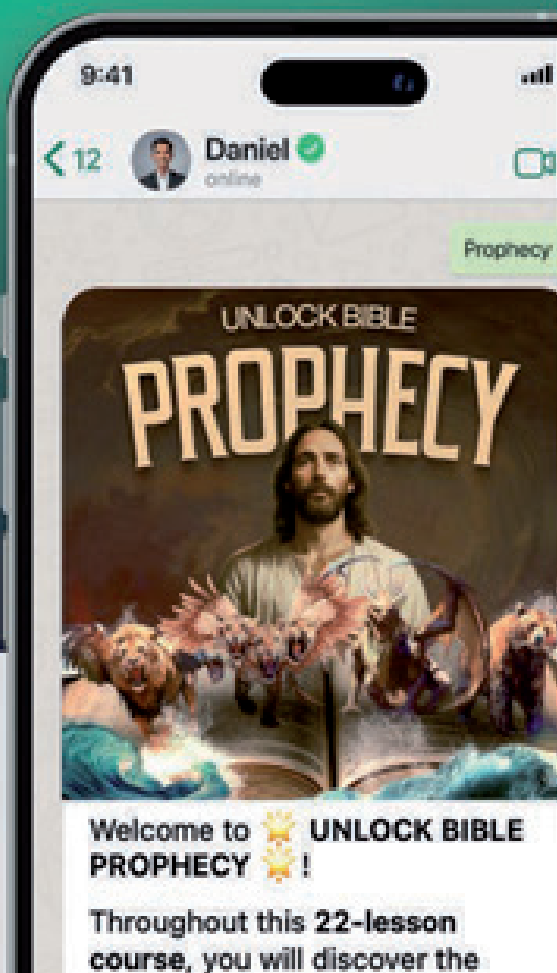

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