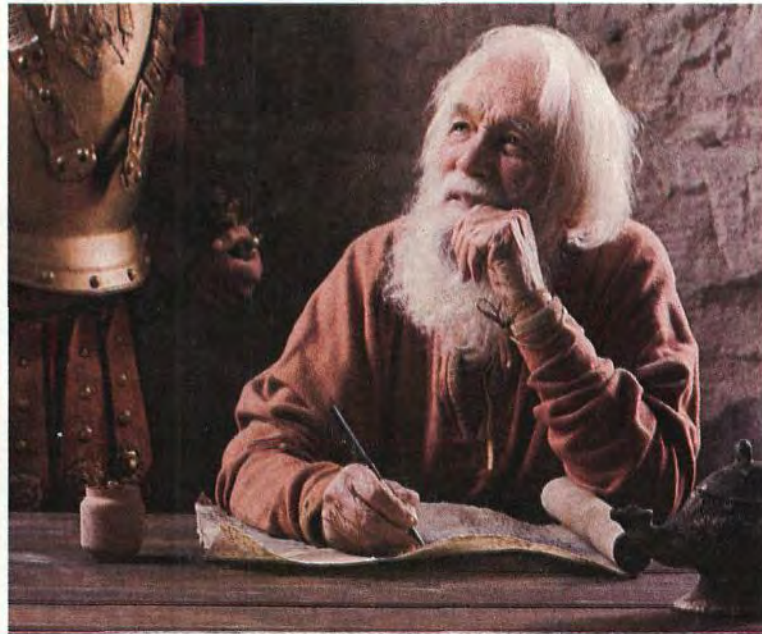


D Discoveries in **P** PROPHECY

WITH
**MARK
FINLEY**



Angel 911: Revelation's Angelic Conflict

Discoveries in Prophecy

by Mark A. Finley
Speaker-Director, *The It Is Written* Telecast

Discoveries in Prophecy is a series of 26 evangelistic presentations in magazine format by Evangelist and *It Is Written* Speaker-Director Mark A. Finley. These presentations have been reproduced here just as delivered; therefore, the reader will encounter occasional references to slides shown during the actual delivery of the topic as originally preached, and other references characteristic of a live presentation.

See the inside back cover for a complete list of the *Discoveries in Prophecy* evangelistic magazines—keyed to chapter in Mark Finley's book entitled *Beyond Orion's Gates*—and information on how to order additional evangelistic magazines and other Hart Research Center outreach materials.

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Discoveries in Prophecy

Angel 911: Revelation's Angelic Conflict

The Apollo astronauts gazed down in wonder at Planet Earth—this magnificent, luminous blue ball floating in space—and marveled at its beauty. But once they left their orbit to plunge through the atmosphere, come back down to earth, and put their feet on the ground, they immediately recognized that this planet was *not* the beautiful, luminous body they thought it was when seen from space. It's a planet filled with *disasters* and *death*, a planet where places like Bosnia and Herzegovina continue to snuff out lives—a planet where *slaughter* shatters the peace of mosques in the occupied territory of the West Bank. Ours is a planet in deep trouble, a planet where accidents and deaths are commonplace, a planet where scores of innocent people die.

Why is it, for example, that when a drunk driver speeding down the highway at 70 miles an hour hits a 17-year-old driving home from school, the boy is killed instantly—but the drunk's car flips over three or four times and the drunk walks away? Why do innocent people often suffer? Why does a skinny, emaciated

baby who didn't choose to be born in a famine-stricken country die, yet other children born to rich families have maids and can eat a quart of ice cream every night, if they so desire? Why do the good often suffer? Why does suffering seem so arbitrary, pointing its finger at one person and not another? Why do we have Hurricane Andrews—and earthquakes and famines, fires and floods? What's really going on behind the scenes on Planet Earth? What's the real inside story? Why are there so many emergencies and disasters? Why do apartment buildings burn down so that sleeping children die?

Have you ever asked the question, "Why, God? If You're a God of love, why is there so much suffering, sorrow, and death on Planet Earth? If You're a God of love, why do innocent people often suffer?" Have you ever asked

that question? Most human beings have asked it in their quiet, thoughtful moments.

When we observe what's going on in the world, one thing's for sure: We see both joy and sorrow, life and death. Everyone can observe two forces at work—the force of *good* and the force of *evil*. We see a world of *contrasts*—there are beautiful fields of flowers, but there's also parched ground. We see fields of waving grain that produce abundance and plenty, but we also see starving children who hunger and die.

The outward manifestations of good and evil are visible to all. We can see sickness and health, life and death,

joy and sorrow, with the naked eye. But we can't observe or know where they came from—unless we look at the Bible. Beautiful *roses* and their painful *thorns* exist together, as do *life* and *death*. But apart from the Bible, we can't explain these things.

Looking at the world through the lens of Scripture, however, we can understand what's happening on Planet Earth. One thing is certain—the Bible clearly teaches that God is *not* the One responsible for the sickness and suffering, the sorrow and death.

Exodus 34:7 (NIV) describes God as "The Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin."

So the Bible paints a portrait of God as One with infinite love and supreme compassion. In no way can the suffering we see be attributed to God. Where, then, does it come from? What's the source of the suffering and death on Planet Earth?

THE CONFLICT OF THE AGES

Jesus told a story to enlighten us on these basic questions. We find that story in Matthew 13:24-43 (NIV), where Jesus told about "a man who sowed good seed in his field. But while everyone was sleeping, his enemy

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came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and went away. When the wheat sprouted and formed heads, then the weeds also appeared. The owner's servants came to him and said, 'Sir, didn't you sow good seed in your field? Where then did the weeds come from?' 'An enemy did this,' he replied."

