

the eyes of the universe as the great master-mind behind all the wickedness and disasters and evils that are especially being manifested around the world at the present time. But this is also an indication that his tenure in this world is about to come to an end. God is about to wrest the dominion of this world out of the hand of Satan, and give it back to mankind. Those who have cooperated with their Creator in the rehabilitation process and have proved loyal to Him will be given back the dominion which was lost to Satan.

The great day of judgment when the heavenly tribunal will determine who belongs to God's dominion and who belongs to Satan's dominion is nearly upon us. The last message from heaven given to mortals is given in the following words: "*Fear God, and give glory to him; **for the hour of his judgment is come**; and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters*" Revelation 14:7.

This will be the time of eternal redemption and eternal deliverance from the tempters devices. It will also be a time of eternal condemnation and abandonment into the full jurisdiction of Satan and his evil angels. The whole universe will have become witnesses to the nature and results of sin. And its utter extermination, which in the beginning would have brought fear to angels and dishonor to God, will now vindicate His love and establish His honor before the universe of beings who delight to do His will, and in whose heart is His law. Never will evil again be manifest. Says the word of God: "Affliction shall not rise up the second time." Nahum 1:9. The law of God, which Satan has reproached as the yoke of bondage, will be honored as the law of liberty. A tested and proved creation will never again be turned from allegiance to Him whose character has been fully manifested before them as fathomless love and infinite wisdom.

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A BIG QUESTION FACING US TODAY

Why is planet earth at the present time being racked with such scenes of strife, calamities, tyranny and hopelessness such as we have not witnessed in the history of this world? What is the cause for all the troubles that are hitting us with blinding force and rapidity? Many people are pointing to corrupt politicians in government, to the evil designs of globalists, to the crime syndicates that are preying on the innocent people in our society and to global warming resulting from burning of fossil fuels. Many believe that these are directly contributing to the troubles that we are experiencing in our world today. That may be true, yet they are not the prime movers in all that is happening. Sometimes we can't see the forest for the trees.

So the big question that concerns us today is regarding who or what is the prime mover in all this and what is the intended outcome? Is there a mastermind that is causing all the evils in our world and that is inspiring tyrannical governments and wicked cabals and criminal organizations to bring in such a state of anarchy and oppression that we see in the world today? And the answer is 'Yes'. There is a mastermind, a prime mover, that is behind all the strife and disasters and oppression that are plaguing our society. There is a mystery of iniquity that is operating invisibly in our world unbeknownst to the vast majority of people. This mystery of iniquity is deceiving and inspiring men in government as well as people in the media and in all ranks of society, leading them to create a state of anarchy in our world similar to what convulsed France during the French Revolution.

Ironically, the problem did not begin on planet earth; it began on another planet which had always been a place of tranquility and harmony among all its inhabitants. The society of heaven was made up of myriads of angels presided over by a benevolent, triune government consisting of the Father, the Son and Holy Spirit. Heaven was a beautiful society where there was peace and harmony and love toward God and fellow angels. All the intelligent beings that God created were created with the free-

dom of choice. As long as they chose to live in harmony with the law of supreme love to God and unselfish love to their fellow beings, there was joy and harmony in the universe. However, we do not know how long or even how many ages passed before a note of disharmony manifested itself. It began with some negative thoughts that came into the mind of Lucifer, the highest and most intelligent of the heavenly host. Had he dismissed those thoughts, the universe would still be enjoying the peace and joy and harmony with which God had created it.

Lucifer was a glorious, majestic angel who occupied a throne next to God and acted as God's messenger (angel means a messenger) to communicate messages from the government of heaven to all the intelligences of the universe. This included the other worlds that God had created. Although Lucifer was the highest of all the angels and director of the heavenly choir, he was not given a position in the government of heaven as a member in the inner council of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. It would not be wise for God to give to a fallible, created being such supreme authority. But for some unexplainable reason, Lucifer aspired to occupy the highest position and to exalt his throne above the stars of God. He was not content with the high honors which had been conferred on him. He wanted to be like God.

