

Keys to Prophecy



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#7 - Cosmic Conspiracy

We have now covered the core prophecies of Daniel - Chapters 2, 7, 8 and 9

We have seen the history of the world laid out 2500 years in advance - and accurately fulfilled

History	Daniel 2	Daniel 7	Daniel 8	Daniel 9
Babylon	Head - Gold	Lion - Eagle's wings		
Medo-Persia	Chest & Arms - Silver	Bear - Raised on one side	Ram- 2 horns	70 Weeks
Greece	Belly & Thighs - Bronze	Leopard - 4 wings & 4 heads	Goat - 1 Horn - 4 Horns	
Rome	Legs - Iron	Beast - Iron teeth		Messiah
Division	Feet & Toes - Iron & Clay	10 Horns		
Medieval Christianity		Little Horn - Great words - Persecute Saints		Desolations
End Time		3½ times - 42 Months - 1260 Days	Evening-Morning 2300	
God's Eternal Kingdom	Stone - cut out without hands A Great Mountain	Judgment - Little Horn executed	Restoration of Sanctuary	
		Kingdom to Christ and the Saints	Broken without hand	

We have seen the prophecies build on each other - Interlink with each other - As God unfolds a clear picture
 We can be confident that we are on the right track of interpretation -
 Because the fulfillment is clear - Because the united witness of all the prophecies authenticate each other

There is much more we could learn in the book of Daniel -

But this "Keys to Prophecy" series is not intended to be exhaustive

We have now laid the foundation for moving into the Book of Revelation - and related Biblical truths

And you can be sure - we will be checking back into the book of Daniel from time to time

□ Let's turn to Revelation 12 (1182) -

Tonight I want to tell you a story - Paint a broad picture - Lay out a Biblical world view

From the time sin first entered the Universe - until the time sin entered our world

John - the youngest apostle - and the scribe of the book of Revelation - writing down what God showed him

Sees a vision that is clearly symbolic

Revelation 12:1-6 ¹Now a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a garland of twelve stars. ²Then being with child, she cried out in labor and in pain to give birth.

³And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great, fiery red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems on his heads. ⁴His tail drew a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was ready to give birth, to devour her Child as soon as it was born.

⁵She bore a male Child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron. And her Child was caught up to God and His throne. ⁶Then the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, that they should feed her there one thousand two hundred and sixty days.

Scene ONE

- v.1 - A WOMAN - clothed in the sun - Pure, bright clothing - A godly thing
Moon under her feet - The moon reflects the light of the sun
Garland of 12 stars on her head
- v.2 She is very pregnant - Just about to give birth

Scene TWO

- v.3 - A DRAGON - Great - Fiery red - Seven head and 10 horns - Crowns on the horns
Sounds familiar - A dragon with 10 horns - Like Daniel 7 - The beast with 10 horns - Represented Rome
- v.4 - The dragon's tail drew a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth

Scene THREE - CONFRONTATION - The dragon confronts the woman - to try to devour the child
The dragon wants to eat the baby as soon as it is born

- v.5 - The CHILD is born - To be the ultimate ruler of all nations -
The dragon goes after the Child - But the Child is caught up safely to God and to his throne
- v.6 - The woman flees into the wilderness - Evidently the dragon goes after the woman next
Where she has a place prepared by God - For 1260 days - Does that sound familiar?

We have three symbols - The Woman - the Dragon - the Child - Let's start with the Child

- So - Who is this Child? - The MESSIAH - None other that JESUS Christ
Ruling all nations with a rod of iron - Is a messianic statement from the Old Testament - Psalm 2:8-9 (514)
The Messiah will be the ultimate, undisputed, universal ruler of all
Much like - Daniel 2 - The Stone that smashed and blew away all the other kingdoms
Daniel 7 - The Son of Man - Receives the kingdom - dominion over all - forever

Caught up to God and his throne - A clear allusion to Jesus' ascension - to sit down at the right hand of God
- Who is the dragon - Look ahead to v.9 - The devil and SATAN
The same being as was in the Tree in Eden - is now after Jesus
Does Satan usually work in the open - "Hello, I'm the devil and I am here to devour you"
No - Satan works behind other persons or systems who are sold out to him
- What system or nation was the devil working through to try to destroy Jesus at the time of His birth? - ROME
And sure enough - Here this dragon with 10 horns - is the same as the Beast with 10 horns in Daniel 7
Pagan Rome confronts Messiah when He is born - Through King Herod - Matthew 2:1-18 (936)
It was also Rome - Under Pontius Pilate - who crucified Jesus - apparently devouring him

But Jesus flattened the power of Rome - And the devil - with His resurrection
He came out of the grave - Roman soldiers became as dead men - Satan could not keep Jesus dead
And Jesus ascended to heaven - Victor over sin, Satan and the grave - Our Savior and Lord

Who is the woman? - If Jesus is the child - If the dragon is Satan working through Rome - Who is this woman?
She gives birth to the Messiah - But then is chased by the dragon into the wilderness for 1260 days
This woman clearly starts before the Cross - to give birth to the Messiah
She is still around after the cross - Hiding in the wilderness - for a period of 1260 days
As we have seen - the 1260 = the 3 ½ times of Daniel 7 = The reign of the Medieval Little Horn
The same woman who births the Messiah - is what the Medieval apostasy tries to annihilate in the middle ages

