

# The Angelic Conflict

It is important to know that angels do exist, that they have a relationship to both God and man, and that their existence prior to man is related to the creation of the heavens and earth, and the earth becoming a waste place devoid of life.

In covering the Angelic Conflict, I may introduce a few terms which you may not be familiar with.

From time immemorial, man understands that there is some reason for his existence, some purpose for his short life on this earth, and this topic is a theme found in the writings of philosophers, theologians and even playwrights and musicians. One of the most important topics in the Bible is angels and our relationship to them. Angels are not just some peripheral set of created beings; they are the key as to why we were created.

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1. The Bible teaches us that angels exist. Psalm 8:4,5 148:1–8 Heb. 2:6–7 2Peter 2:11
2. In lesson #2, we covered the order of creation: the heavens and the earth, angels, the restoration of the earth, followed by the creation of man. The Bible is the source of this order.
3. Almost every ancient and modern religion teaches something about angels. Like the creation of the earth, some religions teach some really weird things about angels whereas Christianity, if anything, is understated when it comes to angelic creation (not unlike the Biblical approach to the creation and restoration of the earth).
4. The Bible does not have an off-handed reference to angels here or there; angels are mentioned specifically nearly 300 times in the Old and New Testaments. There are a number of additional passages where angels are spoken of as *spirits, lights, cherubs, stars, demons, a cloud of witnesses, etc.*
5. Furthermore, it is made clear, even in the New Testament, that we are involved in an invisible conflict, an unseen war. **For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against nations, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places** (Eph:6:12).
6. There are two groups of angels—the elect or holy angels and the fallen angels. Matt. 25:31, 41 Acts 10:22 2Peter 2:4 Rev. 14:10
7. There are some obvious differences between man and angels: man can procreate, angels cannot (at least amongst themselves). The human race was begun with two people, both created and made directly by God and we have expanded our numbers through procreation; angels were all immediately created by God. They do not procreate; their numbers do not increase or decrease. Ezek. 28:15 Matt. 22:30 Col. 1:16
8. Whereas, we have corporal bodies and a soul and spirit, resulting in both physical

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life and a metaphysical life; angels appear to be confined, most of the time, to spirit bodies or bodies of light which we cannot always see. Matt. 28:2–3 Luke 10:18 Acts 12:27 1Cor. 15:40–41 Heb. 1:7, 13–14 Rev. 18:1

9. There are times when angels enter into human history, and in a variety of ways.
  - 1) Satan either takes on the form of a serpent or indwells a serpent in Gen. 3.
  - 2) Angels take on human-like bodies and are capable of procreation in conjunction with human wives (there is no opposite arrangement; that is, there are no human males copulating with female angels). Apart from this incident, angels do not marry nor are they given in marriage, which suggests that angels are all of one gender (male). Gen. 6 Matt. 22:30
  - 3) Fallen angels (demons) indwelt various people during the time of Christ, having at least partial control of their bodies. Often these were many demons controlling one body. This concentrated activity of demon possession appears to have been most apparent during the incarnation of Jesus Christ (Matt. 4:24 8:16, 28 John 13:27). We do not find demonic possession as a recurrent theme in the book of Acts nor as a topic of extended discussion in any of the epistles). There are individuals whose behavior suggests demon possession—Adolph Hitler or Richard Trenton Chase, for example. However, we are not given the mandate or the mechanics to search out and *heal* such individuals.
  - 4) Angels influence us today with their corrupt thinking, called doctrines (or, *teachings*) of demons. 1Tim. 4:1
10. The most beautiful angel to come from the hand of God is Lucifer, son of the morning.
  - 1) Although Satan is found first in the Bible in Gen. 3, he obviously had to exist prior to that time. He is spoken of in Isa. 14:12–17: "How you are fallen from heaven, O Day Star, son of Dawn! How you are cut down to the ground, you who laid the nations low! You said in your heart, 'I will ascend to heaven; above the stars of God [angelic creation] I will set my throne on high; I will sit on the mount of assembly in the far reaches of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; **I will make myself like the Most High.**' But you are brought down to Sheol, to the far reaches of the pit. Those who see you will stare at you and ponder over you: 'Is this the man who made the earth tremble, who shook kingdoms, who made the world like a desert and overthrew its cities, who did not let his prisoners go home?' One of the fascinating things about the Old Testament is, a passage will be speaking of one thing (here, one of the kings of Babylon) and then it will morph into speaking about something else, a parallel situation or person (in this case, Satan). What we need from this passage is, Satan's sin, to think that he could be like the Most High (i.e., equal to God) and that He has been judged and will be brought down to Sheol.
  - 2) Quite obviously, the caricature of Satan with horns, a trident, a long forked tail and red epidermis has no basis in fact (like the picture of a gentile Jesus with the long flowing locks of brown hair). Satan is extremely