Jesus went on to explain the meaning of His story by saying, "The field is the world." God created a beautiful world with clear, babbling brooks and no pollution. It was a world carpeted with living green, with fragrant flowers, where birds sang their happy songs, and the sun shone over an atmosphere of love, with no sickness or death but only fantastic health and joy! But an enemy sowed seeds of evil. God is not responsible at all. The Bible tells us, "an enemy has done this."

After Jesus, the divine Physician, healed a woman of a long-term illness, how did He describe her sickness—to what did He attribute it? He described her as one "whom Satan has kept bound for eighteen long years." Luke 13:11-16, NIV. So the Bible talks about Satan—you might call him the devil or the enemy—who's behind all sickness and suffering and death. In fact, the Bible teaches that between good and evil there exists a *cosmic controversy*, a war of intergalactic proportions. The leader on one side is called Lucifer or Satan, an evil, rebel angel who's bent on destroying all life on Planet Earth. But that leads to another question: Where did this evil being come from? Did God create him? And if God did create Satan in the first place, then isn't God ultimately responsible for evil?

Many picture Satan as a diabolical being in a red suit

When God created angels and then later mankind, He gave them the ability to choose, because God did not want puppets or robots to serve Him mindlessly with no love. But in doing this, God took an awesome risk.

with horns and a pitchfork living in a flaming hot spot at the center of the earth called "Hell." But truth is stranger than fiction. Jesus Himself said in Luke 10:18, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven." Wait a minute! Satan fell like lightning from heaven? How did Satan get *up* there in heaven? The Bible tell us that *the*

entire universe is engaged in a conflict mightier than any mere "war of the worlds" in science fiction. The Bible tell us that there is, going on at this very moment, a *cosmic controversy* between Christ and Satan. God never created a demon, a devil. We can never understand why sickness and suffering and war exist on Earth until we first understand what went on in heaven. We can never understand why there are tears and sorrow and death on Earth unless we first understand what went on in heaven.

Let your mind travel back in time over the decades, the centuries, the millennia. Go back with me to the beginning of the controversy in heaven. Up there in heaven, God created angels. One of those angels God created was a dazzling being called Lucifer. The name *Lucifer* comes from two Latin words—*lux*, meaning "light," and *fero*, meaning "bearer"—so Lucifer means "lightbearer." Lucifer was created perfect by God, a shining angel of dazzling brightness.

THE ALL-IMPORTANT POWER OF CHOICE

Ezekiel 28:12-15 (NIV) describes God's creation of this perfect angel, Lucifer: "You were the model of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone adorned you. . . . You were anointed as a guardian cherub [the KJV says, "*the anointed cherub*"], for so I ordained you." So Lucifer, this brilliant model of perfection, this angel of dazzling brightness, was ordained by God to a position even above that of other heavenly beings. And with it all, because He loved, God gave Lucifer a wonderful *gift*—the power of *choice*. For without the power of choice, His creatures are without the opportunity or ability to love. And without the ability to love, we're without the opportunity to be happy.

You see, when God created angels and then later mankind, He gave them the ability to choose, because God did not want *puppets* or *robots* to serve Him mindlessly, with no love. But in doing this, God took an awesome risk. For His creatures, being free moral agents, could choose to follow Him, serve Him, and love Him—or not! And the more intelligent the creatures are, the more dangerous the risk is.

The Bible says of prideful Lucifer in Ezekiel 28:17, "Your heart became proud on account of your beauty, and *you corrupted your wisdom* because of your splendor." Wise, intelligent Lucifer, whom God created with absolute freedom of choice, "corrupted" himself and became extremely sly, cunning, and crafty. This once-perfect cherub began whispering doubts to other heavenly angels, saying that they'd have greater happiness and joy if they were free to do whatever they wanted to do. He began dismissing the idea that it was necessary to obey God.

Now, some may ask, “Why did God create Lucifer with the power of choice? Why didn’t God just make Lucifer so he automatically had to obey?” Although that’s a logical question, the answer should be obvious: God *didn’t want* an angelic being with two screws on top of his head that He could unscrew, put in an IBM computer chip, and every time God pulled a string or pushed a button, Lucifer would raise his hand or lift a leg!

As a parent, how would you like a *computerized child* that you’d program to say every morning, “I will eat

God wanted His creatures to
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my cereal.” And that child gets up every morning all programmed, and he says, “Yes, Mama, I will eat my cereal. Yes, Mama, I will do my homework. Yes, Mama, I will not fight in school.” And before that child goes to bed, he says, “Yes, Mama, my room is all picked up,” because you’d programmed him in the morning. Then that robot child reaches out his cold, iron hand and with cold, plastic lips gives you a lifeless, loveless good-night kiss—because, after all, he’s just a robot. Would you want that? Or would you want your own little child wiping sleep out his eyes and saying, “I love you, Mama,” even if he hadn’t cleaned his room or hadn’t finished his cereal?

You as a parent don’t want a mere robot child who minds you and shows affection just because you programmed him to do that. As a heavenly Parent, God didn’t want angels—or people—to be only cosmic computers, either. So He gave His angels intelligent minds with the power to choose. God wanted His creatures to serve Him out of love. Love, by its very nature, can’t be programmed or forced—it must be voluntarily given. We can truly love only by choice, and we can be truly happy only if we love, for love is what makes us happy.

