

THE NATURE OF THE CONFLICT

I. There is a Spiritual Conflict Constantly Going on Around Us

A. It is spiritual

1. Combatants are God and Satan
 - a. Both are invisible
 - b. Both are assisted by other spiritual beings
 - (1) God By Angels
 - (2) Satan by demons
 - c. **We cannot observe the fight**

B. It is warfare

1. The battle is presented as intense
Revelations 12: Description of Church History
2. The opponents are highly organized
Ephesians 6:12
3. At present the battle is for the hearts of men
2 Corinthians 10:3-6

For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.
~ Ephesians 6:12

For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ, and we are ready to punish all disobedience, whenever your obedience is complete.

~ 2 Corinthians 10:3-6

II. We Actually Know Very Little of the Actual Fighting

- A. The little we know leaves room for a great deal of speculation

- B. Our goal is to find out what we can know for sure and how to use that information in our daily lives

III. What Do We Know About the Combatants?

- A. The leaders of the conflict are God Himself and Satan

- B. The fight is not an even conflict
 - 1. God
 - a. **His Nature** - the uncreated all knowing, all powerful and omnipresent one

 - b. **His Character** - true and good

2. Satan

a. **His Nature** - created being, powerful and intelligent but limited

(1) Limited to a single location

(2) Limited in his knowledge

(3) Limited in activity

b. **His Character** -liar, murder, proud, accuser

C. The fight started when Satan, a formerly high ranking angel, rebelled against God and attempted to take over His position (Isaiah 14:12; Ezekiel 28:12-19)

1. Fight ended quickly, "I saw Satan fall from heaven like lightning." Luke 10:18

2. The timing of this event is unknown

D. Mankind became part of the conflict in the garden of Eden when the Serpent manipulated Adam into rebellion against God

1. God begins a program to bring men back to Himself

2. Satan opposes His efforts

3. The soul of man becomes the prize in the conflict John 10:7-10

And He said to them, "I was watching Satan fall from heaven like lightning."

~ Luke 10:18

So Jesus said to them again, "Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. All who came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them. I am the door; if anyone enters through Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly."

~ John 10:7-10

And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of the flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.

~ Ephesians 2:1-3

But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved).

~ Ephesians 2:4-6

IV. How Does the Unseen Conflict Become Real to Us?

- A. We are dead in sin by nature
Ephesians 2:1-3
 - 1. We lived according to the course of the world
 - 2. According to the Prince of the power of the air, the spirit who is at work in the sons of disobedience
 - 3. We lived according to the lust of the flesh and mind
 - 4. We were guilty - sons of wrath

- B. God does a work to make men alive
Ephesians 2:4-6
 - 1. He does a work in us

 - 2. He identifies us with Jesus Christ in His victory over Satan