

## Section One:

# The Divine Drama of Spiritual Conflict in the Old Testament

## Introduction

Because of an overly pragmatic mentality seen in much of the spiritual conflict literature today, an overview of the scriptural teachings on the engagement of Satan with God's children is necessary. In biblical terms, spiritual conflict essentially encompasses Satan's rebellion against God and the manifestations of that rebellion in the created order. At the heart of this warfare, however, is the fact that God is sovereignly and lovingly in control of His creation, and, as the Sovereign One, He has already decided that Satan's rebellion will fail. It is upon this theme that this course is founded. The thread of Satan's rebellion and God's loving response is interwoven through the Scriptures as an ongoing drama played out on the stage of human history. In this section of the course, we will examine this drama in six acts. In each act, we will examine selected events and significant themes upon which we will build a biblical view of spiritual conflict. In the discussion of the themes, we will not limit ourselves to the Scriptures for each act, but will draw on material from the whole Bible.

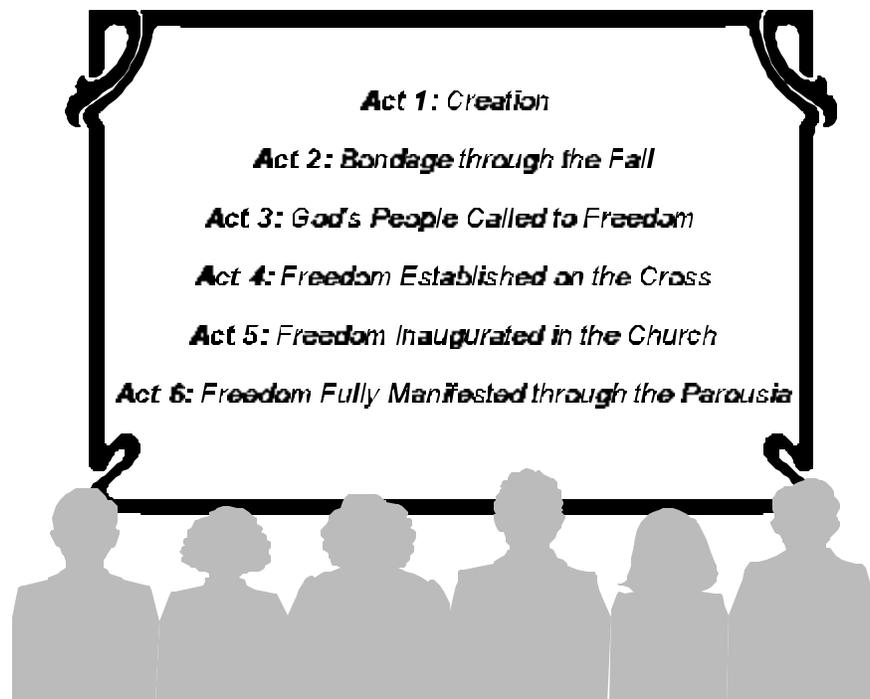


Diagram 1: The Divine Drama of Spiritual Conflict

## Act 1 in the Divine Drama: The Creation (Genesis 1-2)

Overview of Act 1: Creation	
Event	Themes
God's creation of the universe	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. God is the sovereign creator.</li> <li>2. People are made in God's image; our purpose is to glorify Him.</li> </ol>

### Event

1. In the first act of the drama God creates the universe. The created order includes the physical and the non-physical (e.g., angels; Genesis 2:1--see box below). Nothing in the created order is excluded from God's domain, and nothing exists independently from Him. The implications of God's creative work are discussed in the Themes section.

### Discussion on Genesis 2:1 from Moreau, The World of the Spirits, p. 2:

"Hosts of heaven" may refer to both the stars and angels (Skinner, Genesis, p. 36; see 1 Kings 22:19). The word for "host" is a military term used of a body of men organized for war, implying some type of military array in the heavenly sphere (Anderson, "Hosts", IDB). Whether Gen. 2:1 specifically refers to angels or not, *all* of the hosts of heaven and earth, including angels, are created beings (see also Ps. 33:6).

### Themes

1. God is the sovereign Creator of the universe (see also Ps. 96:5; 104:30; Isa. 37:16; 40:12-13; 44:24; 45:12; John 1:3; Acts 4:24; 15:15; Eph. 3:9; Col. 1:16; Rev. 4:11; 10:6).
  - a. God is Creator: The term used for create is found 49 times in the OT and is used only of God's work. The basic meaning is to create with the sense that what is created is new (McComiskey, TWOT, p. 127). It allows for a creation out of nothing, (and is the only Hebrew word that does so; *ibid.* and Waltke, "The Creation Account", pp. 335-37), but does not demand this meaning (Erickson, Christian Theology, p. 368).
  - b. God is sovereign: He created the universe simply by speaking. He is the owner

and governor of the earth who does whatever pleases Him. There are several important implications (from Erickson, Christian Theology, p. 374ff):

- i. God has such power that He simply speaks, and what He has spoken comes to pass.
  - ii. Creation is an act of His will, not an act to which He is driven by any force or consideration outside Himself.
  - iii. Everything that is not God has derived its existence from Him; there is no room for a cosmic dualism in which Satan and God can be seen as two equal competing powers.
  - iv. Nothing made is intrinsically evil. Everything has come from God, and the creation narrative says five times that He saw that it was good (vv. 10, 12, 18, 21, 25). The world is not to be denied or despised: everything that is has value. God likes matter--after all, He invented it!
  - v. The world is to be used and enjoyed; it is the "theater of God's glory" and we are stewards of it (1 Tim. 4:4-5).
  - vi. By virtue of God's nature as the Sovereign One, the created order is entirely dependent on Him for its origin and continued existence. It is eternally linked to Him by a debt that can never be repaid. What God asks of the created order, however, is not repayment, but appropriate recognition of its Creator.
- (1) As the Sovereign One, God deserves glory from His creation. The OT term for glory carries the core sense of heaviness. It thus lends itself to the idea that the one possessing glory is laden with riches (Gen. 31:1), power (Isa. 8:7), position (Gen. 45:13), etc. (Harrison, EDT, p. 443). Our God is stunning in His holiness, and we have the task of letting that character be manifested in us (Oswalt, TWOT, pp. 426-7). Our task in glorifying God is to recognize Him as the supreme moral ruler (Harrison, ISBE Revised, 2:478). The NT term carries the notion of reputation or honor. It is used of honor in the sense of recognition or acclaim (Luke 14:10) and of the verbal worship of the creature for the Creator and Judge (Rev. 14:7) (Harrison, EDT, 443).

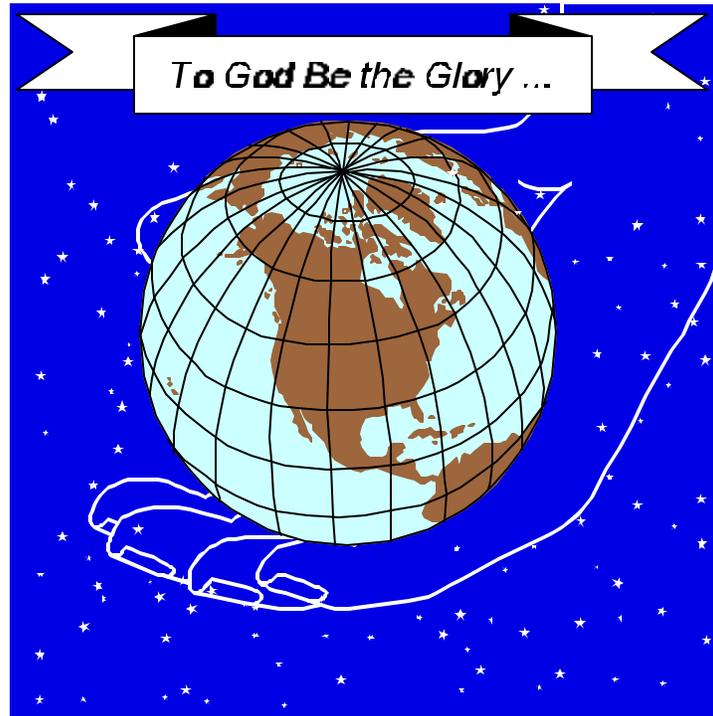


Diagram 2: To God Be the Glory

As Diagram 2 illustrates, our Creator does not have to demand that we glorify, but, by His nature as God, He infinitely deserves it. This is not naked ambition, but rightfully deserved recognition (Harrison, ISBE Revised, 2:479). In more modern terminology, God has the patent on creation; as the Inventor, He deserves the recognition and royalties!