But this angel, Lucifer, who was created perfect by God, said to himself, “I’m wiser than God. I’m more intelligent than God. I could be a better Ruler than God.” And he began sowing lies in heaven, telling the other angels, “You don’t have to obey God.” The Bible clearly tells the story.

Lucifer implied that disobedience was the way to hap-

piness, that freedom meant being free from obeying God. A lot of Satan’s lies are still going around today, aren’t they? Satan tells people: “Don’t get involved in religion. Don’t study the Bible or get involved in church activities. Living for Christ is too restrictive. Religion restricts your freedom.” That’s the same old lie he told in heaven and in the Garden of Eden, yet he still uses it today.

But the exciting thing about the Bible is that it sweeps the curtain aside and lets you really know what’s going on. Your friends may not understand what’s going on. But they see the wars, the famines, the sickness. They have no idea why our world is filled with so much tragedy, but the Bible looks right into Lucifer’s heart and lets us know his strategy.

Isaiah 14:12-14 tells us what Lucifer was thinking in heaven thousands of years ago: “How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer. . . . For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven. I will exalt *my throne* above the stars of God. . . . I will be like the most High.” So the issue was control of God’s *throne*. Lucifer said, “I, as a created being, want to exalt myself *higher* than the Creator. I, as a created being, want to sit on the throne.” *Throne* implies kingdom and law and authority. Governments make laws, which require obedience. God’s divine government in heaven made laws for heavenly beings to guide and direct them. But Lucifer wanted to undermine God’s government, His authority, His laws. He wanted to sit on God’s throne!

WAR IN HEAVEN!

Incredibly enough, it was *there in heaven* that rebellion began. Lucifer’s selfishness and greed and pride started a WAR in heaven. A strange place for a war! At stake was control of the entire universe. It’s a war much more exciting than *Star Wars*—much more exciting than fictional aliens from outer space on television’s small screen. This titanic struggle is a fight to the finish—*truly* “the war to end all wars.” For the first time, angels in heaven felt their affections being lured away from the true God. Lucifer, the brilliant angel with the charismatic personality, was seductively persuasive when he said, “Follow me!” It’s the same in our world today—we follow either Christ or Satan.

Lucifer, the original rebel, exercised his power of choice in a revolting way by turning against God! Revelation 12:7-9 describes that great conflict: “There was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels. . . . And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world.” A line was drawn in the sands of heaven—or maybe in the clouds—and every angel had to decide: “Whom will I serve—Christ or Satan?” Every angel had to line up on one side or the other and decide, “Will I have faith in

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God and lovingly obey Him, even if it seems I'm giving up my freedom?"

Some of you reading this have to make a decision. There are things you're doing which in your heart you know aren't right. If you continue doing them, Satan will become your master and live in your soul. The war fought in heaven, where every angel had to decide, is the *same war* fought in every human heart today. You'll never

If God had zapped Satan at the very outset of his rebellion, it would have made his lies seem true. All other heavenly beings would then have served God out of fear, not love.

be truly free if Satan is your master and you turn your back on what God wants you to do. Only Christ gives true liberation and freedom. Only after I *give up* my freedom to do what I *think* I want to do—only after I accept Christ's will—do I become truly free.

And so, in heaven, every angel had to make a decision. "Who is my master? Am I on Christ's side, or Satan's side?" One-third of the angels had to be cast out of heaven because they believed Satan's great lie: "God is restrictive. He doesn't want you to be happy or free. So do your own thing. Follow God's way, and you'll be restricted. You'll have no joy. The Bible is old-fashioned. The Ten Commandments are outdated. Do what you want—we're living in a modern, liberal age in which everyone lives by his own code and makes his own rules. If it feels good—*do it!*" If you believe that lie, you accept the same lie Lucifer spread in heaven. Sadly, the human race believed that lie in the Garden of Eden when Adam and Eve rebelled against God. Now our world is a world in rebellion. That's the reason, my friend, the world's in such a mess.

This is a planet in rebellion against God! It has disobeyed God's laws and turned its back on God's commandments. As a result, our world has been plunged into misery. The Bible says, in Revelation 12:9, "The great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, who *deceives* the whole world; he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him." Notice *how* he deceives—his point of deception is: If Christ is your Master, you *won't* be happy, for to obey God is to *restrict* your freedom.

Someone says, "Wait a minute, Mark. I can understand that God gave Lucifer the power of choice because He didn't want robot angels, and I can understand that Lucifer chose wrongly. But when Lucifer chose wrongly, why didn't God just swat him like a fly? Why didn't God kill him—zap him?" From a human standpoint, that reaction may seem logical, effective, and proper. But consider the following hypothetical situation:

Let's suppose the President of the United States was charged with great fraud and outrageous financial misdeeds. Suppose one of his own cabinet members and some congressmen and senators closest to him solemnly charged him with flagrant embezzlement amounting to many millions of dollars. But suppose, further, that the President, as Commander-in-Chief of our armed forces, signed an executive decree ordering Army generals to *kill* all those making charges against him. With one stroke of his pen, the President could thus silence all opposition overnight! That would prove beyond a shadow of a doubt that he had never embezzled the money. Right? No! If he called out the generals and resorted to force, it would certainly *not* prove he was right—it would prove he was wrong!

And if God had *zapped* Satan at the very outset of his rebellion, it would have made his lies seem true. All other heavenly beings would then have served God out of fear, not love. They would have reasoned, "Satan *tried* to warn us about God, and—wow! Look what happened to him. He *told* us God was a tyrant! He certainly was right. We'd better snap into shape or God will zap *us*, too." You see, God had to let the devil have free rein so that he'd expose *himself* for the monster he is.

