

# Notes for the Ones Called-Out to Meet

Info: (651) 283-0568 Discipleship Training Ministries, Inc. www.dtminc.org Today's Date: January 3, 2015

## How The Cosmic Struggle Relates To Your Personal Life

by Dan Trygg

“Thus says the Lord Yahweh, ‘You had the seal of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty.’<sup>13</sup> You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone was your covering: ... On the day that you were created they were prepared.<sup>14</sup> You were the anointed cherub who covers, and I placed you there. You were on the holy mountain of God; you walked in the midst of the stones of fire.<sup>15</sup> You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created until unrighteousness was found in you.<sup>16</sup> By the abundance of your trade you were internally filled with violence, and you sinned; therefore I have cast you as profane from the mountain of God. And I have destroyed you, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire.<sup>17</sup> Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty; you corrupted your wisdom by reason of your splendor. I cast you to the ground.”

Ezekiel 28:12-17; cf. Isa. 14:12-14

“And there was war in heaven, Michael and his angels waging war with the dragon. The dragon and his angels waged war,<sup>8</sup> and they were not strong enough, and there was no longer a place found for them in heaven.<sup>9</sup> And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.<sup>10</sup> Then I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, ‘Now the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down, he who accuses them before our God day and night.<sup>11</sup> And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they did not love their life even when faced with death.<sup>12</sup> For this reason, rejoice, O heavens and you who dwell in them. Woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, knowing that he has only a short time.’”

Rev. 12:7-12

**There has been a rebellion in heaven.** The schemes of the enemy mastermind to usurp the loyalties of other spiritual beings by inflating his own image, and by denigrating the character of the Creator, have been exposed in the heavenlies. One third of the angels have been enticed by the subtle political networking of this deceiver (Rev. 12:4). They have given their loyalty to him, believing that to serve him was more beneficial than their service to the Creator.

**God, instead of crushing their rebellion, has chosen to allow them to continue, for the present. Why?** Because He Himself designed both angels, and later humanity, to have the capacity of *free choice*. **A demonstration of ruthless power may quash the rebellion, but it would also forever destroy the free exercise of choice.** The specter of intimidation would forever hang over the creation. It would be eternally stunted, restrained and enslaved by fear. Instead of being the loving Father, He would always be perceived as the ever-present, all knowing Big Brother, the God of wrath who will jealously punish every errant thought.

**The sin of Satan, as also the sin of humankind, had dramatically, irreversibly altered the dynamics of the created realm. To answer it with force and violence would only irretrievably set the stain of sin's presence into the fabric of the universe.** To attempt to eradicate it would require the total erasure of *everything* and *everyone*, ...guilty *and* innocent..., so that there would be no mind, no consciousness, to remember that sin had *ever* happened before. Not only would this be *unjust*, it would not really be a solution to the problem, for there would be no guarantee that, with a new generation of free wills, there would not also be the possibility of another rebellion.

**No, the only hope for free will to continue to truly exist, and for righteousness to ultimately prevail, would be to allow sin and selfishness to show their colors and to bear their fruit *and* also to allow God's true character to be revealed by His actions.** Only *then*, when the fruit and character of both sides become clearly, plainly, unquestionably known, could a clear free choice *for* God be a possibility. Only in this way could the genius, beauty and wonder of the freedom of choice once again be *unhindered*, ...to be expressed with creativity, diversity, and zeal. **The Creator, in His great wisdom, has allowed the evil of sin and selfishness to continue, within certain limits and restraints (cf. Job 1 & 2), so that a monumental lesson of eternal importance could be established.** Only by *observing* and *comparing* the hideous, destructive results of rebellion with the reach and results of the patient, kind, sacrificial, steadfast love of God's heart, could a choice be made that would be a freely-taken step *over* and *beyond* sin to *affirm* the desire and commitment to continue with the Creator.

**The coming of Jesus to our planet was God's *best*, *deepest* and *most dramatic* expression of His loving character and His wisdom** (Jn. 1:1-3,14; 3:16; Rom. 5:6-8). As the enemy attempted to destroy Jesus, God even used Satan's murderous scheme to bring into being the liberating grace that is the hope of the universe (2 Cor. 5:14-19).