- (2) Every part of the created order must acknowledge *something* as the sovereign ruler; that is an intrinsic part of our nature as creatures.
2. People are made in God's image--our purpose is to glorify God as our Creator.
    - a. Note the difference with the rest of creation. Previously, God had said, "Let there be . . . ." Here He says, "Let us make. . . ." The rest of creation is formed by God's command; humanity is brought into existence after God's counsel. We are not the result of chance and circumstances. We did not spontaneously arise; we were purposely fashioned by our Creator to meet a divine intention. Thus, we have a purpose for our existence.
    - b. We will not get bogged down in trying to identify that to which "image" refers. The following chart summarizes the various explanations proposed by theologians.

There are three major categories of views (Erickson, Christian Theology, pp. 498-512) in which a total of eight major options may be listed (McDonald, Christian View, pp. 33-41). Our understanding is that the image is not limited to any one of these ideas. In any event, for the discussion on spiritual conflict, arriving at a definitive conclusion about the image is not necessary.

Possible Ways to Explain the Meaning of the Image of God	
<p>SUBSTANTIVE</p> <p>There is some characteristic or quality in humanity.</p>	The image is <i>our bodily form</i> , an idea allowable from the Hebrew words but in contrast to the concepts of God as Spirit and His omnipresence.
	The image is <i>our spirit</i> ; as in the whole realm of creation only people are spiritual beings.
	The image is the <i>whole person</i> , both body and spirit. All that people are (both outside and inside) is of God (see Calvin, <u>Genesis</u> , p. 95).
	The image is <i>our rationality, morality, personality</i> , or some combination of these attributes (note the discussion in McDonald, <u>Christian View</u> , pp. 37-39).
<p>RELATIONAL</p> <p>Image consists of our relationships or our relational capacity.</p>	The image is humanity as male and female (taking v. 27b as a comment on v. 27a). Thus, man and woman are to live in equal harmony, as does the Trinity (see Jewett, <u>Man as Male and Female</u> and Atkins, <u>Split Image</u> ).
	The image is <i>status as God's children</i> --we were created to be God's natural children, but broke that through sin. God chose to adopt us again as His children through Christ. Because of our status, we were given dominion, rationality, morals, personality, etc. (see McDonald <u>Christian View</u> , p. 41).
	The image is <i>our relationship with God and other people</i> . Human beings were the only creatures created in an incomplete state. As we relate with God, and He perfects and molds us, our response is the "image of God" (see Erickson, <u>Christian Theology</u> , pp. 503-4).
<p>FUNCTIONAL</p> <p>Image consists of what we do.</p>	The image is <i>our dominion over the rest of creation</i> . We are God's visible representation, the keeper of His creation. Sin affected our use of dominion, but that dominion was not removed from us.

- c. What are the consequences that we bear God's image? (It was not lost in the fall--see Gen. 9:6.) Being in God's image:
  - i. We have the ability to choose. (A satanist can always come to Christ.)
  - ii. We provoke jealousy in Satan because he is reminded of his Creator every time he sees a person.
  - iii. We have a built-in purpose for our existence: *we are to be connected to that which we image*. This is the essence of glorifying God: we connect ourselves to Him by ascribing to Him that which is rightfully His and honoring Him by

joyfully and gratefully living according to the order that He established in His creative act. As people made in the image of God, our choice is not whether we glorify, but who we glorify. We glorify God when we live our lives in accordance with His guidelines as a love response to His wonderful works. The first commandment embodies the essence: we are to love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength. Living this out in daily life is spiritual conflict at its most basic level.

## Act 2 of the Divine Drama: Bondage Through the Fall (Genesis 3-11)

Overview of Act 2: Bondage through the Fall	
Events	Themes
3. The temptation, fall, and banishment of Adam and Eve (Gen. 3)	1. Satan's nature and purposes 2. The battle for the mind
4. The fall of the nations (Gen. 11)	

### Events

1. The temptation, fall, and banishment of Adam and Eve (Gen. 3): The second act starts with the temptation of Adam and Eve. They are asked to assert their independence from God. Satan cannot physically coerce them to sin--he must entice them to make their own decision. In effect, the engagement takes place in the mind, as does the vast bulk of spiritual conflict today. Discussion of the events of the fall is found in Moreau, The World of the Spirits, pp. 1-4. In the temptation Eve faces the offer to become like God (surely a noble goal, unless the idea is to replace Him!) in a way that He has specifically declared to be wrong. Good goals achieved by inappropriate means do not result in a higher purpose being served, as Adam and Eve find out. In one sense, they are asked to assert their independence from God. At the same time, however, included with that rebellious spirit are pride, idolatry, and unbelief. It is no wonder that James notes that breaking the Law at any point amounts to breaking the whole Law (Jas. 2:10).
2. The fall is worked out through Genesis 11, which depicts the effects on sociological groups (the nations). Sin is not limited to the individual--it has affected systems as well. Not only are individuals changed, so are the social structures through which we live our lives.

Up to this point in time, humanity had one language (literally "one lip") and one vocabulary (literally "single words"), and everyone could understand everyone else.

- a. Out of their insecurity and pride, and possibly their desire to control others, people seek to build a tower and make a name for themselves (to create a strong, centralized power-base?; Stigers, Genesis, p. 129).
- b. "Nothing which they purpose to do will be impossible for them". God made us with incredible abilities which can be used for good or bad. Here His concern appears to be with the latter--building such a tower in their pride, there is nothing (including the deepest sin) which will be impossible for them. His concern is not to frustrate their

technological capability, but to prevent their skills from being used to the maximum for sinful purposes ("better division than collective apostasy"; Kidner, Genesis, p. 110).

Themes

1. Satan's nature and purposes.

a. His nature:

- i. Being a creature, he falls under God's sovereignty. At the foundation, we must note that he is a creature--he is by nature limited to the created order, even though he would have believe otherwise. Being a creature, he necessarily is subject to God's universal sovereignty (as depicted in Diagram 3) and, as such, is an unwitting and unwilling tool under God's control.



Diagram 3: Satan in God's Sovereign Control

As a rebellious and unrepentant creature, he is defeated and overcome (his works were destroyed on the cross; Col. 2:15) and he is destined for hell (together with his demonic hosts; Matt. 25:41).

- ii. At core, Satan is a SIFTER. He is used of God to test our intentions; he "sifts" the wheat from the chaff to claim the chaff as his own (Luke 22:31). His work may be seen along a spectrum in which several roles may be noted (Diagram 4):

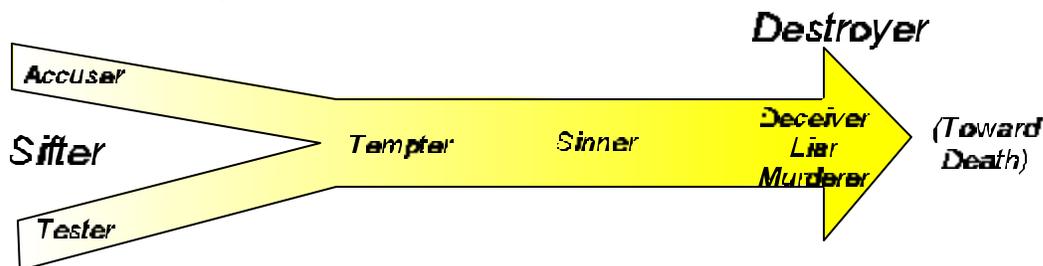


Diagram 4: The Spectrum of Satan's Character

- (1) ACCUSER: His job description appears to have been that of accusation from the beginning (Rev. 12:10).
- (2) TESTER: He is allowed of God to test our faith (Job 1-2; Rev. 2:10).
- (3) TEMPTER: He tempts us (1 Thess. 3:5) just as he tempted Jesus. He is persistent; if defeated once, he waits for an opportune time (Luke 4:13).
- (4) SINNER (1 John 3:8):

- (a) He is the enemy of everything that is right (Acts 13:10).
- (b) He leads the whole world astray (Rev. 12:9).