THE DEVIL HAS HIS DAY

Keep in mind that Lucifer was the anointed cherub, highly respected among the angels. Very subtly, he *lied* to the holy angels, who had no prior experience with sin and had never heard a lie before. This crafty devil, who *originated* sin, is called "the *father* of lies" in John 8:44. And one-third of those angels were deceived into believing that Lucifer was right and that their loving heavenly Father was restrictive. If God had destroyed Satan, it would've seemed that Lucifer's claims were true. The whole universe would have been forever insecure. To protect the universe throughout eternity, God reluctantly but wisely allowed sin to be planted, and to grow, and to bear its bitter harvest—so the whole universe could SEE sin's horrible results.

Someone may say, "Wait a minute, pastor. Are you saying God created Earth as a dumping-ground for Satan? That wasn't fair?" No, I'm not saying that at all. When Lucifer was cast out of heaven, this world was God's pearl of great price. God created this planet magnificently and beautifully. He didn't create this planet with Satan on it.

Neither did He create this planet as a dumping ground to get rid of Satan. When Satan was cast out of heaven, Earth had just been created, and Satan set his eyes on this planet. Now to be fair to the whole universe, if God had not given Adam and Eve the power of choice and allowed them to face the devil's temptation, Satan would have screamed before the whole universe that "God is unfair! God knows that if He gives Adam and Eve the choice, they'll choose *my* way because it's *better*."

Although God had to allow our first parents to be tested, as a loving heavenly Father, He warned Adam and Eve that if they followed Satan and disobeyed, they would die. Revelation 12:12 says, "Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! For the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth he has but a short time." *Woe* is a warning word, like *beware*, so God said to Adam and Eve, "Beware." When God created the earth, Lucifer wasn't here yet—it was all perfect. Then Satan came with his terrible temptation. But if God was to be fair and just and the Giver of freedom, He must grant all created beings—seraphim and cherubim and humans—the power of choice.

SATAN INSINUATES DOUBT

Satan *insinuated doubt* when he asked Eve, "Did God *really* say you mustn't eat of that tree in the garden? Did God really say that?" He tries the same tactic with you and me. He whispers, "If you make this surrender to Christ, you won't be happy. Don't give this up. Did God *really* say you had to give it up in the first place?" He constantly insinuates doubt. "Your sins are not forgiven. Don't try to be a Christian. You're too weak—you don't have the spiritual strength. Did God really say He'd forgive you? Did God really say He'd give you the power?"

The doubts that come to mind are planted not by *God* but by *Satan*, and if allowed to grow, they'll produce a harvest of shame. If you doubt you can be a Christian—that's from Satan. If you doubt you'll ever be strong enough to overcome sin—that's from Satan. If you know what God wants you to do and you really want to do it, but doubts come into your mind and you begin thinking, "Oh, maybe I don't have to give this up anyway,"—that's from Satan. If you doubt your sins are forgiven—that's from Satan. Satan insinuates doubt, but God inspires confidence.

Cunningly, Satan asked Eve, "Did God really say you can eat from any tree in the garden?" And Eve replied in Genesis 3:2, 3, NIV, "We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, but God did say, 'You must not eat fruit of the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.'" God wanted to give Adam and Eve freedom to choose, and therefore He said (Genesis 2:16, 17), "You can eat of every tree, but not that

tree in the middle of the garden" God reserved that tree as a test of their loyalty, a test of their obedience, a test of their faithfulness. That tree was a TEST of who was Lord and Master and in control of their lives.

But Eve failed that test when she listened to the evil one's voice and turned from God's command. In Genesis 3:5 (NIV), Lucifer lied, "God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." Lucifer told her, "Eve, *God knows* that when you eat of that tree you'll enter into an exalted state of being and be much happier. God is harsh and cruel and tyrannical. He wants to restrain your happiness!" Eve succumbed to the serpent's voice and said, "I certainly don't want my happiness curtailed." And the instant she reached for the forbidden fruit, she disobeyed God. Eve reached, and Adam reached, passing "the point of no return." By the simple act of eating it, they chose a new master—they gave their hearts and minds to the evil one. It was irretrievably too late. Sin separated them from God, and they were no longer innocent and righteous.

Sin built a great barrier between them and God. Isaiah 59:2: "Your sins have separated you from God." Separation from God is separation from the Source of life and health. So immediately the seeds of death were in their bodies. Their cells began to deteriorate and degenerate.

There's a war going on—an
intergalactic war. It's the war for
control of your heart, your mind,
your allegiance.

Health became fragile. Germs and weeds immediately began to grow in the environment. Separated from God, they were separated from the Source of happiness. Sorrow began to fill their lives. They became greedy and selfish, hoarding things for themselves. Separated from God, human hearts are deceived and defiled. It became easier to do wrong than right—their very natures were now changed.

The Bible says in Romans 6:16, NIV, "Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to someone to obey him as slaves, you are slaves to the one whom you obey—whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience which leads to righteousness?" That's what

Adam and Eve did. Once servants of God, they became slaves of Satan. Once followers of righteousness, they became seekers of corruption. Once free, they were now shackled by sin. The shadow of death came over the garden. Flowers no longer bloomed continuously. The earth became parched and polluted, a rebellious planet that drifted away from God.

Would God destroy earth—and the disloyal couple with it? No, God’s love would not allow Him to do that. But you may have wondered to yourself, “Even if God had to give Satan a chance to expose himself for the demon he is, why doesn’t God *do* something about this tragedy now?”