- ☐ All through Scripture a woman represents GOD'S PEOPLE - Those in a relationship with Him
 God is the groom - His people are His bride - His virgin - His betrothed - They are in love!
 Jeremiah 6:2 (732); Genesis 3:15 (3); Ezekiel 16 (813)
 He woos and cares for her
 She responds with love, respect and affection - or with unfaithfulness and rejection
- A Good woman - Here and in 19:7,8 (1178) - People faithful to God - Loyal - True
 But when she followed after idols - God called her an adulteress - an unfaithful wife
 An evil woman - 17:1-5 (1175) - Unfaithful people - Illicit affairs with the ways of this world
 The church gone bad - Persecuting - Changing God's ways - Casting truth to the ground
 Is called a Harlot woman - BABYLON the GREAT - Rebellion
 God's true people - His virgin bride - Waiting faithfully - True and faithful to her groom until the marriage
- ☐ What would the woman represent BEFORE THE CROSS? - Who were God's people before the cross?
 She is standing on moon - Which reflects the light of the sun - Which represents the glory of God
 The glorious truth of the Gospel reflected in the sanctuary-sacrificial system - Prefiguring Messiah
 She has a garland of 12 stars on her head - The Bible is clear...
 Messiah would come from the seed of Abraham - Tribe of Judah - One of 12 tribes of Israel
 Israel was given the oracles - prophets - Scripture - and out of Israel Messiah would be born
- ☐ So the woman before the cross would represent ISRAEL - God's people - Jerusalem - The opposite of Babylon
- ☐ Then - Who would the Woman be AFTER the CROSS? - Let's think this through carefully
 The thing that made Israel different from her neighbors was not her blood line, but her faith line
 By faith Abraham left Ur of the Chaldeans in Babylonia - Abraham was just a Babylonian who believed
 Babylonians were a "Semitic" people - Israelites were descendants from the Babylonians
- What made Israel special - was to stay with the faith of Abraham
 When they abandoned the faith of Abraham - God sent them back to Babylon
 The 70 year captivity - Of Jeremiah 25 and 29 - In the time of Daniel
 God then gave them a second chance in the 490 years - "70 week" prophecy of Daniel 9
 That prophecy reached down to the time of Messiah
 But when the Jewish people rejected Jesus as the Messiah - Jesus was clear when he said...
- ☐ Matthew 21:43 (957) *Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it.*
 See Isaiah 5:1-7 (657); 1 Peter 2:9,10 (1163)
- The line of faith moves from Israel - those looking forward to the coming of Messiah
 Thru the cross - to all who accept and trust in Jesus Christ as Messiah after the Cross = The Church
 Paul makes this clear in his comments
- ☐ Romans 2:28-29 (1086) *²⁸For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh; ²⁹but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter; whose praise is not from men but from God.*
- Being a Jew is an inward matter of the heart - of trust and relationship with God - Not a nationality or bloodline
- ☐ Galatians 3:7 (1121) *Therefore know that only those who are of faith are sons of Abraham.*
- ONLY those who put their trust in Jesus are "children of Abraham" - A faith-line, not blood-line
- ☐ Galatians 3:26-29 (1122) *²⁶For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. ²⁷For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. ²⁸There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.*
- Trusting in Jesus as Messiah makes you Abraham's seed - offspring -
 And qualifies you as heir to all God's promises to Israel

- So God's true "Israel" - his true people of faith - after the cross - is His CHURCH - Regardless of nationality
Those who put their trust in Jesus as the Messiah-Savior - And proclaim Jesus to the world
That is what makes the dragon so upset - and has him chasing the woman off into the wilderness to destroy her
For how long? - 1260 days - Which is the same as the 3 ½ times of Daniel 7
The dragon is after the woman - Just like the Little Horn was making war on the saints (Daniel 7 & 8)
We will see that more clearly in a future study

So this same woman represents God's people of FAITH - both before and after the cross
It is all about the "line of faith" - Looking forward - Looking back
In the Old Testament - Old Covenant - Looking forward in faith for the coming of Messiah - the Savior
In the New Testament - New Covenant - Looking back to Jesus - the Messiah-Savior who came -
Who Lived - Died - Rose again
It is all about FAITH in the pivotal event of Jesus Christ

So we have a confrontation between the powers of this world - motivated and empowered by Satan
And God's people of faith - both before and after the cross
All centered around Jesus - the Messiah - our Savior

Now - We are going to leave that picture for now - as scripture does - But we will return to it later

- Revelation 12:7-9 (1182) *⁷And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, ⁸but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer. ⁹So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.*

- v.7 - WAR IN HEAVEN - Where did the dragon come from? - who attacked Messiah? - the Devil?
The peace of "heaven" was shattered by a war - a conflict - a battle

- Two sides - MICHAEL and his angels VS. the DRAGON and his angels
I believe this is a flash back - To where the dragon came from in the first place
This dragon does not just appear out of nowhere - What is his origin? - Did God create a dragon?
War - Fighting - Where? - In heaven - the place we think of as the epitome of peace and love
How could that happen?

v.8 - The dragon did not prevail - No room for a fighter in heaven

- v.9 - Dragon was CAST OUT OF HEAVEN - Here he is connected with the Serpent in the Garden of Eden
- He's the one who DECEIVES THE WHOLE WORLD
- He was CAST TO THE EARTH -

It doesn't say he was cast out - and then wandered here to the earth - It says that God sent him HERE!
I sure wish God would have sent him some where else - Why here? - More on that in a minute

His angels were cast out with him

- Go back to v.4 - The tail of the dragon drew 1/3 of the stars of heaven and cast them to the earth
What do stars represent in symbolic Bible prophecy?

- Revelation 1:20 (1175) *The mystery of the seven stars which you saw in My right hand, and the seven golden lampstands: The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands which you saw are the seven churches.*

Stars represent angels - So what would stars of HEAVEN represent? - Angels of heaven

So we know two things

Satan started out in heaven - And evidently started a war there - Was defeated - and exiled - to this earth
Satan's side appears to have involved 1/3 of the angels

How many angels are there?