- (5) DESTROYER (1 Cor. 5:5):

- (a) DECEIVER: He deceives the whole world (Rev. 12:9) and all the nations (Rev. 20: 7, 10).
- (b) LIAR: He is a liar (not just in contradiction of truth, but "morphing" or gradually changing truth to lie; Diagram 5) who tempts us.

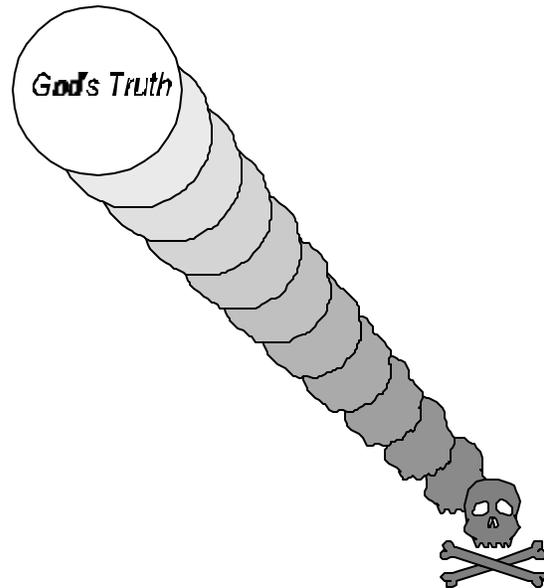
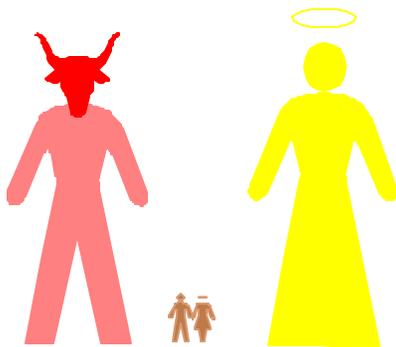


Diagram 5: "Morphing" Truth



His authority, power, and control are *contingent*. He is dependent on our participation in sin! In Diagram 6 we see the lie Satan would have us believe; namely that he is in some way the cosmic equal of God and we are just pawns in the battle (Anderson, Living Free, p. 249). Spiritual conflict is not a cosmic battle between equals.

Diagram 6: What Satan Would Have Us Believe ...

- (6) MURDERER: He is a murderer (Diagram 7; seen in his work with Adam and Eve). The broader idea of death as separation gives the full scope. In the fall, Adam and Eve were separated from God, from each other, and even from themselves.

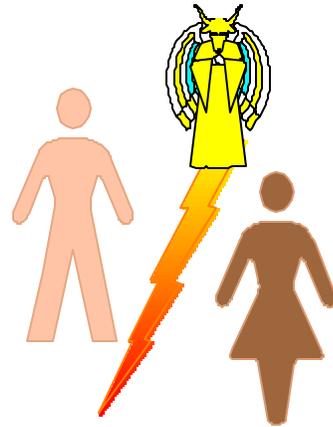


Diagram 7: Satan is a Murderer

- b. His purpose:
- i. Satan's overall goal is to prevent God from being glorified in any way he can. How does he do this? In imitation of God, he has established a temporary counterfeit kingdom in which he receives glory (recognition as lord) from his subjects when they follow in his rebellious footsteps. Two objectives may be noted:
    - (1) Stop people from coming to Christ and having the freedom to glorify God (2 Cor. 4:4).
    - (2) Stop Christians from walking in a manner worthy of their calling in Christ (Eph. 4:1).
  - ii. His work is creative only in the sense of perverting an already existing thing. In effect, he steals God's design and perverts it to suit his own needs.
- c. The central consideration:

How is the thief coming to steal, kill, and destroy in our context? For each culture, what are the types of bondage he uses and the steps by which he leads people into bondage?

Satan uses two primary strategies to attack our minds with the common theme

of deception: relationships and truth. These two, of course, are intimately intertwined. For example, Satan can damage relationships by perverting truth, and through damaged and broken relationships he can more readily distort our view of truth. We deal with relationships first because that tends to be felt more strongly than the issues related to truth.

- i. Following the bent of his murdering nature, he wants relationships broken and/or distorted. How he does that varies not only from culture to culture, but also from relationship to relationship.
- (1) Relationships with people (Diagram 8--The arrows represent Satan's attacks): Do not give him too much credit--he takes advantage of our sin to bring breaches or build inappropriate dependencies, but he is not responsible for all of our bad relationships.

Assumption: God has set us free through Jesus to live in loving relationships with others.

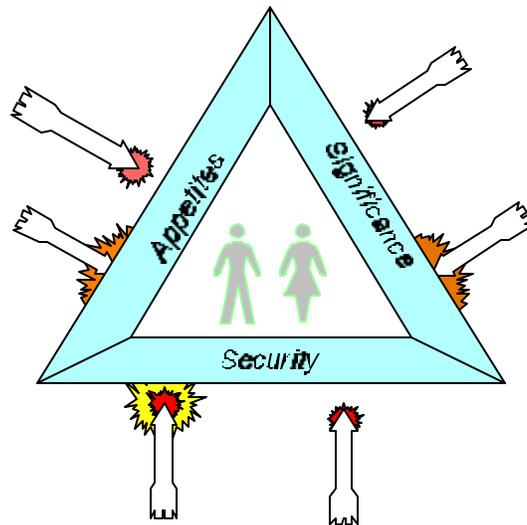


Diagram 8: Areas of Relational Deception

- (a) Significance: Every human being is significant because (s)he is made in the image of God. We have an inbuilt desire to sense that significance, but tend to look for it in the eyes of people who are significant in our own lives.

- (b) Security: We all desire basic security in life. A good thing, however, is taken too far when it becomes a consuming passion for wealth, power, or other things which give us a (false) sense of security.
- (c) Appetites: We are physical creatures with ongoing physical needs. An appetite often attacked is that of our desire for sexual intimacy.

These three overlap. For example, inappropriate sexual relations do not result just because of lust--security and significance are almost always intertwined with living out inappropriate sexual desires. In addition, they are not limited to the personal level. They are found institutionalized in our structures and systems.

Our task: Accept God's loving healing of our own hurts caused by others. Seek to live as Christ's ambassadors by being relational healers. Every culture has means of breaking and restoring relationships. We must study the 'relational hermeneutics' of a culture and of God's Word so that we can apply them as healers.

- (2) Relationship with God: How many ways is this distorted?!! We seek God because He has created us to do so, but many twist that around. Because this is a theme found throughout the course, we will not expand on it here.

Assumption: We must accept Christ's sacrifice on our behalf as the uniquely necessary and sufficient way to restore our relationship with God.
--

Our task: Cultivate our own relationship with God on the basis of His Word, worship, and fellowship with like-minded believers. Seek to live as Christ's ambassadors by lovingly and gently imploring others to move into a relationship with God. Study the culture's understanding of God and how people may relate with Him to know the issues you will face in communicating Christ.

- ii. Satan also plays with truth by attacking our understanding of it ("Did God **really** say that?"). We expand on this under the theme of the battle for the mind below.

Assumption: God's Word is truth for all people of all cultures at all times.

Our task: Know the truth! Exegete the culture to see where truth resides (general revelation) and where distortions are. Seek to facilitate indigenous development in discovering and applying God's truths in the local context.