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- attractive, charismatic and personable.
- 3) Ezek. 28 is about the King of Tyre, but it also parallels the person of Satan: “You have been in Eden, the garden of God. Every precious stone was your covering; the ruby, the topaz, and the jasper, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the turquoise, and the carbuncle, and gold; the workmanship of your tambourines and of your flutes in you. In the day you were created, they were prepared. You were the anointed cherub that covers, and I had put you in the holy heights of God, where you were. You walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. **You were perfect in your ways from the day you were created, until iniquity was found in you.** By the multitude of your trade, they filled your midst with violence, and you sinned. So I cast you defiled from the height of God, and I destroyed you, O covering cherub, from among the stones of fire. Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty; you corrupted your wisdom because of your splendor. I have cast you to the ground. I will put you before kings, that they may see you. By the host of your iniquities, by the iniquity of your trade, you have defiled your holy places. So I brought a fire from your midst and it shall devour you, and I will give you for ashes on the earth in the sight of all who see you. All who know you among the peoples shall be appalled at you. You shall be terrors, and you will not be forever.” (Ezek. 28:13–19). Here, we are told that Satan was in the garden of God and that he was created perfect until iniquity was found in him.
  - 4) Satan is called an angel of light, the god of this world and the ruler of this world. John 14:30 2Cor. 4:4 11:14
  - 5) God created the Lake of Fire where Satan and his angels and men who do not believe in Jesus Christ will be cast. Jesus taught: “**Then He will also say to those on His left, Go away from Me, cursed ones, into the everlasting fire having been prepared for the Devil and his angels.**” (Matt. 25:41).
  - 6) Satan will be cast into everlasting fire because he has been judged. “**The ruler of this world has been judged.**” (John 16:11b).
  - 7) His being cast into the Lake of Fire is future: **And the Devil leading them astray was thrown into the Lake of Fire and Brimstone** (Rev. 20:10a).
11. Why is Satan out and about now?
- 1) From the judgement of Satan and his fallen angels to this point in time, thousands and possibly millions of years have gone by. Satan sinned, he has been judged, and he will be thrown into the Lake of Fire. Therefore, we ought to ask, why has this not occurred yet? Why has God not carried out this sentence? Why is Satan out there loose in the world?
  - 2) R. B. Thieme Jr. has postulated that Satan’s sentence is now under appeal. This is based upon several Scriptures.
    - (1) In Job 1–2, Satan and the angels are assembled before God and Satan is raising objections to the way things are. He claims that Job is dedicated to God only because of the many blessings which