Inspiration describes the thoughts that went through his mind. *"How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: **I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High**"* Isaiah 14:12-14.

Had God never created intelligent beings with freedom of choice, the peace and harmony that existed in the whole universe would never have been broken. The hallowed presence of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit would always have pervaded throughout illimitable space and preserved its tranquility.

him to overcome the temptations of Satan. We can be ever grateful that God chose the painful route to rehabilitate the human race so that one day they could dwell with Him in a pure and holy heaven untainted by sin.

However, until the process of rehabilitation is completed, and all the facts of the rebellion against the government of heaven are fully revealed, Satan will be given full opportunity to manifest his diabolical character. He is acting out his character through wicked men in government, in institutions, in churches, in criminal organizations as well as in the calamities and disasters that are plaguing our world.

Satan works through the elements to garner his harvest of unprepared souls. He has studied the secrets of the laboratories of nature, and he uses all his power to control the elements as far as God allows. When he was suffered to afflict Job, how quickly flocks and herds, servants, houses, children, were swept away, one trouble succeeding another as in a moment. It is God that shields His creatures and hedges them in from the power of the destroyer. But the world has shown contempt for the law of Jehovah; and the Lord will do just what He has declared that He would—He will withdraw His blessings from the earth and remove His protecting care from those who are rebelling against His law and teaching and forcing others to do the same. Satan has control of all whom God does not especially guard. He will favor and prosper some in order to further his own designs, and he will bring trouble upon others and lead men to believe that it is God who is afflicting them.

Satan will bring disease and disaster, until populous cities are reduced to ruin and desolation. In accidents and calamities by sea and by land, in great conflagrations, in fierce tornadoes and terrific hailstorms, in tempests, floods, cyclones, tidal waves, and earthquakes, in every place and in a thousand forms, Satan is exercising his power. He sweeps away the ripening harvest, and famine and distress follow. He imparts to the air a deadly taint, and thousands perish by the pestilence. He is being exposed in

surprised to hear a serpent talk, but instead of going back to her husband to involve him in the dialogue with the serpent, she continued to dialogue with Satan until he convinced her that God had lied to them about the negative effects of eating of the forbidden tree. He deceived her with the same sophistry with which he deceived the angels when he told them that obedience to Gods laws was restricting them from reaching a higher state of existence. Likewise, he assured Eve that if she and her husband ignored what God had commanded them about the forbidden tree and ate of its fruit that they would attain to a higher state of wisdom and knowledge and be as gods, knowing good and evil.

There was nothing poisonous in the fruit itself, and the sin was not merely in yielding to appetite. It was distrust of God's goodness, disbelief of His word, and rejection of His authority, that made our first parents transgressors, and that brought into the world a knowledge of evil. It was this that opened the door to every species of falsehood and error. And tragically, when Adam and Eve rejected the words of their Creator and accepted the assertions of Satan, they placed themselves under his dominion. As stated in Romans 6:16:

“ Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness. ” From this point on, Satan became the prince of this world and claimed the dominion which God had given to Adam and Eve. Because Adam and Eve yielded to the tempter, they lost the dominion of this world and gave Satan the right to their dominion.

When man sinned, God could have abandoned the human race to the jurisdiction of Satan whom they had chosen as their mentor at the forbidden tree. Or He could choose to rehabilitate mankind to his condition before he fell. But that would require the death of the Creator to pay the penalty for man's transgression so that sin might be forgiven and the guilt washed away. And it would require the continual ministry of an intercessor to provide the grace to deal with the knowledge of evil and enable

Why then did God takes such a great risk in giving to intelligent beings the freedom of choice? The alternative was to make intelligent beings as programed automatons. They would be glorified robots who always rendered perfect compliance to the laws of heaven because they could not do otherwise. No earthly parent would desire children like that. Neither did the Creator desire children like that.