2. The battle for the mind: The framework for the temptation of Adam and Eve is an engagement for their thinking. The four areas of engagement are depicted in Diagram 9. We will see them throughout the course, so we will not expand on them here. They include:

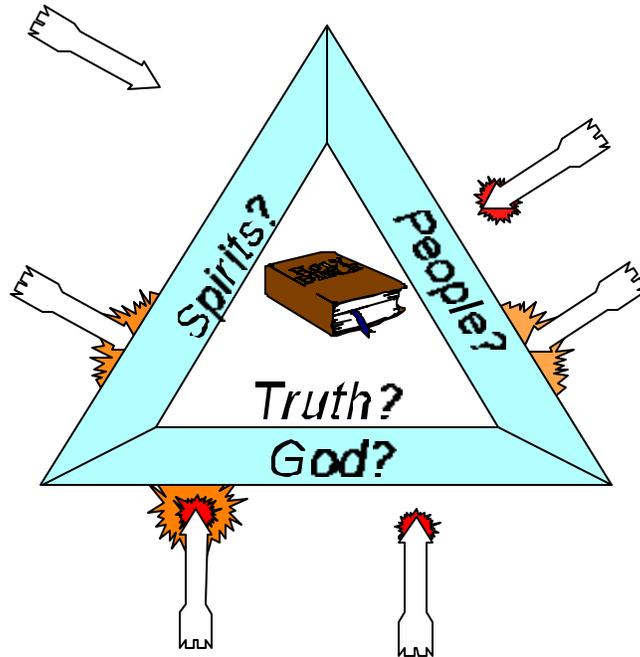


Diagram 9: Four Areas of Engagement in Spiritual Conflict

- a. Who is God? Satan's attacks in the temptation include: "Has God really said. . . ?" and the idea that God does not want you to be like Him.
- b. What are people? (or Who am I?) Satan's attack: We are to be like God, but we accomplish that through a short cut.
- c. What are spirits (Satan in this case)? If Eve had known his true nature, the odds of her falling for his lies would have been greatly reduced.

- d. What is truth? Satan's attack of God's warning shows his desire to deny God's word and bring us along in his unbelief.

### Act 3 in the Divine Drama: God's People Called to Freedom (Genesis 12 - Malachi)

Overview of Act 3: God's People Called to Freedom	
Events	Themes
3. God calls apart a people (Gen. 12-22). 4. Moses with Pharaoh (Exodus 7-9) 5. Saul's encounters (1 Sam. 16-19; 28) 6. Job's trials (Job 1-2) 7. Daniel's vision (Dan. 10:4-11:1)	1. God calls people on the basis of His mercy, which He LONGS to lavish on us. 2. Our responsibilities towards God 3. The different levels of spiritual conflict

#### Events

1. God calls apart a people: snapshots in the life of Abraham (Gen. 12-22).
  - a. Gen. 12:1-3: Abraham is called by God (his matriculation in the school of faith). The promise to Abraham (Gen. 12:1-3) was that he would be blessed of God so that in him all the nations (or families) on the earth might be blessed. Kaiser rightly maintains that this is really an Old Testament "Great Commission" (Kaiser, "Call," p. 28). Abraham was chosen, and, through him, Israel was called as the people of God. The initial choice of Abraham, however, was for the benefit of all the nations (see also Gen. 22:18).
  - b. Gen. 12:10-20: Abraham forgets Who is in control and instructs Sarah to lie about their relationship (an unexpected pop quiz which Abraham fails). There are no explicit instructions given to Abraham about God's provision in the famine, so he goes on his own initiative to Egypt. Fearing the Egyptians, and forgetting God's ability to save, he lies about his relationship with Sarah to the Egyptians. Pharaoh's rebuke of Abraham's lie is unanswerable. God is not beyond using unbelievers to teach us of the faith!
  - c. Gen. 15:1-6: Abraham believes God, and his belief is credited as righteousness (his mid-term exam, which he aces!) Abraham had not yet produced the child that God had promised, and he was questioning whether this would be fulfilled (15:1-3). God assures him that it will by taking him outside and showing him the splendor of the universe. The One Who created the stars is the One Who made the promise (15:4-5). Abraham's response was to believe (15:6)--he stopped looking for the gift and started looking at the Giver of all gifts (see Stigers, Genesis, p. 154).

- i. Abraham "believed in the Lord." This faith did not come as a result of Abraham's work or emotions, but as a response to God's display of His power and majesty. Abraham placed his complete certainty in God's ability to accomplish His purposes. Is this Abraham's entry into salvation? Probably not--the verb tense (perfect) shows that it may be a reaffirmation of a previously experienced state ("Abraham had believed"). Note that the context refers to promises of a physical nature (Abraham's descendants), not to salvation (Stigers, Genesis, p. 154).
  - ii. It was reckoned to him for righteousness. God reckoned (NIV, "credited," *hesheb* is used 121 times in the OT). The basic root of this word refers to using the mind in thinking activity. It has six clearly distinguished variations, including planning, making a judgment, meditating, imputing, inventing, and accounting (bookkeeping). Imputing, or counting, is the sense here (Wood, TWOT, p. 330). Faith is not righteousness, but the reason for it. Righteousness is given to Abraham as a result of his faith.
- d. Gen. 16:1-6: Abraham and Sarah (another pop-quiz and another failure). Abraham has just been declared righteous for believing God will provide descendants--and now he chooses his own way to bring about the fulfillment of God's promise. God is determined to eliminate every possibility except the miraculous in providing Abraham with an heir (Kidner, Genesis, 126). It is important to see here that Abraham is guided by the voice of *Sarah*, not the voice of God (v. 2). In each character can be seen false pride (4), false blame (5), and false neutrality (6).
  - e. Gen. 20:1-7: Abraham again does not trust God (a paper integrating faith and learning; another failure). Even so, God protects him. Just before the story of Isaac's birth we once again see Abraham lying to protect himself. Again we are reminded that it is by the grace of God that Isaac is to be born!
  - f. Gen. 22:1-18: Abraham's ultimate test: the sacrifice of Isaac (his final research paper, which he passes with flying colors). This is the most significant test of Abraham's entire life. Can he trust God to provide even though Isaac be slain? Who comes first in Abraham's life--Isaac or God? The parallel between what Abraham was asked to do and what God actually did is obvious--the offering of a son as the ultimate sign of commitment and love.
2. Moses with Pharaoh (Exodus 7-9)

Discussion on Exodus 7-9 in Moreau, The World of the Spirits, p. 8:

In the first three encounters between Moses and Aaron and the magicians of Pharaoh, the magicians are able to imitate the works of God (changing staffs into snakes, turning the water of the Nile to blood, and bringing a plague of frogs across the land; for a survey of magical practices in the biblical world, see Yamauchi, "Magic"). In the fourth, however, they fail to bring forth gnats. After the fifth (striking people with boils), they are not able even to stand before Moses because they had boils. If nothing else, we see here a definite limitation on the powers or abilities of the Egyptian magicians.

The word for "magicians" is derived from the word for "stylus"--they were literally "engravers" or "scribes" (Zuck, "Practice of Witchcraft", p. 354). Aune notes that the LXX translates the term as "singer of spells" or "enchanter" here, but uses "interpreter" in Gen. 41:8. (Aune, "Magic", ISBE Revised). The term, as found in Genesis 41:8, "appears to be part of a composite title for those who were expert in handling the ritual books of priestcraft and magic" (Kidner, Genesis, p. 195).

Where did their ability to imitate God's acts originate? Two major explanations are available: either they were only adept at sleight of hand and practicing their skills in this area, or they were displaying supernatural powers which came from Satan. If the former, they finally ran out of abilities with the plague of lice and were completely routed by the boils. If their powers came from Satan, does this indicate a limitation on his capability? Why were they unable to imitate the plague of bringing lice, when they were able to bring frogs? No direct answers are found in the text, though the thrust certainly is that Satanic power is limited and God's power is not.

Satan's power (including its limits) and intentions are clearly seen in the magicians' imitations of the miracles performed by Moses. Though there may certainly be slight of hand involved in the magician's counterfeit miracles, the text does not give the impression that they are to be seen as tricks. Rather, the demonic power behind the magicians is portrayed as all too real, though it proven to have definite limits. This type of encounter is known as a power encounter, where the power of God is channeled through a person is displayed against the power of the enemy (also channeled through people). Though not used for evangelism in this case, the Egyptians none-the-less become favorably disposed towards the Hebrews as a result of God's work (Exod. 12:36).