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- God has given him. Remove these blessings, Satan alleges, and Job will curse God. The book of Job is God showing Satan (and the angels who are observing) that Satan is wrong.
- (2) Some associate the name *Satan* with *lawyer, prosecuting attorney, attorney*. Although I was unable to find a clear indication of this in the several lexicons which I own, this seems to be a Jewish tradition.
  - (3) Satan is said to accuse believers before God day and night. Rev. 12:20
  - (4) The use of the words *judgment* and *punishment* in conjunction with Satan suggest a trial.
- 3) Let me suggest the basis of Satan's appeal (the first of which is postulated by Thieme):
- (1) How can a loving God cast any of His creatures into a Lake of Fire?
  - (2) Satan to God: "God, You made me this way. I am not responsible for Your creation." God is at fault for not making a perfect creation. If Satan is imperfect, then it must mean that God is imperfect.
  - (3) Satan's sin is originally one of pride, was discovered by God—how can a hidden sin like this deserve eternal death? How is this just?
  - (4) Can't a God of love forgive His creatures?
  - (5) Let's accept the premise that Satan and the fallen angels have sinned. Why not just give Satan some little space in the universe and let him and the other fallen angels hang out there?
  - (6) Elect angels have chosen this path simply because God rewards them for their choice.
  - (7) Essentially, Satan's objections call into question God's actions in comparison to His character and essence. God has to be consistent, as He is immutable. God is righteous and just, so His judgment has to be righteous and just. God is love, so His actions should reflect His love.
  - (8) There are inherent contradictions in God's character (creating beings which will suffer forever in the Lake of Fire does not demonstrate love or righteousness). Therefore, the inherent defects in Satan's character cannot be judged by Someone with inherent defects. In other words, if Satan is imperfect, then God is imperfect. God is unable to demonstrate perfect character in all respects at all times (that is the argument of Satan).
  - (9) Right and wrong are relative concepts; there really is no such thing as absolute standards of right and wrong. The acts of Satan and those angels who fell are not inherently wrong, because there is no such thing as inherent wrong.
  - (10) Right and wrong, good and bad, are simply arbitrary standards, set up by God.
  - (11) God is incapable of creating creatures with free will who will not, at

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- some point in time, disobey Him.
- (12) Finally, Satan, in a sense, alleges, "I could do a better job than God with this earth and with His creatures." He said, "I will be like the Most High." (Isa. 14:14b).
- 4) If you know much about the Bible, you know that each of these objections is addressed in the Bible in conjunction with human history being played out.
- 5) Whatever objection you have ever formed in your mind against God, God's plan or God's grace, God will deal with that objection in time.
- 6) Whatever objections unbelievers lodge against God will also be dealt with in time. God's answering all of Satan's objections will simultaneously answer all of the objections of mankind throughout the ages.
12. The time frame of all of this is important. This helps us to understand our place in this world:
- 1) God created angels.
  - 2) Satan fell and took a third of the angels with him. Rev. 12:4
  - 3) There was a trial of some sort.
  - 4) Satan and the fallen angels were judged and sentenced. Matt. 25:41
  - 5) This sentence is not carried out immediately.
  - 6) The implication is, Satan lodged an appeal.
  - 7) Temporarily, the habitation of the angels (the earth) is frozen, which possibly restrains the fallen angels.
  - 8) The earth is restored, man is created.
  - 9) Human history is played out.
  - 10) Then Satan and the fallen angels are cast into the Lake of Fire. Rev. 20:10
  - 11) This implies that we, lowly human beings, are somehow involved between the fall and sentencing of Satan and the carrying out of the sentence against Satan. In other words, we apparently are involved in the appeal portion of the trial of Satan and the fallen angels.
13. This explains our place in this world. We were created inferior to angels, but we have an essence similar to angels, inasmuch as we can think, we have self-consciousness, we have a concept of right and wrong, we have a vocabulary, we have emotions, and we have volition. These are things which angels possess, and these things are a reflected image of God. Heb. 2:5–10 12:1
14. By our creation and our lives on this earth, God reveals the nature of His character—His perfect love, justice and righteousness—in dealing with man. Psalm 145:17 Isa. 5:16 John 3:16
15. By our creation and our life in this world, God reveals the consistency of His character through His interaction with man—man as created perfect and man as a fallen creature. God will interact with man under a number of varying conditions, including perfect environment and far less than perfect environment. These interactions, observed by angels, will reveal that God is love, righteousness, justice, and that every single thing which God does is consistent

