

THE WAR BEHIND ALL WARS



Lesson 1 for April 6, 2024

Justina



“And 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”
(Revelation 12:7, 8, NKJV)

We live immersed in a conflict of galactic dimensions. Even if we are not aware, or do not believe that this is possible, the conflict is real.

The conflicting forces are spiritual, invisible to us (Eph. 6:12). However, we can feel the effects of war. Disasters, immorality, death...

At stake was the very government of God, the loyalty of angels and unfallen worlds. Today your loyalty and mine are at stake.



-  The beginning of the conflict
-  Rebellion in Heaven
-  Rebellion on Earth
-  love strikes back
-  The conflict today

THE BEGINNING OF THE CONFLICT

"You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created, till wickedness was found in you" (Ezekiel 28:15)



The fact that, in Eden, there was a being that incited Eve to distrust God, implies a rebellion against God existed before humanity existed (Gen. 3:1).

Jesus called this being that sows distrust between God and his creatures "an enemy," which he identified as the devil (Mt. 13:39).

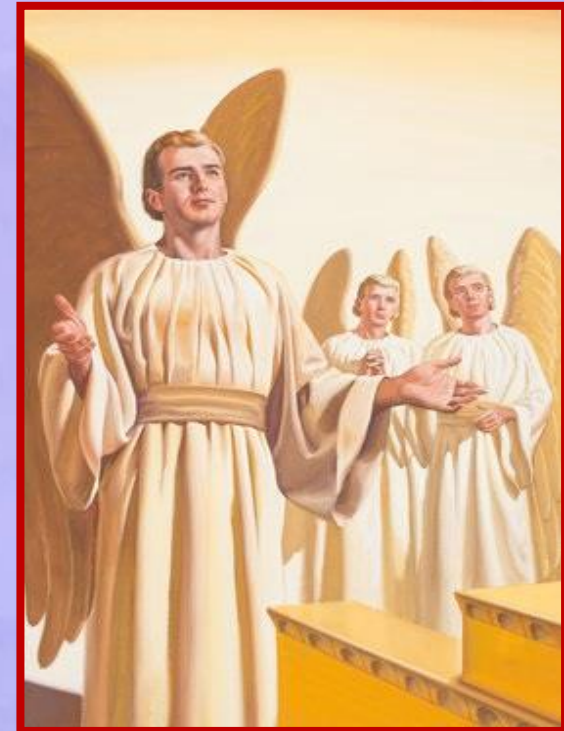


The first question we should ask ourselves is: did God create the devil, that is, did God create an evil being?



The Bible tells us that the devil is an angel called Lucifer (Is. 14:12). This angel was created perfect and beautiful (Ez. 28:12). He was exalted to the highest position an angel could aspire to: protective cherub (Ez. 28:13-14).

If Lucifer was perfect, how did he become the devil? How did the conflict between God and him begin? God granted him, like all his created beings, freedom of choice and, inexplicably, Lucifer decided to rebel, and aspired to occupy the throne of God (Ez. 28:15; Is. 14:13-14).



REBELLION IN HEAVEN

"Its tail swept a third of the stars out of the sky and flung them to the earth..." (Revelation 12:4a)



In his desire to usurp the throne of Heaven, Lucifer raised doubts in the angels about the justice of the divine government. Weren't they all free? Why submit to severe and, perhaps, unjust or capricious laws?

Lucifer became Satan, the accuser (Rev. 12:10; Job 1:6, 9-10). He rejected all of God's loving calls to change his attitude.



The rebellion became an open conflict, a war where each angel had to make their decision. 1/3 of the angels followed Satan, while the rest remained faithful to God (Rev. 12:4a).

Today the war continues. Satan is still active. He tries to drag every person to rebel against God. There are only two sides. Those who want to obey God's Law, or those who reject it. The decision is ours (Deut. 30:11, 16, 19; Josh. 24:15).



“The great God could at once have hurled this archdeceiver from heaven; but this was not His purpose. He would give the rebellious an equal chance to measure strength and might with His Own Son and His loyal angels. In this battle every angel would choose his own side and be manifested to all. [...] If God had exercised His power to punish this chief rebel, disaffected angels would not have been manifested; hence, God took another course, for He would manifest distinctly to all the heavenly host His justice and His judgment.”