The truth of the matter is, He *has* done something about it. When the world was in the grasp of Satan, God sent Jesus! 1 Corinthians 4:9 says, “We are made a *spectacle* unto the world, and to angels, and to men.” That word “spectacle” is the Greek *theatron* from which we get our English word “theater.” As Shakespeare said:

*All the world’s a stage,
And all the men and women merely players:
They have their exits and their entrances;
And one man in his time plays many parts.*

Our world is a stage, and on the stage of this earth, God revealed His love to the whole universe. When Satan was screaming, “God doesn’t love you! He’s just a vindictive Judge. God’s laws were made to take away your happiness,” Jesus was born as a Babe in Bethlehem. The purpose of Christ’s coming to earth was to reveal to the universe that *God is love!*

THE BATTLE IS STILL RAGING

You see, there’s a battle still raging. Ephesians 6:12, NIV: “For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.” You see, there’s a war going on—an intergalactic war. It’s the war for control of your heart, your mind, your allegiance. Satan urgently whispers, “Do your own thing—live your own life! You have a right to be happy. Go out and have fun. Drink. Indulge yourself! Have some exciting, promiscuous sex. Make money—make your house your god, TV programs your god, sports your god. Make *yourself* your god. Go ahead and *live* a good moral life—or live an *immoral* life—but forget about God. Forget about the things of eternity.”

But when human beings live this way, they don’t realize they’re held captive by slavemaster Satan. You see, there’s a battle raging—a battle for your very soul. That’s why it’s so hard to do right and so easy to do wrong. You’re having this struggle because Satan and his evil angels want to destroy you.

JOB’S PAINFUL EXPERIENCE

But wait. Jesus came! And when He came, Jesus openly exposed Satan’s lies. Right here the experience of Job can be very instructive and illuminating. Satan looked down at Job and hurled a challenge at God: “God, Job serves You only because he has a nice house, wonderful chariots, and large flocks. Job serves You only because he has good health, a charming, beautiful wife, and terrific kids. But if You took away his home and other possessions, he’d curse You to Your face. People serve You, God, only because they want to get good things for themselves, not because they love You. Their service to You is motivated by selfishness.”

But God said, “Satan, that’s not true of Job. Take away whatever you like, and I know he’ll still serve Me. Look, Satan, everything he has is in your hands. But you can’t hurt his body—don’t lay a finger on him.”

So Satan came down and took away everything Job had—his house, his flocks, his children. Yet Job remained faithful and said in Job 1:21, “The Lord gives, and the Lord takes away.” Then Satan said, “God, if I could touch his body, then he’d curse You to Your face.” The Lord agreed to let Satan test Job in this way but would not allow Job’s life to be taken. This time when Satan came down, he gave Job painful boils, but still Job served God. Why? Because Job sensed that his life was a gift from God and that God’s plan was best for his life. Even in disappointment and pain he could still love and trust God.

Satan wants you to think that the
bad things that happen to you
come from God. He wants to play
havoc with your life so you’ll
curse God.

Why did Job have this assurance? Because God had made a promise, and Job believed that promise. God had said, “I’ll give the greatest Gift. My only-begotten Son will come to this dark world and live in human flesh to show how much I love you.”

In spite of this world’s rebellion, God made a promise that in the midst of suffering—the Job experiences we all go through—He would reveal Himself in the form of Jesus Christ. He’d live in this morally twisted, spiritually dwarfed world amidst all its misery and sin. Christ would show us what God is *really* like, in contradiction to Satan’s lying insinuations. With incredible love, He

would die an excruciating death to save us from our sins. Faithful Job knew his Redeemer lived and that he would see Him at the last day—even if skinworms destroyed his body, he knew he'd see Jesus in his flesh, with his own eyes. Job 19:25-27.

Satan's hideous hand reached out and took everything Job had. And he'll do anything he can to destroy you, your life, your happiness. He wants you to think that the bad things that happen to you come from God. He wants to play havoc with your life so you'll curse God, not only because he sees you as a mere *pawn* in this war but also because your failure will *bolster* his claim that no one can keep God's laws, anyway.

THE COMPASSIONATE CHRIST

But because Jesus came in human flesh, He truly understands you. He understands your sorrow, your disappointment, your heartache. Christ didn't stay in the comfort of heaven's ivory palaces and shout moral slogans down to earth. Christ walked the dusty roads of Galilee to reveal the truth about the Father so we could choose our loving heavenly Father as our Master and know that Satan's lies lead to heartache, destruction, and death.

Jesus mingled with the crowds of suffering humanity. He touched blind eyes, and they were opened! He touched deaf ears, and they were unstopped! He touched withered, paralyzed limbs, and they glowed with new life and strength! Jesus broke the bread and miraculously fed 5,000 people on the hillsides of Galilee. Jesus came to the tomb of Lazarus and resurrected him from the dead. Jesus took that widow's son in His arms and breathed life into him again. When Jesus opened the eyes of the blind, He was saying, "My Father loves you and wants you to see." When Jesus opened the ears of the deaf, He was saying, "My Father loves you and wants you to hear." When Jesus broke the bread, He was saying, "My Father loves you. Satan is a liar. In this war of the worlds, famine doesn't come from Me—I break bread and feed people." Everything Jesus did testifies to the fact that "Satan is a liar." In this war of the worlds, you can trust God's love. Since He knows what's best for your life, He'll lead you to true freedom and happiness.