### 3. Saul's encounters (1 Sam. 16-19; 28)

Discussion on 1 Sam 16-19 and 28 from Moreau, The World of the Spirits, pp. 13-14:

God took away His Holy Spirit from Saul and sent an evil spirit to torment him, apparently an instance of a demon tormenting a believer. This spirit terrifies him (1 Sam. 16:14), makes him ill (1 Sam. 18:10), and causes him to attempt murder (see 1 Sam. 19:9-10) (see Alexander, Demonic Possession, p. 20).

The spirit did not take up permanent residence in Saul (Woods, Holy Spirit, pp. 126-38). It came on him while at home. We do not know what circumstances brought it, though it seems tied to Saul's jealousy of David. The text hints of this in relating the maidens' song of Saul and David (18:7) and Saul's subsequent anger (18:8) and suspicion (18:9) against David just before the invasion of the evil spirit (18:10). It caused him to try to kill David. Was Saul allowing the spirit this much control, or was this completely beyond him? David, as God's anointed, escapes from Saul's attempts.

In the only OT case of someone dealing with personal demonic oppression, the relief that came through David's playing on the harp had only a limited effect. No verbal commands of authority are mentioned, and even prayer seems to have been omitted.

In 1 Samuel 28:3-20 is Samuel actually brought back to life? All the evidence points in favor of that understanding (Wood, Holy Spirit, p. 139; contra Korem, The Fakers, pp. 92-100). For example, note the witch's surprise--she certainly did not expect him (v. 12)! More importantly, the text gives no overt hints that this was not Samuel himself. Does this mean the dead can return? Apparently, God allowed this one exception only to reveal His judgement on Saul. It was not that Samuel himself came back to life, but that God allowed Samuel's *spirit* to return to announce God's judgement.

Does this teach that we can call up spirits? Nowhere is this condoned in the Bible--it is condemned instead. If this is an actual case of Samuel's spirit returning, then we see only that God allowed the "return" to expose Saul's sin and pass judgement (Wood, Holy Spirit, pp. 140-1). 1 Chron. 10:13-14 informs us Saul died, in part, because he asked counsel of a medium rather than the Lord. Perhaps it is possible to call up genuine spirits, but any such actions are completely condemned throughout the Bible. For those who want to "speak" with departed loved ones or relatives, there is no assurance that the spirits which are sought will actually appear. The only thing we can be sure of is that such actions will open the door to Satanic deception rather than true spiritual revelation!

This is the clearest example of a person tormented by an evil spirit in the Old Testament, and shows both the intrapersonal and interpersonal levels of spiritual conflict. On the intrapersonal level, Saul is tormented by the demon, and struggles to retain his kingdom and sanity. On the interpersonal level, David is brought in to minister to Saul through music, something not seen in the New Testament. David's ministry is only partially successful in that it provides some succor for Saul, but it is not successful in setting him free from bondage.

#### 4. Job's trials (Job 1-2)

##### Discussion of Job 1-2 from Moreau, The World of the Spirits, pp. 16-17:

There are several things to note in the first phase of Satan's appearance. First, "sons of God" is the same term used in Genesis 6:2, and here it undoubtedly refers to the angels. They are "sons of God" in contrast to Satan, who comes in their midst. Second, "Satan" is literally "the Satan" or "the accuser". Third, "among them" may indicate either that he comes as an intruder (Anderson, Job, p. 82) or that he was usually among them (Tur-Sinai, Job, p. 11).

God's question is not due to lack of knowledge. In formal royal court procedures the king must speak before the petitioner, so this may be seen as God's acknowledgement to allow Satan to speak (Gordis, Job, p. 15). What has Satan been doing? "Roaming and walking on the earth" is anything but idle wandering; it is purposeful moving (Rowley, Job, p. 31; compare 1 Pet. 5:8). Though ambiguous in terms of place, it is clear in terms of action.

God's question comes as a taunt: "Have you considered . . . ?" Satan, as the accuser, has nothing of which he can accuse Job, and God knows it. Is this a challenge to Satan's character? Satan's answer shows his nature: he cynically refuses to accept anyone as upright. He accuses God of putting a fence of material wealth around Job that buffers him from reality even though Scripture in general portrays wealth as a snare rather than a buffer (Ibid.). Satan is going out of his way to accuse God that He can only obtain the worship of His children by bribing them with financial security (Zuck, "Job", p. 720). Satan's statement confirms this: "He will surely curse" is an oath ("I swear that he will"; Rowley, Job, p. 31). Further, his form of address to God ("you") is insulting in a royal court (Anderson, Job, p. 85); his hatred for righteousness is clearly seen. God accepts Satan's challenge, with the condition that Job himself be left alone, and Satan immediately does his work (vv. 13-19) by controlling "nature" and sending fire (v. 16) and a great wind (v. 19).

The second phase also presents several items worthy of note. The setting is the same as before, but Satan has been shown wrong on his first accusation. Job held fast, yet Satan is still convinced of his accusation. God tells Satan that his test was "without cause," the same word Satan used to accuse God (Job believed in Him "without cause", 1:9; Rowley, Job, p. 32). God has turned the tables! The phrase "skin for skin" is difficult to translate and interpret. It may mean "skin behind skin" (Ibid., p. 33), in the sense that Satan was only allowed to touch the external trappings. The "second skin," Job's health, would be the real test (Tur-Sinai, Job, pp. 23-5). Less likely is the idea "a man will give anyone else's skin . . . to save his own" (contra Gordis, Job, p. 20). In any event, to this test Satan dares God. Again he is given permission to act, again only within God's boundary. He afflicts Job with boils (v. 7), showing his power over our health.

Some general conclusions may be drawn. First, Satan can (at least at the time of Job) enter God's court. Second, his primary work is accusation, and he is an agent which God uses to bring the disasters for the tests that He allows. Third, he can only act within restricted boundaries. Fourth, he cannot believe in the integrity of any person. Fifth, even when he is proven wrong, he does not repent. Sixth, he roams the earth restlessly, looking for victims. Seventh, and finally, he has some control over "nature" and health.

Job 1 and 2 affords us a glimpse behind the curtain of history at the cosmic level of spiritual conflict. Of significance is the fact that there is no real conflict--Satan can only wage his war through slander and insulting behavior. Even though he wants to attack Job, he is completely restricted, declaring Job to have a hedge about him. We also see that Satan's power, though great, is restricted by God. This is not cosmic dualism--Satan is limited by God every step of the way.

##### 5. Daniel's vision (Dan. 10:4-11:1)

Discussion of Dan. 10:4-11:1 from Moreau, The World of the Spirits, pp. 24-25:

On hearing the voice of this angel, Daniel passes out and falls on his face--and no wonder! The angel's appearance is awesome: a body like beryl (a precious stone, exact identification is impossible; see Bullard, "Stones", ISBE Revised), a solid gold belt, a face like lightning, eyes like flaming torches (shining out from the lightning-like face), feet and arms like polished bronze, and a voice like a loud waterfall. He is probably not Gabriel (named twice earlier, 8:16 and 9:21), or Christ (contra Walvoord, Daniel, p. 243 and Young, Daniel, p. 225) because he needs Michael's assistance (10:13). He seems to be of equal rank to Michael and Gabriel (Leupold, Daniel, p. 448).

Daniel alone sees the vision, but it still affects those around him with so much fright that they run away. As when he saw Gabriel, Daniel passes out. He is supernaturally revived by the angel three times in the account. In the first (v. 10), he is enabled to stand, in the second (v. 16) he is enabled to speak, and in the third (v. 18) he is given strength.

This angel has to struggle to deliver God's message. He comes because of Daniel's words, though he is delayed for twenty-one days (v. 2) by the "prince of the kingdom of Persia". This is undoubtedly a demon associated with Persia (Wood, Daniel, p. 272) as Michael is associated with Israel (12:1). The angel will return to do more battle with this demon (v. 20). Here we get a definite glimpse of the spiritual battle that wages around us. Greece is also about to get a similar prince, showing us something of Satan's division of labor. Just as God appears to assign angelic guardians over nations (see on Deut. 32:8 above), so Satan appears to assign equivalent "guardian demons". Thus there is a "struggle behind the struggles that are written on the pages of history" (Leupold, Daniel, p. 457). Even so, the Christian can be assured that "the cause of the kingdom is in good hands, and its success is assured" (Ibid., pp. 459-60).