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- with His character. All of the objections which I suggested, will be answered in human history.
16. By the function of Bible doctrine in our souls, God reveals the importance of truth, which is embodied in the Bible that we have. God reveals the importance of His creatures knowing and adhering to His Word. Prov. 8 1Cor. 2:16 Philip. 2:5 3:15 4:7
  17. God's judgments are revealed as being holy and righteous; His character is revealed as being perfect in all respects. Our function on this earth glorifies God. John 11:4 1Cor. 10:31
  18. The simplest way for us to understand this is by our relationship to our own children. When they do wrong, we punish them, and sometimes the punishment is difficult for us and them. However, ideally speaking, before, after or during the punishment, we explain to them what they have done wrong and why it is wrong. In this way, a child develops norms and standards; he develops a conscience; and he learns how to function in this world in such a way that is both moral and right and is beneficial to him and to those around him. This allows a child to build up an entire framework of norms and standards which will carry him through his entire life. Parents who do not do this are destroying the little souls of the children God has entrusted to them.
  19. This is how God interacts with us, and helps to explain why, over and over again, believers are called His children. It explains why God disciplines us. Heb. 12:5–11
  20. Men and angels, in this process, develop an understanding and an appreciation for Who and What God is and for the wonder of their own existence.
  21. The Angelic Conflict explains a great many things to us:
    - 1) Why we exist. We resolve the Angelic Conflict and both glorify and vindicate God. His love and mercy toward His creatures is revealed in the cross, as is His righteousness and justice. Our daily interaction with God after the cross reaffirms God's character and essence.
    - 2) Why is there sin? Sin is a result of our free will. Satan and a third of the angels chose to sin, and man chose to sin. There is the difference that we are born with a sin nature because Adam sinned; all fallen angels had to go from a sinless state to a fallen state.
    - 3) Why God cannot overlook or tolerate sin. There is nothing more vicious than man's inhumanity to man. Whether this begins as a schoolyard taunt, a mean piece of gossip exchanged, or a radical religious movement which kills people in order to make a political statement; sin causes great pain and suffering. Sin is not something which people are willing to engage in on their own. As an example, people claim that pornography is a victimless crime. However, people are kidnaped and enslaved even today in order to further the pornography (and sex-trade) industry. People are led toward drug-addiction in order to keep them involved in the sex trade. Marriages are destroyed and children's lives are ruined because of pornography. The results of any sin can be carried out to reveal how



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- damaging that sin can be.
- 4) Why sin must be judged. There are few among us, when we observe man's cruelty to his fellow man, do not desire to see justice done. Even in a movie, when we are drawn into the evil of some of the characters, it is a great release it is to see these characters receive their comeuppance at the very end of the movie. No one watches a *Die Hard* movie and is disappointed that Bruce Willis prevails at the end of the movie. That is the satisfying resolution to good versus evil.
  - 5) Why is there suffering? Men suffer as a result of sin. This is why God will remove sin completely from our lives in the future. This is also why He will create a new heavens and a new earth, completely separate from the stain of sin.
22. The Angelic Conflict is not a static event or series of events. Satanic strategy and Satanic attacks change from dispensation to dispensation. Although I will personalize this, and speak of Satan's attacks, bear in mind, that we are dealing specifically with his strategies, but that much of his strategy is executed by fallen angels, called demons (although, on occasion, Satan will personally attack some believers).
- 1) At the Age of Innocence, Satan observed the man and the woman, and not being content to leave well enough alone, interfered, causing the woman to sin by deceiving her, and the man to sin knowingly, because the woman he loved had sinned.
  - 2) Satan's strategy in the Age of the Gentiles: When God promised a Savior (first to Adam and Eve and later to other believers), Satan's focus was on this Savior and destroying the line of the Savior. The killing of Abel was probably the first Satanic attack against the line of the Messiah (Satan possibly assumed that Abel was the One promised by God).
  - 3) Satan's Strategy in the Age of Israel, parts I and II: When God called Abraham, and promised to preserve his line and to make a great nation of him, Satan began to attack the line of Abraham as well as the nation Israel.
    - (1) As an aside, I should point out that, if the Jews are removed from this earth, most of the prophecies found in the Bible become null and void; they cannot be fulfilled. Therefore, from the exodus to this very moment, Satan encourages anti-Semitism and does everything that he can to remove Jews from this earth.
    - (2) God made a number of promises to Israel—the Abrahamic Covenant and the Davidic Covenant, to name two—and Satan has acted not only to keep this covenants from being fulfilled, but he also acts to cast doubt upon the fulfillment of these covenants. Many Jews today wonder about their relationship to God and the promises which He made to them. In the end times, Jews are going to rediscover books like Esther and passages like Gen. 22, Psalm 89 and Isa. 53, and suddenly their eyes will be opened, and