- Revelation 5:11 (1178) *Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne, the living creatures, and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands,*

Angels around the throne - 10,000 x 10,000 (= 100 million) + 1000s of 1000s (= millions and millions more)
This passage is about the Judgment scene in Revelation that matches the one in Daniel 7

- Daniel 7:9-10 (864) ⁹*"I watched till thrones were put in place, and the Ancient of Days was seated...
¹⁰...A thousand thousands ministered to Him; ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him.
The court was seated, and the books were opened.*

And again we find this same number - Around throne - 1000 1000s + 10,000 x 10,000
Revelation is quoting from Daniel

That's a lot of angels - and these are the 2/3rds left - So Satan took 50 million plus millions more with him
I don't believe these passages are intended to literally tell us how many angels there are
But they do let us know that God does not just have a small squad of angels
There are tens of millions of angels - even hundreds of millions -
And Satan somehow convinced 1/3 of those angels to join him in rebellion

This rebellion is not something small that happened in a little corner of the universe
Something God can just leave alone and hope it goes away
This is not some tiny bug that can be squashed and no one will notice -
This is A MAJOR REBELLION OF COSMIC PROPORTIONS

We don't know how or why - yet - But we know that...

Satan came here from heaven - and he brought tens of million of fallen angels with him
So all the trouble in this world - really began up in heaven - God got tired of it - Imported it here - THANKS!
All the trouble - the terror of this world - was imported by extra-terrestrials - so to speak
By beings from out of this world - whom God actually sent here!

But did God create a devil? Would a good God create an evil devil? How did this war get started?
We have a couple other passages in scripture that help us out with this story

- Isaiah 14:12-15 (667) ¹²How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning!
How you are cut down to the ground, you who weakened the nations!
¹³For you have said in your heart:
"I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God;
I will also sit on the mount of the congregation on the farthest sides of the north;
¹⁴ I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.'
¹⁵ Yet you shall be brought down to Sheol, to the lowest depths of the Pit."

- v.12 - A being is called LUCIFER - or Daystar - Son of the morning
What is a daystar? - The brightest star in the sky - A star bright enough to see during the day - after sunrise
 Here we have a being FALLEN FROM HEAVEN - In Revelation 12:9 we saw an angel cast out of heaven
 He is CUT DOWN TO THE GROUND - In Revelation 12:9 he is cast to the earth
 You who WEAKENED THE NATIONS - Revelation 12:9 calls him the deceiver of the whole world

v.13 - *Said in your heart*

I will ascend into heaven

I will exalt my throne above the other stars - other angels - Wanted to be #1

I will sit on the Mount of the congregation - Sit among the gods

v.14 *I will ascend above the heights of the clouds - To the very top*

- I WILL BE LIKE THE MOST HIGH*

What is the attitude of this being? - One of self-exaltation - I will make myself #1

He had "heart" trouble and "I" trouble

Like the Ram - the Goat - the Little Horn - of Daniel 8 - Self expansion and exaltation

This being - The brightest of God's stars = angels - Got the self-exaltation bug
 And you will notice - He began speaking great words against the Most High
 Claiming for himself prerogatives that were not his - Prerogatives that belong to God alone
 But God says the end of such self promotion will be a huge fall - An ultimate crash and burn

v.15 - *You will be brought down to Sheol - The depths of the Pit*

There is a principle here - What goes up must come down - Every nation that rises falls
 God functions on a different principle - What goes down will come up
 He says the last will be first - If you want to rule, you must serve - Give and you will receive

There are two great principles - And everyone runs their live by one of these two principles

What goes up must come down - or - What goes down must come up

Which principle was reflected by Jesus Christ? -

He was God - humbled Himself - became a servant - obedient to death - And God highly exalted Him
 Lucifer - wanted to climb his way to the top - To be God - But he is coming down

- Ezekiel 28:12-17 (830) ¹² *Son of man, take up a lamentation for the king of Tyre, and say to him, "Thus says the Lord GOD:*
'You were the seal of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty.
¹³ *You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone was your covering:*
the sardius, topaz, and diamond, beryl, onyx, and jasper,
sapphire, turquoise, and emerald with gold.
The workmanship of your timbrels and pipes was prepared for you
on the day you were created.
¹⁴ *You were the anointed cherub who covers; I established you;*
you were on the holy mountain of God;
you walked back and forth in the midst of fiery stones.
¹⁵ *You were perfect in your ways from the day you were created,*
till iniquity was found in you."

v.12 - This prophecy is addressed to the King of Tyre

But the language clearly goes beyond the human to a bigger story of cosmic proportions

- Seal of PERFECTION - Full of wisdom - perfect in beauty -
 There was nothing inherently wrong with this exquisite being
- v.13 - In Eden - We will see this being in the Garden of Eden shortly
 Precious stones - In the presence of God - among the burning, glowing, glorious stones
 God's throne is seen by the prophets as amidst glowing precious stones - Revelation 4:2-3; 21:19-20
- On the day you were CREATED - This being was created by God - Perfect and beautiful
- v.14 - The ANOINTED CHERUB WHO COVERS - Like the two covering cherubim on the ark of the covenant
 The angels next to the throne of God - The highest angels
 This concept matches the brightest star - the day-star - we just saw in Isaiah 14
 I established you - God established this being and assigned him to his high and exalted position
- v.15 - Perfect in your ways from the day you were created - Again - God always creates good and perfect
- Til INIQUITY WAS FOUND IN YOU - Something went wrong -
 God did not PUT iniquity in this being - It was FOUND - A discovery - Almost as if a mystery

What happened?