Hebrews 2:14 (NIV) says of Christ: "Since the children have flesh and blood, He too shared in their humanity so that by His death He might destroy him who holds the power of death, that is, the devil." When Christ went to that cross, Satan was angry because even the inanimate wooden cross on which Christ was nailed in a sense cried out, "Satan is a liar!" Why? Because Christ—in His great love—was willing to hang and die, willing to go into the grave and never come out, willing to shed His blood for you. Isaiah 49:15, 16 (RSV) asks, "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should have

no compassion on the son of her womb? Even these *may* forget, yet I will *not* forget you. Behold, I have graven you on the palms of My hands."

You may wonder, "God, where are You in my suffering? Where are You when I have cancer? Where are You when babies starve to death? Where are You when my 17-year-old son crashes through the car's windshield? Where are You when I go through a painful divorce? God, where are you when my marriage partner runs off with someone else?"

With unutterable love, God answers: "Do you think I

Our God identifies with us
because He walked in human flesh.
He walks beside us in our
suffering. He lives with us in our
pain. He comforts us in sorrow.

don't know what it means to suffer? Never forget that I hung on a cross from nail-pierced hands. I know what pain and suffering are like. I've been there—and because I suffered so much, I can be with you and comfort you when you suffer. 'Even these may forget, yet I will not forget you. Behold, I have graven you on the palms of My hands.'

"Do you think I don't know what it's like to be lonely? Never forget that Peter denied Me, Judas betrayed Me, and My own Jewish people rejected Me. I was lonely and discouraged. If you ever get lonely, remember that your name is written in the nail-prints of My hands. If you're ever tempted to ask, 'Where are you, God?' in your suffering, remember I didn't cause that suffering, My child. Lucifer caused it because you're on a planet in rebellion. In your suffering, your sorrow, your heartache and disappointment, remember that I suffered, too. And from the blood that flowed from My side, comfort can flow. My child, when you suffer, *I'm there with you* in your suffering. *I'm right there beside you* when you suffer. Remember, when you shed tears, I shed them with you. When you're in pain, I feel it, too."

The cross cries out, "We have a God who suffers with us." No other religion in the world teaches anything like that. You see, Mohammedanism—Islam—says that we've digressed morally and have to *come up* to where God is. Buddhism also says we have to go up to where God is—we have to bring all our offerings, our fruit offerings, our idols—we somehow have to go back to where

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God is. Christianity does *not* say we must go up to where God is, but that God comes down to where *we* are!

LET JESUS COMFORT YOU

God trudged this darkened world in the form of Jesus Christ. God knows what it's like to be lonely, to be tired, to be hungry. God knows what it's like to be denied. Our God identifies with us because He walked in human flesh. He walks beside us in our suffering. He lives with

There's no suffering, no disappointment, no loneliness we can feel that Jesus is not there with us in that experience.

us in our pain. He comforts us in sorrow. When you're lonely, He's lonely. When you're disappointed, He's disappointed. He brings courage and hope to our hearts. The cross reveals that God knows what it's like to suffer far more than we'll ever experience, so He comforts us in suffering.

God sent Jesus to disprove Satan's lies and to show the whole universe that God is love. He sent Jesus to win back our allegiance after we had sold out to Satan. I believe that God is a God of love. I believe God's way is best. I believe Satan destroys our freedom. I'd rather follow God and obey Him, even if it looks as if my freedom is restricted, for I believe that when I give myself to Christ, He gives me true freedom.

God is doing something about all this suffering. The good news is that *beyond* the cross, Christ was resurrected from the dead! The resurrected Christ is alive right now, and He cradles every sufferer in His arms. He comforts that woman going through the trauma of divorce. He carries on His shoulders that child whose parents were killed in an accident. He puts His arms around that man suffering with cancer. There's no suffering, no disappointment, no loneliness we can feel that Jesus is not there *with* us in that experience. We must take our eyes *off* our painful trials and put them on Jesus.

THE HELL-ON-EARTH HITLER CREATED

Some of us suffer physical pain, while others are wounded emotionally or psychologically by things that haunt us in life. One thing that haunted me for much of my life when I got older was, Why did God allow Hitler

to have those concentration camps and cause so many innocent people to suffer?

I've been to Dachau and Auschwitz several times. I walked down the tracks into Auschwitz in Poland where, from 1939 to 1945, Hitler killed *tens of thousands* of people. I wept when I walked those tracks. As you come into Auschwitz you go through the gate that says, "*Arbeit Macht Frei*" which means "Work makes you free." I have actual pictures from all over Europe of the Nazi years. In one picture, Nazi Gestapo officers are taking Jews on the train to a concentration camp. The Jews were told by the tens of thousands that they were being put on trains to be taken from the war front to a resort. They gathered their few belongings and were taken to Auschwitz on big trains. There were a half-million people there at one time!

The terrible truth is that Dachau and Auschwitz were not just "concentration camps." They were *death camps* filled with unspeakable horror. Jewish victims at Auschwitz were divided into three groups: The first group—the children, the elderly, and the sick—stood in line to be killed immediately. The second group would be worked to death. They would work until they dropped—in three months they'd be dead. The third group would be alive for six months, but no one would live beyond six months. That was the plan—get the most work out of them, kill them, then have others take their places.

One picture shows human hair from the victims. Before they were murdered, their hair was shaved off and used to make flax-like blankets for German soldiers at the war front. I saw a room in Auschwitz that was filled with nothing but human hair. *Hair* of the people who had been gassed and burned—thousands of them—was piled clear to the ceiling! You can still see that hair there today. Another picture shows the execution wall in Auschwitz, at which 40,000 people were shot to death.

