

Why Is There Conflict?

by Stephen Kaung

The origin of conflict in the world is attributed to the rebellion of Lucifer, an archangel created by God, who sought to exalt himself above God.

Duration: 1:03:07

Scripture: Genesis 1:1, Matthew 16:18, John 16:33, Philippians 2:6-8

Topics: "Spiritual Warfare", "Salvation History"

Description

This sermon delves into the preparation for the second coming of the Lord, emphasizing the importance of understanding the conflict between God and Satan, tracing back to the rebellion of the archangel Lucifer. It explores the significance of man's creation in God's image, the temptation of Adam and Eve, and the ultimate victory of Jesus Christ over the enemy through his sacrificial death on the cross.

Transcript

Will you please turn to Matthew, the gospel according to Matthew. Chapter 16. We'll just read one verse, verse 18.

Matthew 16, 18. That's the word of the Lord. And I also, I say unto thee that thou art Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and Hades' gate shall not prevail against it.

Brothers and sisters, as we get it here this time, our theme is clear. Prepare the way of the Lord. And of course, by that we mean prepare the way of the second coming of the Lord.

Before our Lord Jesus came into this world the first time, God has prepared for his way. Not only God has prepared the time for it, he has also prepared the vessels for it. We know that in Galatians chapter 4, verse 4, in the fullness of time, God sent his Son into this world.

So there is a timing involved. And it was the time when Rome controlled the known world at that time. There was peace, and Romans were famous for building roads.

And there were good roads everywhere. And at the same time, you'll find even the language, Greek, is being used in commerce. So it seems as if the time was ripe for the coming of the Lord.

And at the same time, the Lord prepared the vessels. As our brother mentioned last night, how he prepared Zechariah and Elizabeth, and through them came John the Baptist. And how he prepared

Joseph and Mary, and how he prepares Simeon and Anna.

And these are the ones that we know. We believe that there must be many others. So we find that at the first coming of the Lord Jesus, there was a preparation.

Both in time and in vessels. And this time when we are talking about prepare the way of the Lord, of course we know this refers to his imminent second coming. But our emphasis this time is a little bit different.

The emphasis that we have this time is more on the way, the way of the preparation for the coming of the Lord. So we use especially Matthew chapter 16 verse 18. And there our Lord Jesus, after Simon, Peter, received revelation from God the Father concerning our Lord Jesus.

And he confessed him as such. Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And then our Lord Jesus continued to reveal something more about God's eternal purpose.

He said, you are Peter. You are a small stone. But I will build my church upon this rock, this massive rock out of which all these little living stones came from.

And I will build my church upon this massive rock that is the Lord himself and the confession of Peter. But when he was, he is doing that, he said the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. So here we find there are three things emphasized here.

One is the vision, the vision of Christ. Because the vision of Christ is the only way, basic way for his coming. And the second one was the vessel, how he prepared the vessel for his coming.

And the third one is the conflict. It is through conflict that a vessel is prepared. And the coming of the Lord is speed up.

Now I was given the assignment on the third point, how the way of conflict is the preparation for the coming of the Lord. Now this morning, we would like to go back to the origin. In other words, why is there conflict upon this earth? We know when God created the heavens and the earth, there was no conflict whatsoever.

Because whatever God has created, it was perfect. As we find in Psalm 19 verse 1, the heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament shows his handiwork. So you find in heaven and on earth, everything glorifies the Lord.

There was no conflict whatsoever. When God laid the foundation of the earth, the morning stars sang for joy and they shout for joy. They agree with what God has done.

It was so wonderful, so perfect. And if we even go back to Revelation chapter 4, which we believe it is a review of the creation of God, the creator. And we find that in Revelation chapter 4, everything was so harmonious.

You find the 24 elders sitting on their thrones and how they took off their crowns and worship. You find the four living creatures crying day and night, holy, holy, holy God almighty. And when this is done, there was worship.

That God who created, he created everything according to his will and it is for his glory. So in other words, as you read the word of God, you find that in the very beginning of God's creation, everything was harmonious. Everything was good.

Everything expresses the glory of God. There was no discord. There was no conflict.

But why is it that there is conflict afterwards? Now, of course, we do not see plainly in the word of God. In plain words, how did it happen? But then God, he did give us hints about what has happened. Because we find that in the Bible, God used two different parables.

And as you read these two different parables, you cannot apply this to any human beings. It has to be something higher. He used the king of Tyre.

He used the king of Babylon. But in these two instances, as you read the scripture, I think brothers and sisters, if you are without prejudice, you have to confess that this is something deeper than can be applied to any human beings. For instance, if you turn to Ezekiel chapter 28, verse 11, and the word of Jehovah came unto me saying, Son of man, took up a lamentation upon the king of Tyre and say unto him, Thus says the Lord Jehovah, Thou who sealest up the measure of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty, Thou was in Eden, the garden of God.

Every precious stone was thy covering, the sardines, the topaz, and the diamond, and the chrysalite, the onyx, and the jasper, and the sapphire, and the carbon gold, and the amaroid, and gold. The workmanship of thy timbers and of thy pipes was in thee. In the day that thou was created were they prepared.