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- they will understand what those passages are saying to them. I believe that this is where the 144,000 evangelists will spring from during the Tribulation.
- (3) Satan also inspires doubt in Gentiles, which respect to God's fulfillment of His covenants with Israel. One of the results of this is known as Covenant Theology, where all the promises which God made to Israel are reinterpreted and spiritualized, and that the church is seen (falsely) as *spiritual Israel* and that God's covenants are transferred over, somehow, to Gentile believers in the Church Age. The idea is, the Jews just sinned too much, God decided that they were not His people, and He started up the church, which has been mostly a gentile organization (although Jews do believe). This is a false system of theology because it calls into questions God's veracity, His immutability and His omniscience.
- i Is God really truthful? He made some very clear promises to Israel, and it is difficult to take God seriously when these promises are *spiritualized*.
  - ii We are told that God does not change, but, if He just gave all his promises to Israel over to the church, which requires these promises to be *spiritualized* in order for them to make sense, then He is not immutable.
  - iii How can the Jews go so far as to fall outside of God's plan? Isn't an omniscient God able to know this is going to happen and to make provision for it?
  - iv At the very least, Covenant Theology ends up calling into question these 3 attributes of God (these are not tenets of Covenant Theology, but they are logical questions which arise from believing in Covenant Theology (a dispensational interpretation of history is the alternative to Covenant Theology)).
- (4) Satan did everything that he could to destroy the nation Israel, inspiring countless attacks against them. He had a hand in splitting up Israel into two nations (the northern and southern kingdoms), and a hand in removing Israel's sovereignty on several occasions.
- (5) This should help to explain not only the continual attacks of the surrounding nations against Israel, but it explains the holocaust and it explains the remarkable hatred of Islam for the Jew today.
- 4) Satan's strategy for the Age of the Hypostatic Union: direct attacks upon Jesus Christ (and, to a lesser extent, His disciples). Here, we have one of the most amazing historical events, simply from the standpoint of strategy. Satan knew Who the Messiah was, and Satan attacked Him in every way possible. Satan did everything he could to move Jesus to the cross, to what he believed would be tremendous humiliation. Satan was able to exercise his considerable hatred toward Jesus throughout this process of



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Jesus being taken to the cross. However, what Satan did not seem to realize was, God would provide our salvation by means of the cross, and that the cross was His ultimate destination. Blinded by intense hatred, Satan moved Jesus toward the cross, not realizing that the cross would be the turning point in the Angelic Conflict. It is with the cross that Jesus provided all mankind salvation. Had Satan been able to figure this out, he would have done everything possible to keep Jesus from the cross.

- 5) In the Church Age, the Angelic Conflict is intensified for the individual believer. The Messiah promised by God has come, died for our sins, and been resurrected. Therefore, Satan attacks man in general and believers specifically. Satanic strategy moves on two fronts:
  - (1) Satan tries to blind the unbeliever from the gospel and tries to keep any person from believing in Jesus Christ. Religion plays as great a role in this as does sin. 2Cor. 4:4
  - (2) Once a person believes in Jesus Christ, Satan does everything that he can to neutralize his spiritual impact. Satan again uses religion to neutralize the spiritual impact of individual believers. This is one reason there are so many Christian cults; this is the reason the Catholic Church has become so corrupt; this is the reason so few Protestant churches concentrate on the teaching of the Bible; this is the reason that so many churches lean toward social action and even toward liberation theology—these attacks keep a believer from growing and having any sort of spiritual impact. Quite obviously, Satan continues to use sin to keep man from growing spiritually. 1Tim. 4:1
- 6) When the church is taken up (the rapture), there will be no one who believes in Jesus Christ left on the earth. There will be 7 more years of the Age of Israel to play out, called the Tribulation in the Bible. Satan will have more power at this time and he will seek to kill every person who believes in Jesus Christ. We know that, for instance, in the history of Communist nations, there will be a strong, charismatic leader who rises up to *liberate* his people and to offer them *hope*. Meanwhile, behind the scenes, he is killing every person who is against his *revolution for freedom*. The Beast will rise up in much the same way, adored by millions, if not billions, of people; who will, at the same time, engage in a vicious holy war against God's elect. This will be a double-intensification of the Angelic Conflict.
- 7) The Millennium will be marked by perfect environment, the knowledge of God throughout the earth, people being born without sin natures, and Satan being locked up, so to speak. However, Satan will be let out of confinement at the end of the Millennium, and he will again be given limited power, and he will lead some men against God—men who have enjoyed a thousand years of perfect environment. Rev. 20:2–9
- 8) General strategies in all dispensations:

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- (1) Satan would do anything to make God a liar. So, he will continue to attack and attempt to eradicate the Jews. If there are no Jews in the end times, God cannot fulfill His plan.
- (2) In order to make God a liar, Satan will do anything to show even one promise of the Bible to be wrong.
- (3) We all associate Satan with sin and evil, but Satan is heavily involved in *good* as well. Satan attempts to produce human good panaceas—which panaceas often deny the existence or importance of God. Socialism and Communism are clear examples of this, where man has tried to make men equal, which involves the eradication of religion, freedom and, in many cases, life. In this past American presidential campaign (2008), I saw many people paraded in front of us, and their sad and difficult lives revealed, and who or what would solve this? The candidate who parades these people before us. He or she would be the solution to the ills of these people. The idea is, we ought to put our trust and hopes in a particular man or a particular form of government, rather than in God. If our lives are difficult, this has nothing to do with God nor does it have anything to do with us, but it is because the wrong man or the wrong party is in power in government. This is Satanic strategy and it is all about *good*. Fanatical environmentalism is a Satanic strategy. Clean air and clean water are good things, and that is a part of our taking control of our environment. However, environmentalism has gotten out of control today with such things as global warming mania and the preservation of such animals as the snail darter or the spotted owl. One of the many reasons why US jobs have been *shipped overseas* is environmentalism, which has shut down industry and building all over the United States (e.g., the lumber industry in the northern United States). These are all strategies where Satan inspires man to try to create a perfect international kingdom here on earth.
- (4) Along the same lines of Satan's involvement with good, many fanatical Islamic groups are also associated with doing good as well, e.g., feeding those who are hungry. Here, Satan is able to combine good works with religion.
- (5) Satan would like to establish a perfect environment on this earth, and man is constantly frustrating him. So Satan seeks to establish as much control over man's free will as possible, to the extent of determining the amount of money man ought to be allowed to make and at what temperature he ought to set his thermostat at home. Satan would like to create a happy balanced world of people, animal life and nature. In this way, he could prove himself to be like the Most High. Satan is behind all international efforts and international control, because it is easier for him to direct and

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- control human behavior if we are all subject to the same government.
- (6) Satan would like to establish equality on this earth (not equality of opportunity, which creates inequities, but actual equality).
  - (7) Satan would like to improve who and what man is, mentally and physically, and eliminate people who are substandard.
23. Because of Satan's original sin, because all of his appeals will have been exhausted, God will toss him, the angels which fell and all unsaved men into the Lake of Fire at the end of the Millennium. Rev. 20:10–15
24. Then God will create a new heavens and a new earth, as the Angelic Conflict will have been resolved. Rev. 21:1

A number of people have covered this particular topic, and their studies are available online:

[http://www.gbible.org/files/pdf/The\\_Angelic\\_Conflict\\_Part1.pdf](http://www.gbible.org/files/pdf/The_Angelic_Conflict_Part1.pdf)

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<http://www.eccentrix.com/members/beacon/conflict.htm>

[http://www.ironrangebible.com/griffith/Angelic\\_Conflict/angelic\\_conflict.htm](http://www.ironrangebible.com/griffith/Angelic_Conflict/angelic_conflict.htm)

<http://www.cotsk.org/faq/MeaningOfLife.html> as well as

<http://www.cotsk.org/archives/specialstudies/AppealTrialOfSatan.html>

[http://www.versebyverse.org/doctrine/angel\\_con.html](http://www.versebyverse.org/doctrine/angel_con.html)

[http://www.answerbag.com/q\\_view/523978](http://www.answerbag.com/q_view/523978) (go down to Moosemose and his answer)

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This study does not even begin to exhaust the concept of the Angelic Conflict; however, it is good to find out just what Satan and fallen angels are up to, so that we can recognize it when Satan tempts the woman in the garden, or when we see examples of it around us.