But the most shocking thing was the gas chamber. The Nazis in charge of the camp told the people they were going to give them a shower. They stripped every man, woman, and child naked. Then they marched them into the shower rooms and packed them so close together that the people had to hold their arms up above their heads. After the Nazis packed them in, the doors were locked and deadly cyanide gas was released so that it poured out of the shower heads instead of water. The people died immediately. Guards came in with hammers and knocked out the gold teeth of the corpses. Then the bodies were taken to the crematoriums and put into the furnaces. They were stacked there by the hundreds, day in and day out, 24 hours a day. For six years in Dachau and Auschwitz, the furnaces never stopped burning human flesh.

“LO, I AM WITH YOU ALWAYS”

When I went to Auschwitz, I couldn't help thinking, “Oh, God, *where were You* when all this suffering was going on—when millions were killed?” My head was spinning. It was not an easy experience. I have a film of when they liberated the camp. Pictures of the children, terrible photographs of medical experiments that were done—drugs were injected into people's brains and they went crazy—terrible! I was emotionally upset when I went to Cellblock No. 11, Cell No. 1632. As I went down into that cell, I stood there staring at it, and I noticed a cross etched into the wall of that cell and a picture of Jesus' face that a prisoner had carved. Just below Jesus' face, His broken heart was drawn. The prisoner carved these words in the wall: “Jesus was here.”

And then I understood where Christ was. Christ was there with every prisoner who suffered. Christ was in that prison camp giving those prisoners courage. Christ was where He *always* is when any human being suffers. The Good News is that Christ, who revealed His love 2,000 years ago as a suffering Sacrifice, is with us when we suffer. The Christ who hung on a cross and died, who knows what it's like to go through pain, is with us when we go through pain.

When you say, “I want to be yours, Christ,” and you commit your life to Him, He commits Himself to you. Then there's no pain or sorrow you can experience that He doesn't share with you. Jesus, the living Christ, is with you. He was there at Auschwitz. He's with us now in our suffering.

THE FINAL CHAPTER

But the last chapter in this story has not yet been written—the curtain has not yet gone up on the last act in this drama of the ages. We've seen that God did something in the *past*—He sent Jesus. And He's doing something *right now*—He's ministering sympathy and support to our hearts from heaven. But *soon* He'll do something *more*—one day Jesus Christ will come! One day the whole universe will have seen that Satan's way has brought sin, sickness, suffering, and death. Ezekiel 28:16 and 18 says, “I will *destroy* thee, O covering cherub [Lucifer]. . . . I will bring forth a *fire* from the midst of thee, it shall *devour* thee, and I will bring thee to *ashes* upon the earth.”

Satan and sin and every remnant of wickedness will be destroyed! The last act in the drama is the coming of Jesus Christ. The Bible says, in Matthew 24:27, NIV, “As *lightning* comes from the east and flashes to the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.” This is the closing scene in the last act—this is the final chapter: the coming of Christ in power and glory to do away with sin and sorrow. Hang on, brother and sister—Jesus is coming! Verse 30 says, “Then shall appear the sign of the

Son of man in heaven. . . . They shall *see* the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven *with power and great glory.*”

Rebellion has had its day. Sin and sorrow and heartache have had their day. Christ comes with all the power and glory and majesty of the Father. Satan and sin and sinners are finally and completely destroyed. And then, thank God, there'll be a magnificent New World—a world where there'll be no suffering, no sickness, no disappointment, no sorrow, no loneliness!

Are you going through suffering right now? The Christ who loves you knows what it is to suffer. Christ will cradle you in His arms and whisper encouragement in your ear. Just hang on—He's coming soon to *liberate* this earth and to create a New Heavens and a New Earth! I want to see Him come, don't you? I want to *follow Him home*—don't you? ▲

Discoveries in Prophecy Quick Quiz

Our heavenly Father has *so much* He longs to teach us! Think of each seminar session as one in a series of steps leading upward—a series of “lessons from heaven.” May we learn our lessons well, so we in turn can teach others. God’s Word, the Bible—our Textbook for this seminar—offers **Learning Unlimited!**

Angel 911: Revelation’s Angelic Conflict

Numbers in parentheses below refer to page numbers in special-edition Seminar Bibles—the first number for the King James Version, the second for the New King James Version. For example: (709 / 681).

- The Lord Jesus Himself declared, “I beheld Satan as lightning _____
from _____.” **To check your answer, see Luke 10:18 (1025 / 1021).**
- Some men reason that “Since **God** created all things, then He must have made the **Devil**, also.” But the Bible says of Lucifer, “Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God. . . . Thou art the anointed cherub. . . . Thou wast _____ **in all thy ways** from the day that thou wast **created**, till iniquity was found in thee.” **To check your answer, see Ezekiel 28:13-15 (851 / 829).**
- T** When God created angels and mankind, He gave them the wonderful *gift* of **freedom of choice**, for He didn’t want mere *puppets* or *robots* to serve Him mindlessly with **no love**.
 F **To check your answer, see Genesis 2:16-17 (2/2), Ezekiel 28:15 (851/829), Joshua 24:15 (266 / 243).**
- When Lucifer exercised his God-given freedom and *rebelled*, the Bible says, “There was _____ in _____,” and today we’re still in the midst of a *cosmic conflict* which is bigger than this small world. **To check your answer, see Revelation 12:7 (1226 / 1222).**
- The egotistical Devil *fell* because of **pride**. The Bible says: “How thou art *fallen* from heaven, O Lucifer. . . . For thou hast said in thine heart, _____ will ascend into heaven, _____ will exalt _____ throne above the stars of God: _____ will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: _____ will ascend above the heights of the clouds; _____ will be like the _____.” **To check your answer, see Isaiah 14:12-14 (705 / 677).**