REBELLION ON EARTH

“And he said, ‘Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?’ ” (Genesis 3:11)

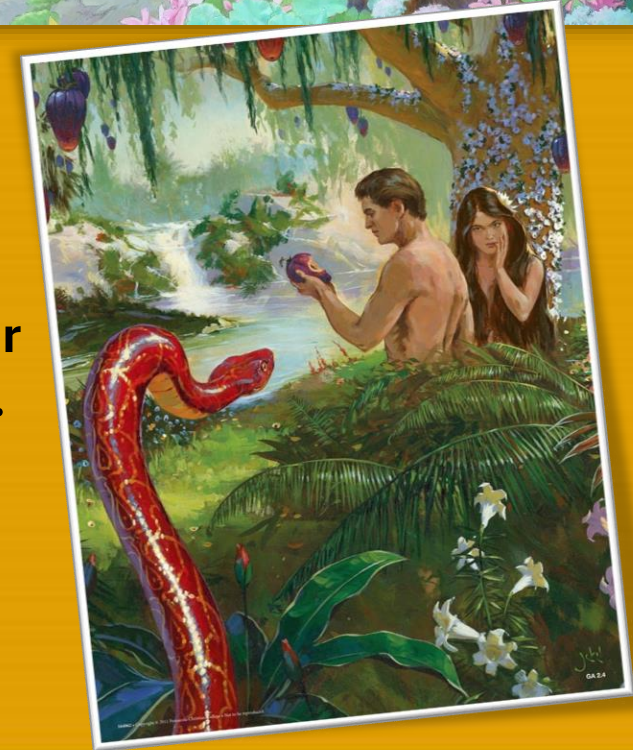
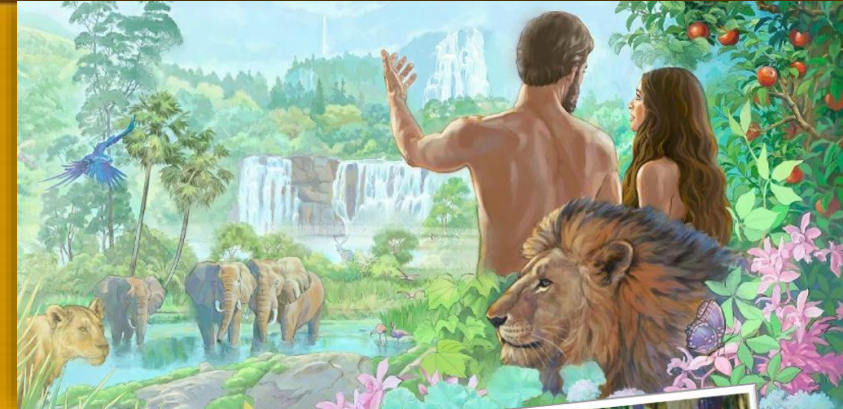
God created angels in a sinless, perfect environment. Likewise, God created humanity in a perfect environment, free from sin (Gen.1:31).

Just as it happened with the angels, God also created us with the power to choose freely. So, Adam and Eve could exercise that freedom, he gave them a simple order: “but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil” (Gen. 2:17).

That was the only point where Satan could make them doubt. Deviously, he achieved his goal. Adam and Eve doubted God, disobeyed Him, and turned away from the source of life (Gen.3:6, 9-13, 19). Adam opened the door for sin to enter, and thus death passed to all men (Rom. 5:12).

Since then, we live in a world marked by pain, illness and death. Are we all paying for Adam's sin?

We each pay for our own sin: “for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23).



LOVE COUNTERS

"This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins" (1Jn. 4:10)

Even before announcing the consequences of disobedience, God communicated to Adam and Eve that there was a plan for their redemption (Gen.3:15).



Humanity had voluntarily separated itself from the Creator. But far from abandoning his ungrateful children, God revealed his true character by loving them beyond belief (John 3:16).

Death did not have to be the eternal destiny for the sinner. Jesus showed his love by paying the price of sin with his life (Rom. 5:8).



There is nothing in us that makes us worthy of God's love. However, with every drop of blood that Jesus shed at Calvary, God tells us: "I love you."



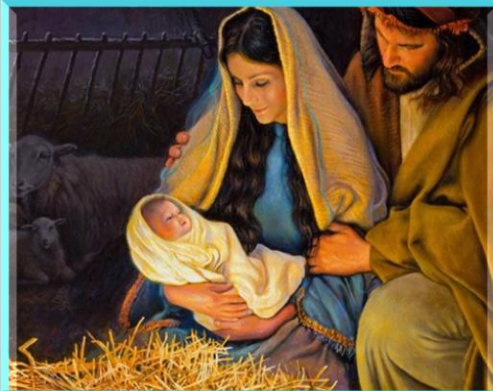
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How did Jesus show us his love?