- Ezekiel 28:16-18 ¹⁶ *"By the abundance of your trading you became filled with violence within, and you sinned;*
Therefore I cast you as a profane thing out of the mountain of God;
And I destroyed you, O covering cherub, From the midst of the fiery stones.
¹⁷ *Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty;*
You corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendor;
I cast you to the ground, I laid you before kings, that they might gaze at you.
¹⁸ *You defiled your sanctuaries by the multitude of your iniquities, by the iniquity of your trading;*
Therefore I brought fire from your midst; it devoured you,
And I turned you to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all who saw you.

- v.16 - *By the ABUNDANCE OF your TRADING - You became filled with VIOLENCE - and you sinned*
 This being seemed to have begun to utilize his great abilities for self purposes
 Influence peddling - Jockeying for first place - Political pandering and promises
 I have a better way to run the universe - Join me and we'll make changes around this place
- Therefore I CAST YOU OUT OF THE MOUNTAIN OF GOD - As in Revelation 12:8-9 (1182)
- v.17 - *Your HEART WAS LIFTED UP because of your BEAUTY -*
You corrupted your wisdom for the sake of SPLENDOR
 The focus went from others to self - Pride - 1 Timothy 3:6 (1140)
 Did this being see his reflection in a still pool - and become amazed with what he saw?
 God gave this being tremendous abilities to serve others - He turned those talents to exalt himself
- Therefore I CAST YOU TO THE GROUND - As in Revelation 12 and Isaiah 14 - Cast to the earth

We don't have absolute proof - But the story seems to be...

That a perfect angel in heaven - The highest angel next to God's throne - Developed an inner rot
 Based on pride and control

We have every evidence that everything God creates is very good - Including this angel

- So HOW COULD A GOOD ANGEL GO BAD - IF GOD DIDN'T MAKE HIM THAT WAY?
- And the answer lies in the one word that above all describes God - **GOD IS LOVE**
- Love - by nature always creates with freedom - LOVE GIVES FREEDOM - Otherwise there is no LOVE
- FREEDOM ALLOWS CHOICES - gives the capacity to make real choices
 To be capable of LOVE you have to be FREE to choose to love, or not to love
 The very capacity to LOVE opens the door for the opposite choice
- Therefore CHOICE INVOLVES RISK - Risk of making a wrong choice
 When you have children - are you taking a risk? - A huge one
 They may grow up to make you proud - Or to disgrace your name
 And it is not all determined by good or bad parenting - Or environment
 Parenting is hugely important - But perfect parenting does not necessarily turn out perfect kids
 Adam and Eve lost their first born - Cain

Apparently Lucifer - was the first being in the universe to ever turn the incredible power of love up-side-down
 Away from others and toward himself - From serving others to controlling others

Some say - if God created everything that is - and evil exists - Then God had to have created evil

If I ran my car into a tree - and brought it to you and said, "Look what I made" - How would you respond?

I didn't make anything - I wrecked something someone else made

Sin is not a creation - it is a destruction of something God made - A destructive reshaping

Apparently Lucifer - was the first to twist love from serving to controlling - from other-centered to self-centered

- The OPPOSITE OF LOVE is not hate - it is SELFISHNESS - Turning the assets God has given to self use
 Love is giving - Selfishness it taking - If you have the power to give, you have the power to take

Lucifer began to speak great words against God - and apparently convinced 1/3 of the angels that he had a point
 And he apparently confronts God with his ideas

You can almost hear God's conversation with Lucifer - Trying to talk him out of his grand desires and wild ideas

Lucifer says - I will be just like the Most High! - I want to be God - Sit as God - Be worshiped as God

- God says - There is a problem - There are things that I AM that YOU ARE NOT
 You simply are not God - No matter how bad you want to be God
 God is something you either innately are or are not

- 1. For one thing - God is ETERNAL...

- PSALM 90:1-2 (569) ¹Lord, You have been our dwelling place in all generations.

²Before the mountains were brought forth,
 Or ever You had formed the earth and the world,
 Even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God.

- ❑ Notice - A TIME LINE OF GOD has an ARROW ON BOTH ENDS - God has no beginning and no end
That becomes a definition of God - The self-existent one - Who has always been - Who simply IS
God told Moses - "My name is 'I AM'" - I simply exist - Exodus 3:14 (53)
- ❑ Lucifer - Though made to LIVE FOREVER - HAD A BEGINNING - And therefore by definition is not God
"God" is not something you can choose to be - or seek to be elected to the position
Only God is God - and that is it - Get over it!

So one reason Lucifer could not be God - is that God is Eternal - The source of life - And Lucifer is NOT!
Lucifer says - I want to be just like the most High - I want to be God - Be treated as God - Honored as God
God says - There is a problem - You are NOT God - You are not capable of being God
If God had let Lucifer take over as God - what is the first thing that would have happened?
That questions leads us to the second thing God IS that Lucifer was not...

- ❑ 2. Second - God is Creator - and Sustainer of the universe
- ❑ Nehemiah 9:6 (463) *You alone are the LORD; You have made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, The earth and everything on it, the seas and all that is in them, and You preserve them all. The host of heaven worships You.*
- ❑ Psalm 33:6,9 (531) *⁶By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth.
⁹For He spoke, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast.*

Applying or aspiring to the position of God just doesn't work - Lucifer was not a Creator or a Sustainer
We cannot be what we are not - That's profound, isn't it!