When the Godhead created the angels and inhabitants of the other worlds, they knew from the beginning the crisis that would be created in the universe when the most intelligent, the most admirable of all created beings, would choose to rebel against God and the laws of His government. They knew how rebellion would be introduced into the human race and that it would be at a cost of terrible pain and suffering, not only at Calvary, but for thousands of years before and after Calvary, to save and rehabilitate mankind and restore the universe once again to its original peace and tranquility. But love needs someone upon whom to lavish its kindness and goodness.

What transpired in heaven with the defection of Lucifer has reverberated throughout the universe. And it all started when he began to entertain thoughts which he should have expelled. When he turned his attention to himself and his glory and wisdom, self admiration developed into a desire to glorify himself. Though all his glory was from God, this mighty angel came to regard it as pertaining to himself. Not content with his position, though honored above the heavenly host, he ventured to covet homage due alone to the Creator. He became envious of Christ, the second person of the Godhead, and began to question why Christ was honored above Lucifer. Because Christ is also called the archangel, it probably seemed to Lucifer that He was just another angel who was a step above Lucifer.

It is important to understand how Lucifer went about to achieve his goal of becoming like the most High. As a clever politician, it seems that he began his defection by raising some questions regarding the government of heaven. It must have been obvious

to him that the only way for him to elevate his throne to the highest position was to stigmatize the order and laws of heaven with its existing arrangement which placed Christ above him in power and authority. In this political change in the order and laws of heaven, Lucifer must have thought that he could take over the position held by Christ in the inner circle of the council of heaven. In that way he would be able to elevate his throne to be equal with God. Working with mysterious secrecy, and for a time concealing his real purpose under an appearance of reverence for God, he endeavored to excite dissatisfaction concerning the laws that governed heavenly beings, intimating that they imposed an unnecessary restraint.

God's law is a transcript of His character and the foundation of His throne. Any contempt directed against that law was contempt against God. Lucifer was the first being in the universe who showed contempt for that law by violating its precepts. Love to God and love to his fellow beings was substituted in Lucifer's heart with selfishness, pride and even murder. Christ showed what was in Lucifer's mind right from the beginning of his defection. Addressing His enemies in John 8:44 He said, "**Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.**" Lucifer not only violated the ninth and tenth commandment, which are against lying and coveting, but he also violated the sixth commandment in his heart, which forbids murder.

The rebellion of Lucifer and his sympathizers grew so bold that God had to deal with it. He could have destroyed the rebels and stopped the rebellion from spreading any further. But the onlooking universe would not have seen the real nature of the rebellion and the depths of wickedness that motivated the rebel leader. Time would have to be given to the rebellion to allow it to manifest itself more fully before the whole universe. Only in that way could the universe be secure from ever going that route again. What happened next is described in the following:

"And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him." Revelation 12:7-9.

But the casting out of Satan from heaven boded no good for planet earth. Revelation 12:12 tells us, "*Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.*" Trouble from outer space was about to infect planet earth with the virus of sin. The rebellion against God and the laws of His government was determined to establish itself permanently in this world. That is why a warning was given to the inhabitants of earth when Satan was cast out of heaven.

We can be sure that God and holy angels informed the newly created Adam and Eve about the rebellion of Lucifer and one third of the angels. And God saw fit to give them a very mild test to prove their loyalty. "*And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it*" Genesis 2:16. Lucifer, or Satan, would not be able to tempt them except as they approached a certain tree in the midst of the garden called the tree of knowledge of good and evil. At this point in their experience, they had known and experienced only the good things of life which God had so freely given them. They did not know what evil and sin actually were. They didn't have a knowledge of evil, only the knowledge of good.

When Eve inadvertently found herself near the forbidden tree, she probably wondered why God had so decidedly forbidden them to eat of that tree. And Satan must have divined her curiosity by the way he addressed her, speaking through the serpent. His first words to her were, "*Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?*" Genesis 3:1. No doubt Eve was