**We are born into a *broken world*, ...a world despoiled, scarred and inhabited by evil..., but one which also conveys to us many messages of the Creator's character, as well** (Rom. 1:18-20; Acts 14:16,17). We carry within us *both* the marks of the image of God that is our potential, *and* the infection of sin's deceitful self-seeking and willfulness which has plagued the universe for millennia. For *us*, the dilemma of coming to know sin and God is *not* a proposition set on some sterile, abstract stage, where we can make observations from a safe distance. No. **The realities of good and evil are in our *experience*, within us and around us, from our first waking moments. We do**

**not just observe sin, we experience it. In the same way, we will not simply observe God and grace, we will experience them, as well.**

The initial problem, however, is learning to accurately discern from the jumble of messages and experiences in life what is really going on. **The enemy wants to keep us under his control, and to keep us from God. He will try to distract us, seduce us, get us stuck in various traps, oppress us, beat us down, and feed us disinformation about who God is and what He is like.** The Creator/Redeemer also attempts to communicate with us in a variety of ways. He attempts to *keep us looking for truth, surrounds us with testimonies of His goodness and His love* for us. He attempts to *woo us* and *draw us to Himself*, and *He seeks to expose to us the lies and traps of the enemy.*

**Discipleship begins after we have decided to identify with Jesus as our Lord.** By then, we have already concluded, at least in some measure, that we *need* and *want* God. Although we have made a clear step toward Him, there remains all of the disinformation and ignorance about God, about life, and about ourselves that keeps us from being all we can be, and hinders us from experiencing all that God has for us in this life. **The process of discipleship is about renewing the mind, correcting and filling in the gaps of our understanding, and encouraging risk and growth in order to become all that we can potentially be,** both for the Kingdom of God and for ourselves. To be a disciple is to be an *active follower*, not just to have our names listed on a membership roll somewhere. Discipleship is about *following* Jesus' instruction and example, learning to trust and obey God in everything. It means developing a relationship with God that is intimate and real, and responding to the things He says to us.

**These changes don't just "happen", ...they require attentiveness, conscious thought, and definite choices.** The first converts at Pentecost "devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, fellowship, the breaking of bread, and to the prayers" (Acts 2:42). The words translated as "devoted to" means "to persevere toward, or to continue unremittingly in". There was *work* involved, a *sustained effort* toward sorting out truth from error. It was *not* just a process of intellectual learning, but also one requiring *action* and *experimentation*. **Disciples are more than just students, they learn by doing,** ...by putting the Word of God into practice (Jn. 8:31,32), and by responding to the whispers of the indwelling Holy Spirit (Gal. 5:16-25). *As they take risks*, they begin to discern and differentiate what is of God from what is "old programming" or other "voices" that are not consistent with His leading. **Being a disciple means that "business as usual" is not going to be acceptable to us any more.** We are choosing to make a definite departure from the self-seeking direction of the culture's propaganda machine, and even from familiar patterns of thinking and interrelating with life that have become second nature to us.

**The Holy Spirit is our guide and counselor in all of this** (Jn. 14:16,17,26; 16:13). He uses *many* resources, but we don't always catch on right away as to *how* He is communicating with us. One of these resources is *other people*. In Matthew 28:18-20, Jesus exhorts *us* to "make disciples". What this means is that **we are to take responsibility to help one another in this process of following Jesus.** We can share *our* insights and experiences *with each other* to encourage one another. We can *instruct* one another from the Scriptures, and we can *speak* and *express the truth* to one another in love (Eph. 4:11-16). These *personal testimonies* and *practical feedback* will help us in the process of detecting the false messages we have imbibed, and sorting them out from what is the life-giving truth of God.

What we have found is that **too often people are basically alone in their pilgrimage.** Often, no one has offered to them the simple explanation that I related above concerning both (1.) what kind of *possibilities* there are in Christ, and (2.) what *obstacles* they might face. Many don't even know that there *is* anything more to being a Christian than going to church on Sunday morning, ...or they don't have much of a clue as to *what* they might do differently, even if they *wanted* to. **People have questions that remain unanswered, and struggles that they bear alone, largely because they are not connected with others who could help.** What we call "ministry" (the Greek simply means "service") is not some mysterious, complicated thing. It is *spending time with people with the purpose of helping each other grow*. One of our goals is to encourage those with whom we fellowship to begin to become *actively involved* in *agitating* and *encouraging others* toward growth in simple, practical ways. We try to "de-mystify" discipleship so that people can see that it can be a *normal, manageable* part of their lives. **Discipleship is very much a relational, "nudging along" process** that is different for each individual. It is clear, however, that God has given *us* the responsibility of *looking out for one another*, and *helping one another grow* in Christ.

As we serve one another out of the graciousness that comes from our walk with God, **we are on display before not only the world, but also the angels.** Paul writes, "To me, ...grace was given, to preach to the nations the unfathomable riches of Christ, <sup>9</sup> and to bring to light what is the administration of the mystery which for ages has been hidden in God who created all things; <sup>10</sup> so that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the church to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly places. (Eph. 3:8-10). **As we love and walk uprightly, we become part of the cosmic display that gives testimony for God,** His character and His wisdom. We do not have to be victims of the enemy's evil working in our lives. We can find freedom and become a blessing, as we follow Christ.