Had Lucifer succeeded in taking the place of God on the throne of the universe - what would have happened?
Lucifer and all creation would have ceased to exist - the universe would have died - End of story
Why? - Because God is LIFE - the source - All other creatures get their life from that source
If a light bulb separates itself from the source - what happens? - It goes out

- ❑ 3. And Third - And the more Lucifer aspired to be God - the more unlike God he was becoming
For God is LOVE - God does not just have love - God is not just loving -
Deeper yet - God IS love - Love is His very nature
And love is by nature "other centered" - While Lucifer was cultivating self - the opposite of love
- ❑ 1 John 4:7-8 (1170) *⁷Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. ⁸He who does not love does not know God, for God is love.*

Lucifer must have been a very gifted persuader - an incredible intellect and speaker
To have convinced 1/3 of the angels in heaven that the perfect loving God was a problem
To convince 1/3 of the perfectly happy angels - who had never known a moment of unhappiness in their lives
That somehow they were not as happy as they thought they were - or could be
To convince 1/3 of the angels who lacked nothing - had never known want or emptiness -
That something was missing - And they ought to fight for it

But that appears to be exactly what Lucifer did - He gathered his forces and decided to take God's place by force
And God decided not to let it happen!
WHY? - What would have happened to the universe if God had let Lucifer take over?
It would have ceased to exist -
Lucifer did not have the ability to sustain even his own existence - Much less the universe

You see - in a very intrinsic way - the wages of sin is death - God doesn't kill sinners - Sin is killing us
Because the essence of sin is trying to be your own God - which you aren't
And if God ever steps back and lets you try - You will cease to exist - because you are not self-existent

So why didn't God just wipe out Satan before he could cause any more trouble?

Why did God exile Lucifer to this earth - along with all his fallen angels?

Why didn't God just snap his fingers and end their existence?

Think of all the pain and suffering God could have prevented by just thinking them out of existence

And the universe could have continued on as if it never happened! Right? - WRONG

Think about it this way - Two angels are passing on the streets of Gold -

One asks the other - "Have you seen Lucifer lately?"

The other answers - "NO" - "Well, where is he?"

"I don't know. He is just GONE! He was asking God some tough questions - and he disappeared"

And all the angels who were siding with him are gone too!"

"Wow - We had better watch our step - and not ask the wrong questions - or we may be next"

If God had executed Lucifer on the spot - Heaven would have become like Stalinist Russia

Fear would have replaced LOVE -

Love would have disappeared - and that's impossible because God IS love

God does not just have love - God is not just loving - God IS love - It is His nature

And love gives freedom - even to make wrong choices

And if you kill - even humanely - everyone who makes a wrong choice - You don't have choice

❑ So love could not EXECUTE - it could only EXILE

If Lucifer wanted to be God - Let him do it in an isolated domain - A quarantined area - A limited venue

God knew how it would turn out - But He had to let the rest of the universe see how it would turn out

Only after Lucifer's plan - and rulership - revealed its own terrible reality

Could Lucifer and company be destroyed without instilling fear in all who remain

So God exiled Lucifer and his rebel angels - Where? - To this earth!

Why here? - Why not? - Wherever God sent him the inhabitants would have said, "Why here?"

Now watch how fair God is

I assume that there are other worlds God has created - with intelligent creatures

And those creatures are sinless - Like everything God has ever created

Therefore - they are not separated from God like we are - They are in open communication

Like Adam and Eve in the garden before they sinned

So every other created being in the universe would be aware of what is going on

If God had sent Lucifer and company to a world where they knew all about him

Would that have given Lucifer a fair chance to get them to let him come there to try out his new ideas?

Love would not FORCE Lucifer on them - That, too, would not be love

Love would give any world Lucifer was sent to the option to accept or reject his leadership

So - it appears - God was creating a brand new world - Earth

Then God sent Lucifer and company here - Where the new inhabitants would be neutral -

Not pre-disposed one way or the other due to prior knowledge or experience

Was that fair to Adam and Eve - to us?

❑ Let's pick up the story in GENESIS 2

Genesis 2:8-9 (2) ⁸The LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden, and there He put the man whom He had formed.
⁹And out of the ground the LORD God made every tree grow that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life was also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

God made a perfect world - And planted a beautiful Garden home for the first human beings

They had everything they could need to sustain and enjoy life

❑ And God planted TWO special TREES - The "tree of life" - and the "tree of knowledge of good and evil"

What were these trees for? - God did not leave Adam and Eve ignorant - He instructed them clearly

Genesis 2:15-17 (2) ¹⁵Then the LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it.
¹⁶And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; ¹⁷but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."

Now - Did Adam and Eve understand what "die" meant? - Not by experience - There was no death before sin
 But God let them know that it was something they didn't want to know - or need to know
 Why should they believe God? - Why not? - There was no reason not to trust God -
 Everything they knew about God was positive - He provided their every need

- So what were these two trees for? - Simply a means of choice - FACILITATE CHOICE
- VOTING BOOTHS
 Because LOVE always provides choice - And choice is not choice if there is no way to express it!
- Now look at Genesis 3:1

Genesis 3:1 (2) *Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, "Has God indeed said, 'You shall not eat of every tree of the garden'?"*

First of all - Serpents were not loathsome, creepy creatures like they are today
 That word "cunning" means beautiful - skillfully made - desirable - handsome - intelligent
 Serpents were at the top of the animal pecking order - in beauty and intelligence
 Of all the animals in the world at that time - you would choose a serpent first as a pet
 So there was nothing in the serpent to repulse Eve - Serpents were gorgeously attractive

Listen to the serpent - Satan - Lucifer - Speaking *great words* against God - Beginning with a subtle insinuation
 Has God INDEED said - That word for "indeed" is almost a grunt of distrust - Huh, has God said...?
 Has God restricted you from something you might enjoy?

- CAN YOU REALLY TRUST GOD? - Insinuation of doubt
 Have you ever met someone - and had a very positive first impression - You liked them
 Then someone dropped just a little negative hint about them - and everything changed
 Doubt had been introduced by insinuation
 Introducing doubt has an amazing effect - Things suddenly go from color to greys

Eve responds well -

Genesis 3:2-3 (2) ²And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden; ³but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.'"