Michael (an archangel; Jude 9) has to help the angel so that he can deliver the message. As one of the chief angels, he is assigned to Israel (10:21; 12:1), which shows Israel's importance in God's plan. One of Michael's functions appears to be the enabling of free passage of God's messengers to Israel.

It seems that the angel which came to Daniel had been struggling over the position of influence with the demon, and Michael helps him win that position. These two are the only two participating in the struggle (v. 21)--we need not speculate on a myriad of angels fighting a myriad of demons. Two angels were fully sufficient to deal with any demonic influence (see Leupold, Daniel, p. 467)

The last episode unveils a glimpse of the reality of struggles between spiritual powers. The text does not portray God playing a direct role in the encounter, though His sovereign presence is what predetermines the victorious outcome of the angels. The fact that such scenes are so rare indicates that God wants us to focus on His sovereignty rather than cosmic battles.

### Themes

1. God calls people on the basis of His mercy (Deut. 10:12-16) which He LONGS to lavish on us (Isa. 30:18). This is seen in the life of Abraham as well as in Israel as a nation. They were not chosen because of their strength or numbers, but because of God's sovereign mercy. This is a theme interwoven throughout the OT.
  - a. In Exodus 33:17-19 we read: And the Lord said to Moses, "I will also do this

thing of which you have spoken; for you have found favor in My sight, and I have known you by name." Then Moses said, "I pray Thee, show me Thy glory!" And He said, "I Myself will make all My goodness pass before you; and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious and will show compassion on whom I will show compassion."

When God states "I will make all My goodness pass before you", He shows that He is full of grace, and is willing to demonstrate that fact. Further, He is gracious and merciful. Mercy (*raham*) refers to the deep love of a superior for an inferior with whom he or she has a natural bond (it is linked to the Hebrew term for womb, and is used to speak of a mother's love for her nursing baby). It shows God's link to us as a father (and/or mother?) to his (or her) infant children and is also a reminder of His unconditional choice of us. It is closely related to the concept of grace (Coppes, TWOT, pp. 841-2).

- b. Exodus 34:6-7 states: And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, "The LORD, 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. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation."

God is compassionate, a term which denotes the strong tie that God has with His children; He looks upon them as a Father upon His children; and a deep, tender love. He is gracious, which depicts a heartfelt response by someone who has something to give to one who has a need (Yamauchi, TWOT, p. 302). He is slow to anger; "His anger prolongs itself and is not quick to inflict punishment on the sinner, in order that he may repent" (Cassuto, Exodus, p. 439). He is abounding in lovingkindness (tender and benevolent affection; loyal covenant love) and truth (faithfulness) ("reliability, trustworthiness," the attribute of someone one can depend on [the Hebrew is from the same root as our "amen," "it is certain"]; certainty, dependability). These two combine in a single attribute--"lovingkindness of truth, true and faithful lovingkindness. He keeps, with complete faithfulness, His promises to shew lovingkindness and bestow good . . ." (Cassuto, Exodus, p. 439). God keeps lovingkindness for thousands. This takes off from Exodus 20:2-7, which states that God punishes sins to the third and fourth generations, but shows love to thousands of generations (the term implies a limitless number; Cole, Exodus, pp. 156-7) towards those who love Him. How great is God's mercy in comparison to His wrath!

The frequent use through the rest of the OT of these verses by which the nature of God is portrayed (Num. 14:18; Neh. 9:17; Ps. 86:15; etc.) is an eloquent

- testimony to the centrality of this understanding of God's person. Special note should be taken of its use in Jonah 4:2. Jonah obviously understood a universal extension of the Exod. 34:6 concept, not limiting it to Yahweh's relationship with Israel (an astounding thought to the average Israelite of the day!). The compassion of Yahweh is not bound by Mosaic limits, but is universal as is the Abrahamic covenant.
- c. God's merciful compassion carries on in the NT as well, where we see:
- i. He is the One from whom all things come and for whom we live (1 Cor. 8:6).
  - ii. He has blessed us with every spiritual blessing (Eph. 1:3-10), sealing us with His Spirit (2 Cor. 1:21-22; 5:5) and effecting our rescue from Satan's domain (Col. 1:13-14).
  - iii. He Himself does not tempt us (Jas. 1:13), and He moderates every temptation we experience (1 Cor. 10:13).
  - iv. He is able to keep us from falling (Jude 24-25), but, even when we do fall, He comforts us in our troubles (2 Cor. 1:3-4) and continues to work all things for our good (by conforming us to the image of Christ; Rom. 8:28-30).
  - v. He works in us (Phil. 2:12-13), enabling us to grow (1 Cor. 3:7) and to do the works He has already prepared for us (Eph. 2:8-10).
2. The believer's responsibilities towards God. In light of the revealed character of our loving, merciful, compassionate Creator, what is our response? The following suggestions provide the framework as seen in the OT:
- a. We are to enjoy the Eternal One forever (borrowing from John Piper Delighting in God and Let the Nations Be Glad, examples from the Psalms):
    - i. We are to delight in God's Law (Ps. 1:2; 19:8).
    - ii. God Himself is the source of joy and delight (Ps. 21:6; 45:7).
    - iii. We take joy in:
      - (1) His protection (Ps. 5:11; 16:8-11).
      - (2) His salvation, forgiveness, and consolation (Ps. 35:9; 51:8).
      - (3) His provision of material possessions (106:5; 113:9).
      - (4) His victory, judgment(s), deliverance (21:1; 35:27; 145:7).
      - (5) His creation (48:1-2; 111:2).

- iv. We express our delight through:
  - (1) Song (Ps. 9:2; 31:11).
  - (2) Worship (Ps. 34:1-3; 42:4; 47:5; 118:15; 122:1).
- b. We are to pursue the Holy One.

**Theme:** As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God.

*Psalms 42:1-2a*

Throughout the Bible are commands to seek God (1 Chron. 16:10-11; 2 Chron. 14:4; Ps. 77:2; 105:3-4; Isa. 55:6; Hos. 10:12; Amos 5:4-6; Zeph. 2:3; Matt. 6:33; 7:7; Luke 11:9 and 12:31). We are promised that if we seek Him, we will find Him (Deut. 4:29; 1 Chron. 28:9; 2 Chron. 15:2; Prov. 8:17; Jer. 29:13). He will hear us and forgive (2 Chron. 7:14); we will understand justice (Prov. 28:5) and lack no good thing (Ps. 34:10). Indeed, God seeks after those people who seek to know Him (Ps. 14:2; 53:2).

- c. We are to praise the Worthy Master.

God's quest to be glorified and our quest to be satisfied reach their goal in this one experience: our delight in God which overflows in praise. For God, praise is the sweet echo of his own excellence in the hearts of his people. For us, praise is the summit of satisfaction that comes from living in fellowship with God.

*Piper, Desiring God, p. 41*

- i. We praise God for:
  - (1) His deeds (Ps. 9:1; 21:13).
  - (2) His character or attributes (Ps. 7:17; 107:1; 146:10).
  - (3) His law (119:7, 62, 108, 164, 171, 175).
- ii. One significant avenue of praise is song (30:4, 69:30; 147:1, 7).
- iii. The rest of the Creation also praises God (19:1; 148:1-8).
- iv. Psalm 150, the last psalm, is a delightful summary of praise:

Praise the LORD.

Praise God in his sanctuary; praise him in his mighty heavens.  
Praise him for his acts of power; praise him for his surpassing greatness.

Praise him with the sounding of the trumpet,

Praise him with the harp and lyre,

Praise him with tambourine and dancing,

Praise him with the strings and flute,  
Praise him with the clash of cymbals,  
Praise him with resounding cymbals.  
Let everything that has breath praise the LORD.  
Praise the LORD.

- d. We are to worship the Glorious King of Kings.

The fuel of worship is a true vision of the greatness of God; the fire that makes the fuel burn white hot is the quickening of the Holy Spirit; the furnace made alive and warm by the flame of truth is our renewed spirit; and the resulting heat of our afflictions is powerful worship, pushing its way out in confessions, longings, acclamations, tears, songs, shouts, bowed heads, lifted hands and obedient lives.