Satan has “**I**” trouble:

- Jesus said that “the _____ . . . was a **murderer** from the beginning . . . and the **father of lies**.” **To check your answer, see John 8:44 (1060 / 1055).**
- When we wonder “Why?” as we see all the **sorrow, suffering, and death** in the world, we should remember Jesus’ story of the wheat and the weeds, when He said: “An _____ hath done this.” **To check your answer, see Matthew 13:24-43—especially verse 28 (961 / 957).**

Quick Quiz

8. Though God did not destroy Lucifer at the outset of his rebellion, the day is coming when He will do so: "I will _____ thee, O covering cherub. . . . Therefore will I bring a _____ from the midst of thee, it shall _____ thee, and I will bring thee to _____ upon the earth." **To check your answer, see Ezekiel 28:16-18 (851/829).**
9. T Christ says even a **mother** may forget her nursing child, but He will **never** forget us, F because He has *graven* us on the *palms* of His nail-pierced *hands*.
To check your answer, see Isaiah 49:15-16 (736 / 711).
10. To disprove Satan's lies about God, "Jesus went about *all* the cities and villages, _____ in their synagogues, and _____ the gospel of the kingdom, and _____ every sickness and every disease among the people. . . . He was moved with _____ on them." **To check your answer, see Matthew 9:35-36 (956 / 952).**
11. T We can be thankful that our High Priest, Jesus the Son of God, can *sympathize* and be F *touched* with our feelings of pain and sorrow, because *He's been through it all*, Himself.
To check your answer, see Hebrews 4:14-16 (1191 / 1184).
12. *Where* was God or Christ when so many suffered in the Holocaust at Auschwitz, and *where* is He when *you* have sickness, pain, or sorrow? **To check your answer, see Matthew 28:20 (984 / 979), Hebrews 13:5 (1199 / 1192), Deuteronomy 31:6 & 8 (233 / 212), Psalm 23 (591 / 548).**
- _____
- _____
- _____



Words to the Wise:

"He is *despised* and *rejected* of men; a Man of *sorrows*, and *acquainted* with grief; and we hid as it were our faces from Him; He was despised, and we esteemed Him not. Surely He hath borne *our* griefs, and carried *our* sorrows: yet we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for *our* transgressions, He was bruised for *our* iniquities: the chastisement of *our* peace was upon Him; and with His stripes *we* are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on *Him* the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth: He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He openeth not His mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment: and . . . He was *cut off* out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was He stricken."

—Isaiah 53:3-9 (739 / 714).

Discoveries in Prophecy

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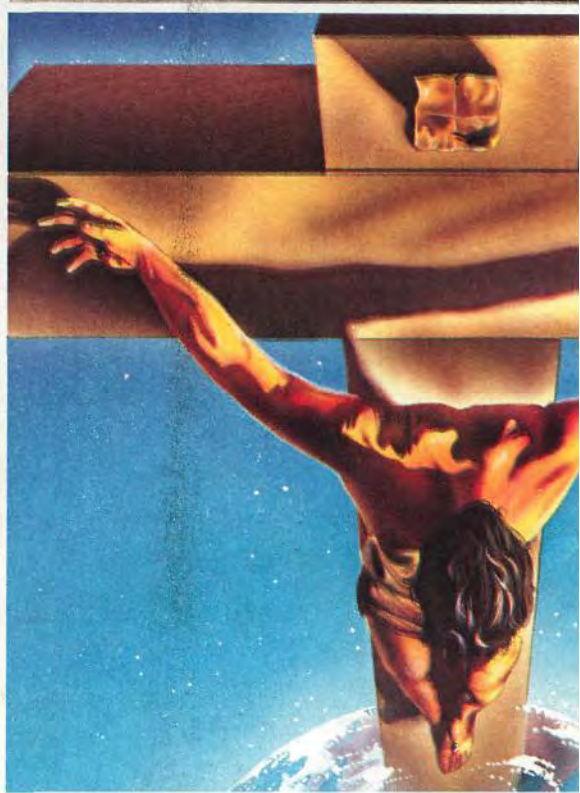
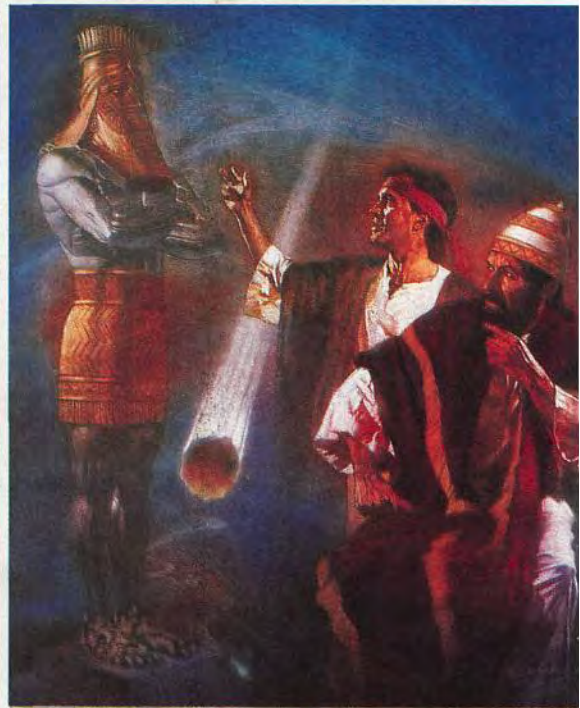
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