We can eat of every tree but this one - the one you are in -
 We have almost unrestricted access - and all our needs are met
 But here God has restricted us - We are not to eat of this tree - or touch it
 Did God say not to touch it? - NO - Maybe God had said to "stay away from it"
 In either case - the serpent was touching the tree - and he was not dead

Now listen again to the serpent - and more great words against God

Genesis 3:4-5 (2) ⁴Then the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. ⁵For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

- v.4 - The Serpent says God is wrong - GOD HAS LIED TO YOU - What God told you is not the truth
 "You will not surely die"
 And God did it deliberately - "God knows" exactly what He did
- GOD HAS DELIBERATELY LIMITED YOUR POTENTIAL -
 "God knows...your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God"
 God has deliberately held you back from further enlightenment - "Your eyes will be opened"
 and from further advancement - "You will be[come] like God"

In fact - God knows - If you eat this fruit - you will become just like Him - Just like the Most High
 You are capable of a higher existence than God has given you - You have to seize it
 A clear echo of Lucifer's "I" statements in Isaiah 14 - "I will be like the Most High"
 The content of this conversation ties all these passages together

The serpent also suggests that "knowing good and evil" is a positive thing - Having God's deeper knowledge
 Kind of like the theory in most religions - That life is a balance of the good and evil - yin and yang
 That you cannot know good except in contrast with evil
 That is pure bunk - Happiness does not require unhappiness in order to be fully enjoyed
 Love does not have to know loneliness to be fully experienced
 These things are such a part of our existence - that we explain them by good/evil contrast
 But the angels in heaven knew love before sin - Adam and Eve knew happiness before sin

God's intent is that we be blissfully ignorant of evil - Perfectly happy in our "very good" creation
 Like a little child - oblivious to rejection - just being himself
 So here we see even the basis being laid by Satan for his future religious inventions
 and the success he has had in selling his ideas to human beings

What reason did Adam and Even have to trust God? - Every reason - God had provided everything for them
 What reason did they have to trust the serpent? - Absolutely none - Serpent had never done anything for them

Genesis 3:6 (2) *So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate.*

- BY SINNING - Eating the fruit - ADAM AND EVE CHOSE TO do two specific things - which they probably did not fully understand at the time
 - 1. They were inviting Satan to take charge of this world - And MAKE EARTH SATAN'S LABORATORY
 To let Lucifer become the "god" of this world - and run it his way
 To allow SATAN to use this world to show what life HIS way would be like
 The petri dish for evil - where it could be cultured and grown
 and the results available to be seen by all in the universe
 God is love - God did not force Lucifer on us - Just gave us the choice
 - 2. They were choosing to GO INDEPENDENT FROM GOD - Leave me alone - I'll do it my way!
 That is the essential reality of all sin - Telling God to leave me alone - I can do it myself
 - What happens when you go independent from God? - What is the CONSEQUENCE OF SIN?
 - What did God say - Genesis 2:17 - "You will surely die"
 - What else does the Bible say - Romans 6:23 - "The wages of sin is DEATH"
 So sin results in death - WHY? - Is that a fair question? - Why does sin result in death?
 Let's think it through
- God is self existent - Are human beings self existent? - No - If we were we would be God
 God is the source of life - What happens if we disconnect from the source of life? -
 We go into non-life - which is DEATH
 What does the Bible say the wage of sin is? - Death
 So if we sin - does that mean that God will kill us?
 If we sin - is God eventually going to throw us somewhere and roast us for a while - something bad
 Because we've sinned and God can't have us in heaven - So He will deal out punishment?
- Is the fact that death results from sin INTRINSIC or IMPOSED? - Is that a fair question?
 If you run a stop sign and they fine you \$300 - is the penalty INTRINSIC or IMPOSED?
 Running a stop sign does not automatically peel \$300 out of your wallet
 Somebody decides that is the penalty that will be imposed
 If you step off a tall building - Is the infraction for breaking the law of gravity intrinsic or imposed?
 That's intrinsic! - No one has to decide your fate - It comes naturally

So is death as the result of sin intrinsic or imposed? - I believe it is INTRINSIC
 Because if you separate from the source of life - And that Source respects your freedom
 That Source has to let you reap the benefits of your choice which will be - non-life - Death
 Just like a light bulb that disconnects from the socket - wanting to shine on its own -
 It's not going to work - It will go out

So Adam and Even chose to go independent from God - So why didn't they die? - Right then?
 Some people say - they died spiritually - which I believe they did
 But if sin = separation from the source of life -
 Then why didn't they just keel over dead the moment they ate the fruit?

Because God is LOVE - and MERCY - God knew they had been deceived - fooled - snookered
 God didn't want to lose them
 I believe the reason we are alive today as a human race - still breathing is because...
 God - by his grace - has temporarily-mercifully violated our free will
 Delaying the results of our choice by His GRACE
 Keeping us alive long enough to try to talk us into letting Him save us

God wanted to give Adam and Eve the opportunity to reverse their choice
 They had chosen to go from life into death
 God wanted to give the opportunity to choose to return from death back into life
 Because He knew they didn't fully understand - And He didn't want to lose us

The only reason any of us are alive today - is because of the GRACE of God
 And in a way that grace violates our free will
 Someday - For God to truly be love - which always gives and respects freedom
 God has to allow our choices to take full effect - at which point we will die
 Because sin is the choice to separate from God - the source of life

But FIRST - God wants to make sure everyone has had the opportunity to choose LIFE again
 That is the Gospel - To be reconciled to God - reunited in relationship with God - Who is LIFE

Do you understand that - The wages of sin is not death because God says - "I will kill you if you sin"
 The wages of sin is death because it is the choice to live outside the laws of life
 It is the choice to try to live independent of the source of life