*Piper, Desiring God, p. 66*

- i. We are commanded to worship God (Ps. 97:7; Rom. 12:1; Rev. 14:7).
- ii. He alone is the one to be worshiped (Exod. 20:5; Deut. 5:9; Isa. 29:13).
- iii. We worship Him by:
- (1) Exalting and glorifying Him (1 Chron. 16:29; Ps. 29:2; Rev. 15:4).
  - (2) Bowing down before Him (Job 1:20; Ps. 95:6; Matt. 4:9; Rev. 4:10).
- iv. Ultimately all will worship the Creator (Isa. 19:21; Dan. 7:27; Zeph.2:11).
- e. We are to fear the Awesome One.
- i. We are commanded to fear God (Deut. 6:13; 10:12-17, 20; 31:12-13; Josh. 24:14; 1 Sam. 12:24; Ps. 33:8; Prov. 24:21; Isa. 8:13; and 1 Pet. 2:17).
- (1) The root idea of the Hebrew term for fear (*yare*) is "to tremble." In the OT the meaning ranges from emotional fear to reverence or awe to formal religious worship (Bowling, TWOT, pp. 399-401).
  - (2) In Deut 10:12-17, it is linked to what follows (walk in His ways, love Him, serve Him, and keep His commands) and conveys the idea of living properly before God.

- (3) God is awesome and completely beyond us; we stand in fear of His awesome power and in awe for who He is. It is this fear that is the beginning of true wisdom (Prov. 1:7).
  - (4) Godly fear is more than just an attitude, however; it involves a response of obedience and right living (Wanke, "Phobeo", TDNT Abridged, pp. 1274) seen in:
    - (a) Righteous living (Leviticus 19:14; 2 Chron. 19:7; Prov. 3:7; 14:2).
    - (b) Serving God (Psalms 2:11).
    - (c) Praising Him (Psalms 22:23; 135:20; Revelation 19:5).
    - (d) Worshiping him (Revelation 14:7).
    - (e) Bringing glory to His name (Revelation 15:4).
- ii. The benefits or results of fearing God include:
- (1) Being kept from sinning (Exodus 20:20; Prov. 14:6; 26-27; 16:6).
  - (2) Being appointed to service for God. (Exodus 18:21).
  - (3) Overseeing righteously (2 Samuel 23:3-4).
  - (4) Being instructed by God in the way chosen for us (Psalms 25:12).
  - (5) Deliverance (Psalms 34:7).
  - (6) Lacking nothing (Psalms 34:9).
  - (7) Experiencing God's compassion (Psalms 103:13).
  - (8) Having good understanding (Psalms 111:10) and wisdom (Prov. 15:33).
  - (9) Being blessed of God (Psalms 112:1; 128:4).
  - (10) Having Him as our help and shield (Psalms 115:11-13).
  - (11) Enjoying a long life (Deuteronomy 6:1-2; 24; Prov. 10:27; 22:4).

(12) Avoiding the reproach of unbelievers (Nehemiah 5:9).

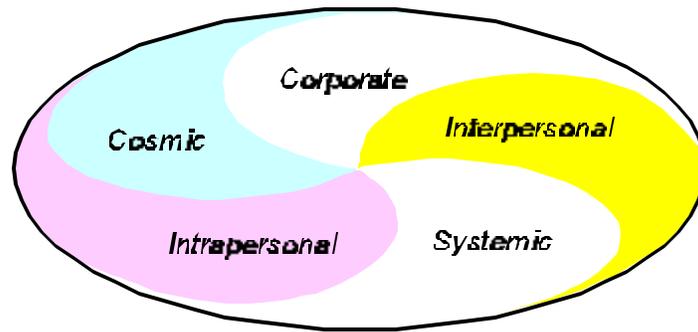
3. Levels of spiritual conflict

- a. There are at least five levels of spiritual conflict seen in the Bible. The following chart explains each level and gives the major theme and examples of the types of conflict found at each level.

Level	Theme	Types of Conflict
Intrapersonal	Be renewed in your minds and put on the new.	<b>Defensive:</b> Putting off the old by resisting temptation from the world and the flesh (including Satan's manipulation of them); standing our ground by taking thoughts captive; refusing to be intimidated <b>Offensive:</b> Putting on the new by allowing Christ to live through us; practicing personal disciplines (e.g., our spiritual armor); being aware of Satan's schemes and exposing them to the light; praying against his schemes as you encounter them
Interpersonal	Love one another as God has loved you.	<b>Defensive:</b> Building up the body of Christ through personal discipleship; being aware of Satan's schemes and knowing how to <i>gently</i> correct those who oppose God's work <b>Offensive:</b> Deliverance and/or exorcism of believers in bondage; evangelism with conscious entreaty for divine assistance in setting people free
Corporate	That the whole body grow up to the measure of Christ	<b>Defensive:</b> Building up of the body in doctrine and good deeds; prayer against attacks on the local body <b>Offensive:</b> Freeing those in bondage; facilitating corporate worship and praise; preventative prayer for God's protection over the local body, especially its leadership
Systemic	The lights of the world	<b>Defensive:</b> Understanding God's kingdom ethics as they apply in systems; refusing to use anti-kingdom devices to develop true kingdom systems; understanding the tactics of the particular expressions of anti-kingdom systems you face; responding to the dominating tactics of anti-kingdom systems through true kingdom ethics (e.g., refusing to play Satan's game Satan's way) <b>Offensive:</b> Seeking to act as "leaven in the dough" of the systems that would dominate us; actively working for systemic change, not just personal conversion; infiltrating anti-kingdom systems as leaven; if necessary (and possible within kingdom ethics) implementing control systems built on kingdom ethics.

Level	Theme	Types of Conflict
Cosmic	Focus on God's control.	<p><b>Defensive:</b> Study and understanding of Satan's tactics and what our responsibility is; prayer asking God's intervention when we sense attacks coming against our institutions or geographic areas</p> <p><b>Offensive:</b> Prayer against the working of spirits over institutions and geographic areas as God leads (territorial prayer--a controversial area)</p>

- b. All of these levels are interwoven in life experiences. At each level there are strongholds against which we struggle in spiritual battle. These are illustrated in Diagram 10:



## Strongholds

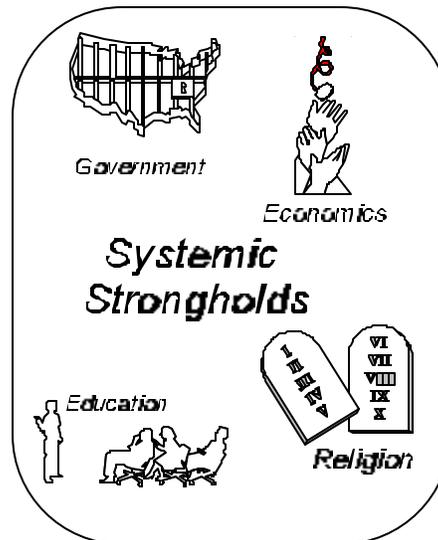
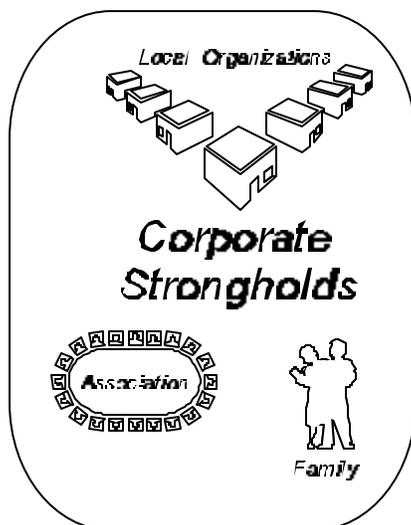
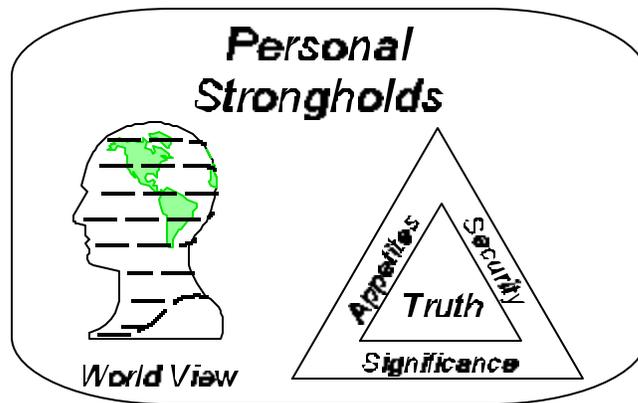