Jesus created everything that exists (Jn. 1:3)



He became a creature (John 1:14)



He went through hardships, suffering, hunger and pain, like us (Is. 53:3; Mark 11:12)



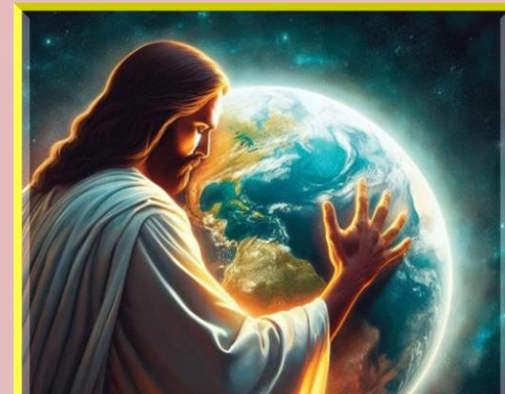
He was tempted like us (Heb. 4:15)



Being righteous, he willingly suffered for our sins (1 Pet. 3:18; John 10:17-18)



By dying and resurrecting, he assured us of eternal life in his company (Rom. 6:3-4)



And all this was for love (1Jn. 4:10)

THE CONFLICT TODAY

"Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them" (Hebrews 7:25)

Today, Jesus is interceding for us in the Heavenly Sanctuary (Heb. 9:24; 7:25).

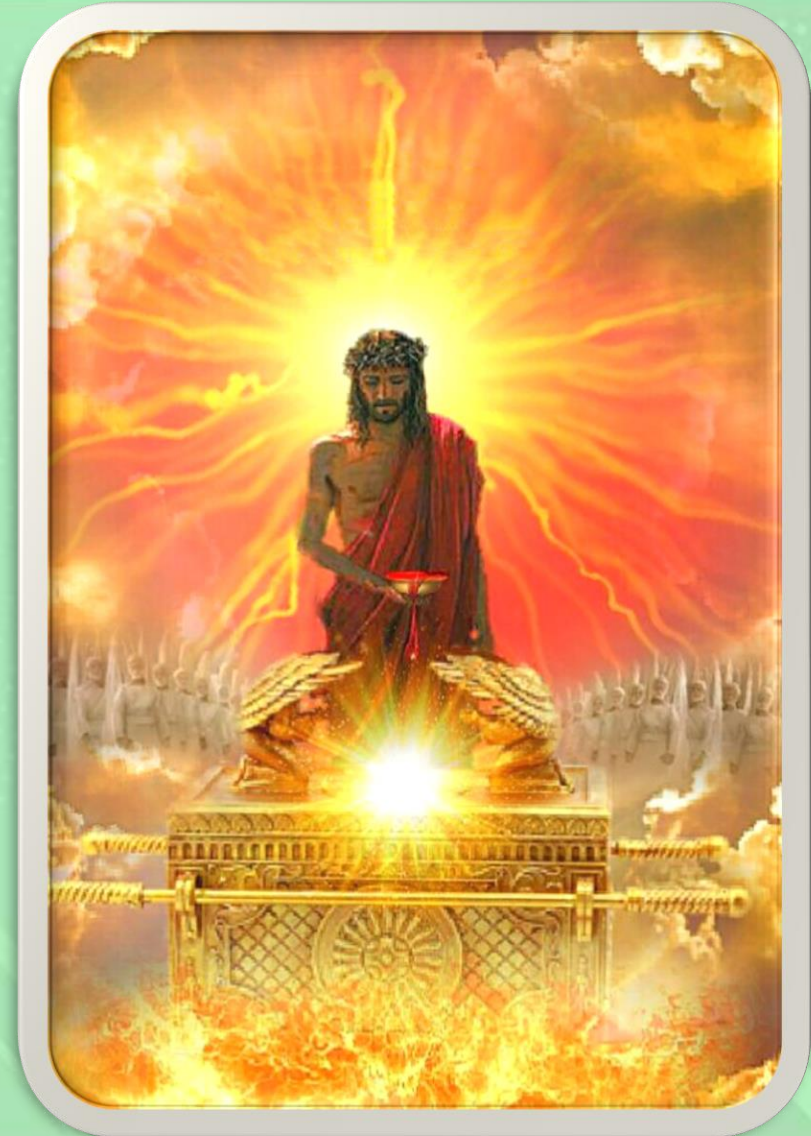
By virtue of his blood shed on the cross, Jesus presents us before the Father – and before all the inhabitants of the Universe – as just, perfect people, worthy of occupying a place in Heaven.

Therefore, we are invited to approach God with confidence through Jesus (Heb. 4:15-16).



Jesus wants us to count on him for every need in our lives (Jn. 14:13-14). Where there is fear, he brings peace; where there is guilt, he brings forgiveness; where there is weakness, he brings strength.

Jesus' greatest desire is to live with us eternally (Jn. 17:24). Is this also your greatest desire?



“When temptations assail you, when care, perplexity, and darkness seem to surround your soul, look to the place where you last saw the light. Rest in Christ's love and under His protecting care. When sin struggles for the mastery in the heart, when guilt oppresses the soul and burdens the conscience, when unbelief clouds the mind, remember that Christ's grace is sufficient to subdue sin and banish the darkness. Entering into communion with the Saviour, we enter the region of peace.”