Here are two key phrases I want you to note and remember

- God does not kill sinners - Sin is killing us - God is trying to save us from sin - from what sin is doing to us
- God does not say - "Serve me or die" - God says - "You are dying. Serve me and live"

That is one of the monstrous things Satan has actually enticed the church to say about God
 That if you don't choose to love him - He will kill you - And that means He will torture you forever
 There is something wrong with that - And we will explore that over the next few topics

Genesis 3:7 (2) *Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings.*

- Adam and Even did immediately begin to feel the effects of sin
- They began to feel SHAME - That something was wrong with themselves - Innocence was gone
 Don't you love a little child - running around naked - Just the way God made them
 Absolutely no shame - No self-consciousness - No fear of rejection
 But it is not long until they experience shame - rejection - and become self conscious
 They learn that they must cover themselves - or others will point - laugh - even take advantage
 This shame is so natural to us - We cannot conceive what life would be like without it

I used to tell my mom - When we get to heaven we will all go naked
 I was part of the hippie generation - Take it all off - Go natural
 Mom just recoiled at the idea of being naked in heaven - "We will have robes of light," she said
 Looking at my body now - now that I am over 50 - I am tending to agree with her
 Getting down to minimum clothes at the beach doesn't hold the same appeal it used to

But in that eternal kingdom we will be perfect in form - and innocent again in mind
 Will heaven be "clothing optional?" - That's not my point
 The moment sin came - shame came - self consciousness came
 And Adam and Eve tried to cover their shame with fig leaves - Ridiculous and itchy
 Even God must have found that amusing

So God came down for a visit -

Genesis 3:8 (2) *And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden.*

The wording here gives you the feeling that God's visit was a natural thing

That God's showing up in the evening was usual - expected - even enjoyed - Up to this time

□ But now Adam and Even feel another effect of sin - FEAR - They hide from God - As if they could
 Peeking from behind the bushes - clothed in fig leaves

Genesis 3:9 (2) *Then the LORD God called to Adam and said to him, "Where are you?"*

Did God not know where they were? - Of course He did

God does not ask us questions for His information - But to get us to think

Why are you hiding? - from Me? - What has changed? - Do you understand what has happened?

Genesis 3:10 (2) *So he said, "I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself."*

Sin brings SHAME - And shame results in FEAR

Adam speaks of his fear - It is irrational, as fear always is -

God had never done anything to make them afraid - Yet they clearly were afraid - Hiding

And the last person we want to see us naked is God

Of all persons in the universe that we want to hide our dirty laundry from - it is God

Yet He knows it all - Better than we do - And He still LOVES us - God is LOVE

God's love absorbed all your sins - even those not yet committed - 2000 years ago

You can never out-sin God's LOVE - God will always LOVE you - even if you reject Him

Genesis 3:11 (2) *And He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you that you should not eat?"*

Again - God is not seeking information for His sake - But Adam needs to think this through

How did this happen? - Did you go contrary to what I had told you?

God is actually giving Adam and Eve the opportunity to "confess" - To admit

Which is always the first step in restoration - Our first "free will" act towards reconciliation

Genesis 3:12 (2) *Then the man said, "The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate."*

□ No confession here - Only casting of BLAME - Passing the buck - The next natural result of sin
 God isn't making this stuff happen - It is a natural cause-effect result - Innate - Not imposed
 Shame - Fear - Blame - Have you seen that pattern in your life?
 Adam blames Eve - And also God - This woman - You gave me - It's her fault - and Your fault

God seems to play along for a moment

Genesis 3:13 (2) *And the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?"
 The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."*

How will the woman respond? - Any different than the man? - NO

She blames the serpent - The creature God made - The devil made me do it

So God turns and addresses the serpent

Genesis 3:14 (2) *So the LORD God said to the serpent:
 "Because you have done this, you are cursed more than all cattle,
 and more than every beast of the field;
 On your belly you shall go, and you shall eat dust all the days of your life.*

And that is why snakes now crawl - We don't know how they got around before
 But they were now cursed to crawl in the dust - And become loathsome creatures
 As a reminder of sin - of it's effects - Sin makes us crawl in the dust - Sin is the curse
 It is interesting that the art of just about every ancient religious system portrays winged serpents
 Is that evidence of an ancient memory - passed down through time - That originally snakes flew?

And in speaking to the serpent - God makes an amazing statement - Almost a riddle

Genesis 3:15 (2) *And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed;
 He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel."*

This is a riddle - What does this verse mean?
 Let's take it line by line and see how this riddle unfolds

- 1. *I* - Who is speaking? - GOD - *And [God] will...*
- 2. *Will put enmity* - What is enmity? - Based on what root word? - Enemy
 Simply means an established or old HOSTILITY - hatred - intent -
 Enmity - This word is used three other places in the Old Testament
 Ezekiel 25:15 - The old hatred of the Philistines against Israel
 Ezekiel 35:5 - The old hatred of Seir - descendants of Esau - against Israel
 Numbers 35:21 - Killing someone out of enmity - with intent

God declares that He will personally see to it that hostilities continue - That the war is prolonged

Is a prolonged war ever good news? - Yes - If you are on the losing side of an attack
 When France fell in the first weeks of World War II - An underground resistance developed
 They did not want the war to end - while France was occupied by the Nazis
 They fought on - They tried to get Britain and the US to join them - Help them win
 They resisted for years - Many to their own death
 Had a final peace been established prior to driving the Nazis out - That would be bad news
 A prolonged war was their hope - To push on - no matter how long - to freedom
 A prolonged war is good news - when you have been invaded and conquered
 And someone steps in on your side and says - "Let's go forward - keep fighting - till we win!"