Diagram 10: The Interweaving of the Levels of Spiritual Conflict

---

Summary of Spiritual Conflict Themes in the Old Testament

*The Characters of Spiritual Conflict in the OT*

1. God is the Creator (Gen. 1:1; Neh. 9:6) who is sovereignly in control of all the universe (Ps. 89:5; 103:19). He is the owner of the earth (Ps. 24:1) who does whatever pleases Him (Ps. 115:3). His sovereignty extends to our daily lives (Ps. 139:16b) and even over apparently random events (Exod. 21:13; Prov. 16:33). Nothing is too difficult for Him (Jer. 32:27).
2. **All** that He created was declared very good (Gen. 1:31; NIV). Thus, goodness finds its reference point in the creative activity and character of God. Evil, on the other hand, is defined as that which actively opposes God's created goodness (and not just as an absence of good; see Gen. 2:18). Good, being rooted in God's eternal nature, exists independently of evil, but evil by definition is contingent on the existence of good. The physical created order was exposed to the effects of evil through the fall (Gen. 3:17-19), though it still proclaims God's glory (Ps. 19:1-6).
3. God created woman and man in His own image (Gen. 1:26-27). We are created for God's glory (Isa. 43:7); we glorify Him by worship (Ps. 29:2) and by walking in His truth and fearing His name (Ps. 86:8-11). Further, we are crowned with glory by Him (Ps. 8:3-8)--we are invested with a dignity second only to God's, and serve as His rulers on earth (Gen. 2:28-30).
4. The created order is not limited to the material universe; it includes spirit beings as well:
  - a. First, we note the spirit beings aligned with God, of which several designations are found: angels (1 Kings 19:5; 2 Kings 6:15-19; Ps. 91:11-12), sons of God (Job 1:6), cherubim (Gen. 3:24), seraphim (Is. 6:1-4), the angel of the LORD (Gen. 16:7-13), the commander of the LORD's army (Josh. 5:13-15), and angelic princes (Dan. 10:21). Gabriel (Dan. 8:16) and Michael (Dan. 12:1) are the only good angels named in the Bible.
  - b. Second, the OT acknowledges the existence of spirit beings who incite people to evil deeds or accuse them before God. Designations for these beings include Satan (Job 1:6), demons (Deut. 32:17); prince (Dan. 10:13), evil spirits (1 Sam. 16:14), gods (Deut. 32:17), and starry hosts (Zeph. 1:5).
  - c. Satan is the deceiver (Gen. 3:1-6; 13), the inciter (1 Chron. 21:1), and accuser (Zech. 3:1) of people and God (Job 1:9-11 and 2:4-5), but operates only on the leash that God

allows (Job 1-2). His defeat is foretold by God (Gen. 3:15), so it is sure. It is debated as to whether or not his fall from grace is described (Isa. 14:12-20 and Ezek. 28:11-19; these passages, if indirectly referring to Satan, describe him as one who fell from the top level of the created order to become the top level perverter of what God has made).

- d. Spirit beings of this category are not prominent in the OT. Further, they are not portrayed as free, independent agents--they operate as God sends them (Deut. 32:15-17; 1 Sam. 16:14, 19:9).

*The Interrelationships among God, People, and Spirit Beings in the OT*

1. People chose to side with Satan when we fell prey to the serpent's temptation in Eden (Gen. 3:1-15). As a result, there was a radical restructuring of our relationships with God, others, and self, including the breaking of our intimate fellowship with God. Not only have individuals fallen; nations are fallen as well (Gen. 10-11).
2. God chooses and sets apart people (Ps. 40:1-3) to bring glory to Him (Isa. 43:7) and thereby demonstrate His reign over the universe to an unbelieving world. The people are chosen on the basis of His mercy, not their own merit (Deut. 10:12-16). He tests His people by sending false prophets (Deut. 13:1-5) and allowing imitation miracles (Exod. 7:8-13, 20-22; 8:5-7, 16-19; 9:8-12) to see if they give full allegiance to Him. This allegiance may be described as the "politics of separation": we are to be separate from the people who do not know God and from their practices. This is focused especially in the theme of holiness (Lev. 11:44-45).
3. Though God is high and holy (transcendent), he also lives with those who are contrite and lowly in spirit (immanent; Isa. 57:15). His focus is not on our power, but on our purity and dependence on Him (Isa. 30:15). He desires broken hearts (Ps. 51:17) and truth in the inward parts (Ps. 51:6). His call is not impossible to obey--it is within our reach (Deut. 30:11-16). Spiritual "power" is not proof of purity (e.g., holy and unholy can be seen close together in that Saul was prophesying when an evil spirit came on him; 1 Sam. 18:10-11). God longs to lavish His mercy on those who walk in His ways (Ps. 84:11; Isa. 30:18), and He has plans of prosperity and hope for those He loves (Jer. 29:11).
4. There are people who actively seek to interact with and relate to spirit beings, but God's people should avoid any practices associated with this (Lev. 19:31; 20:6, 27; Deut. 18:9-14) as well as the demons behind those practices (Deut 32:17; Ps. 106:36-37). There are definite limits to the types of relations allowed between humans and spirits (Gen. 6:1-4).
5. God mediates at least some of His judgments on people through spirit beings, including angels (Gen. 19:1-26; Ezek. 9:1-11) and the angel of the LORD (2 Sam. 24:15-16). Evil spirits also are instruments used to initiate or bring His judgment (e.g., through dissension

[Jud. 9:22-25] and torment [1 Sam. 16:14]).

6. Physically, people are no match for the power of angels (2 Kings 19:35; 2 Chr. 32:20).

### *Levels of Spiritual Conflict*

1. **Personal and corporate:** Spiritual conflict is the individual and the community of God's people reversing the restructuring that took place as a result of the fall. This is accomplished through participating in God's covenant of peace (*shalom*--wholeness, completeness, soundness; Isa. 54:10), which is entered by faith in Jehovah (Gen. 15:6; including trusting in His power to totally deliver) and living a life of obedience in the light of His word (Micah 6:8) no matter what the cost (Gen. 22:1-18). This is possible because God's covenant people live in the shadow of His wings (Ps. 91:1-16).
2. **Political:** One major focus is the establishment of a literal theonomous kingdom in which God's chosen people (as individuals and as a nation) were given a choice (Deut. 30:19-20) to live a life (including religion and politics) pleasing to their Creator. God promises to use His angels to go before Israel and 'clear the land' (Exod. 23:20-23; 33:2). There is no single 'battle plan'--each battle is fought in unique fashion in dependence on Jehovah, and several battles are fought in completely nontraditional ways (e.g., Jericho).

The Israelites fail to establish the kingdom, but not because they (or their God) are not powerful enough. Every victory they win is because of their faithfulness to God, and every loss is a result of their unfaithfulness (e.g., both are seen in the story of Ai in Joshua 7-8). Rather, their failure is due to the fact that they do not maintain their holiness, intermingling with those around them and falling short of the demands of God. They do this physically through intermarriage (Ezra 10:2), spiritually through idolatry and syncretism (2 Kings 21:1-6; 2 Chron. 28:22-23; Ps. 106:34-39), and politically by demanding a king (1 Samuel 8:19) and making alliances not pleasing to God (Deut. 7:1-7; e.g., Ahab with Ben-Hadad, 1 Kings 20:26-42).

3. **Cosmic:** Spiritual conflict also takes place in the cosmic realm. God "chairs" a council of angels (2 Chron. 18:18-22; Job 1-2; Ps. 89:5-8). Angels do battle over nations (Dan. 10:4-11:1). There are powers in heaven which appear to correspond to kings (Isa. 24:21) or nations (Deut. 4:19; possibly Deut. 32:8 and Dan. 8:9-12) on earth.