God declares that Satan's rule on this earth will not go unchallenged

God throws down the gauntlet to Satan - This is war -
 The war started in heaven is not over - the battle location has just changed to planet Earth
 We live in that war zone - And life is never fair in a war zone - Casualties happen

- 3. *Between you* - Who is God speaking to? - The serpent - The 2nd person pronouns all refer to the Serpent
- 4. *And the woman* - Who is "the woman"? - EVE - The only woman on earth at that time
- 5. *Between your seed* - THE SERPENT'S OFFSPRING - descendants
 "Seed" is the term for natural or sexual reproduction in plants, animals and humans
 This is a word used over 206 times in the Old Testament
 Genesis 1:11 - The herb yielding seed - whose seed is in itself
 Genesis 7:2-3 - Take 7 clean and 2 unclean animals/birds into ark - A male and female
 to keep the "species" alive on the earth
 Genesis 4:25 - After Abel was dead - And Cain banished
 Seth born - "another seed instead of Abel whom Cain slew"

6. *And her seed* - THE WOMAN'S OFFSPRING - Eve's descendants - Generations down through time
So this enmity - hostility - war - is going to go on for generations
This war will outlast Eve's life - It will continue with her offspring - her seed
The serpent may have won a battle - but he has not won the war - God will see to that
7. *He* - Who does "he" refer back to? - By now it should be clear
He - the seed of the woman - A MALE OFFSPRING FROM EVE
shall bruise - What does it mean to BRUISE - The word means to wound - strike - crush
BRUISE - Used just two other places in the Old Testament
Job 9:17 - For He crushes me with a tempest, and multiplies my wounds without cause.
Psalm 139:11 - If I say, "surely the darkness shall fall on me;"
even the night shall be light about me.
your head - the serpent will receive a blow to the head -
Not an offspring of the serpent, but the serpent himself
That offspring of the woman will fight the serpent again - and strike the serpent's head
8. *And you* - the serpent
shall bruise - strike
His - the woman's male offspring
heel - A blow to the heel
- What is the significance of striking the head - vs. striking the heel?
- A blow to the head is a mortal wound - A crushed head will end your life - You cannot survive
- A blow to the heel is a superficial wound - Painful but not lethal - Not fatal - You will limp, but live
- In this battle - The male offspring of the woman will mortally wound the serpent in the head
While the serpent will superficially wound the male offspring of the woman in the heel
- And I [God] will put enmity [hostility] between you [the serpent] and the woman [Eve]
and between your [the serpent's] seed [offspring] and her [the woman's] seed [offspring]
and he [a male offspring of the woman] shall bruise [strike] your [the serpent's] head (mortal wound)
and you [the serpent] shall bruise [strike] his [the offspring of the woman's] heel (superficial wound)*
- This statement is a DECLARATION OF WAR against the serpent - With a prediction of the outcome
The serpent will - in the end - lose the war - And end up dead
- Who are the "seed of the woman"? - Those in future generations who choose God's side of the war
Remember - God is on our side - But he won't force us to be on His side
Who are the "seed of the serpent"? - Those in future generations who choose Satan's side of the war
- NOW - Notice how the battle that finally takes out the serpent takes shape
Down thru time - The offspring of both the woman and the serpent will be at war
But in this deciding battle - Who will participate in that ultimate struggle?
- On one side - The seed of the woman - A male offspring of Eve
It does not say how many generations down the line
- On the other side - THE SERPENT himself - Not the offspring of the serpent
Though the ongoing struggle on earth will involve the offspring of both the woman and serpent
The final battle will be between the woman's offspring and the serpent himself
- This statement is also a DECLARATION OF THE GOSPEL
A future offspring of the woman will reverse what has just happened - And restore LIFE to earth
Who is the offspring? - They probably don't know for sure yet - But the hope is there
The first thing God does after Adam and Eve sin - is to offer them HOPE
God did not condemn us - He joined us - He promised to win it all back for us!
That is what LOVE would do!

What kind of a God do we see here?

Adam and Eve sin - Choose to trust an unknown talking snake over their Creator and Friend
They chose to reject God as their leader - To believe he is a liar and a limiter of their potential

What does God do in response? - He come's looking for Adam and Eve - Why? - So he can punish them?

There are unavoidable consequences to their choice

They are scared, ashamed and fighting - Even before God arrives

God offers no threats of vengeance or torment

God finds them - Asks them what has happened - So they can come to understand the fix they are in

Then he offers them HOPE - A future and a hope - In the form of Savior

We live in a state of prolonged war - Why? - Because GOD is keeping it going

A war that would have been lost forever at the Tree of Knowledge - If God hadn't stepped in

God did not leave us to die in our own foolish choice

He chose to continue the war until HE could win it - But on what basis? Why has it taken so long?

Satan portrays God as the cause of the trouble

As looking down from heaven ready to zap you for your sin

But if God wanted to lose us in sin - He would not have kept this battle going as He has

God is love - The only way God can win back our freedom - is within the constraints of love

The Devil has every trick in the book in his battle plan - All in line with his character of deceit and violence

The devil can lie - misrepresent - insinuate - deceive - fudge - fabricate - invent - prevaricate
manipulate - dodge - duck - evade - hedge - tamper - afflict - torture

But all God's plans must line up with his character of LOVE - honest - clear - open - integrity

Is love a strong enough force to finish off this war - with a WIN for the world - or a loss?

In our next topic - "Rules of Engagement" - We will trace this story from Eden through Calvary

Watch the unfolding of the truth of the Savior

And see how a God of LOVE - and love alone - can solve the sin problem on both a personal and cosmic level

How can a God of love wage an ongoing war?

What kind of a war will God fight?

□

What will be His rules of engagement?

Is LOVE alone strong enough to not only solve but eradicate the sin problem?

And win back what has been lost through Adam and Eve to the Devil and sin?