Thou was the anointed covering sheriff, and I have set thee so. Thou was upon the holy mountain of God. Thou didst walk up and down in the midst of the stones of fire.

Thou was perfect in thy ways. Now you cannot apply this to any human beings, because that is beyond human beings. So in a sense you find God is using the king of Tyre as a type of something bigger, greater.

And we believe that it refers to the archangel Lucifer. Now most likely when God created the angels, the angels were created even before the foundation of the earth was laid. And when he created these angels, these spirits, there was one angel.

Among the angels, we don't know whether he was the first created one, but anyway we find that he was created in such perfection. He was adorned with 10 different metals. He was given musical talents, and he was even the anointed angel over the throne of God.

Just like we find later on when Moses make the ark and the mercy seat, you'll find two cherubims cover the mercy seat. So this angel must be the closest of the angels to God. And he had a liberty to walk up and down before God.

The Bible says, in the day when thou was created, were they prepared. Verse 15. Thou was perfect in thy way from the day that thou was created.

Now we wonder if he was the angel that led all the angels in worshipping God. He was given great authority, dominion, and when he was created, he was perfect. Nothing wrong with him.

But sadly, we find in verse 15, thou was perfect in thy ways from the day that thou was created till unrighteousness was found in thee. Somehow, somehow, something happened to this archangel. By the

abundance of thy traffic, they filled the midst of thee with violence, and thou hast sinned.

Because he was given so much, and he was faithful in the beginning, but as he was continuing ruling for God, something happened. You find unrighteousness. You find violence.

You find sin. Now this was happened during the first world. We do not know how long it was, but this archangel began to rebel against God.

So in verse 16 onward, by the abundance of thy traffic, they filled the midst of thee with violence, and thou hast sinned. And because of this, therefore have I cast thee as profane from the mountain of God, and have destroyed thee. Oh, covering sheriff from the midst of the stones of fire, thy heart was lifted up because of thy beauty.

Thou has corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness. I have cast thee to the ground. I have laid thee before kings that they may behold thee.

By the multitude of thy iniquities, by the unrighteousness of thy traffic, thou has profaned thy sanctuaries, and I have brought forth a fire out of the midst of thee. It has consumed thee, and I brought thee to ashes upon the earth in the sight of them that behold thee. All they that know thee among the peoples shall be amazed at thee.

Thou become a terror, and thou shall never be anymore. So we find that even in the early days, there was a rebellion. The archangel Lucifer became proud of himself, and he was proud of his wisdom.

He was proud of his power. And then we find what really was in his heart when you turn to Isaiah chapter 14. Isaiah chapter 14 from verse 12.

But actually, you'll find when you read the verses before that, the Lord was talking about the king of Babylon. But here you find suddenly comes a description that the Lord's words do not fit with any human beings, even the king of Babylon. In verse 12, how are thy fallen from heaven, Lucifer, son of the morning? So here you'll find the plain words.

Lucifer, the morning star, he has fallen. Thou art cut down to the ground, and is prostrate the nations. Now, why did this happen? And thou that didst say in thy heart, something began to come to his heart.

He said, I will exalt my throne among the stars of God. I will sit upon the mount of assembly in the recesses of the north. I will ascend above the heights of the clouds.

I will be like the most high. So here you'll find the reason of the rebellion. You'll find the eye comes out in such a way.

He wants to ascend into the heavens. He wants to exalt his throne above the stars of God. And he wants even to sit in the council of God.

And he wants to rise up so high, to be like the most high. Now, of course, if you read the New Testament, you find that in Philippians chapter 2, when it describes the mind of Christ, you'll find it mentioned another mind. And the other mind is not the mind of Christ, but the mind that tried to rob the place of the son of God.

And we know that this mind is a mind of the devil, the adversary of God. So brothers and sisters, this is the origin of the conflict of the ages. It is really a conflict between God and his enemy, Satan.

Now, how did God react to this situation? It will be very easy for God just to destroy this archangel. And then everything will be peaceful again. But this is not God's way.

God's way is always higher than man's way. So we find that God has his own strategy. And God's strategy at that time was, he didn't want to do it himself.

Because if he did it, he would know, get no glory out of it. Just like a grown up man beating a little child. There was no glory, there is no glory there.

So God wouldn't do that, even though he is able to do that. But he is using someone who is lower than the angels. And from those that are lower than the angels, he will destroy his enemy.

And that will give him glory. So this is the strategy that God has decided. How to meet his adversary, how to defeat his adversary.

So that's the reason why you find when the Lucifer was dismissed from heaven, evidently in the first creation, this planet Earth was under the rule, the government of Lucifer. So when he fell from the throne of God, we find that there was destruction over the area that he had dominion. And our Earth planet must be one of them.

So that's where Genesis began. Now we know as we read Genesis, in the beginning, God created the heavens and the Earth. And Genesis chapter 1.1, in the beginning, God created the heavens and the Earth.

Now we believe that this is the real beginning of the heavens and the Earth. We do not know how long God created, but we only know one thing. When God does anything, he will not leave something undone.

He always does it perfect. So we can believe that when God created, it is done. It is perfect.

So we believe that this verse refers to the very beginning of the heavens and the Earth. But strangely, when you come to verse two, and the Earth was waste and empty, and darkness was on the face of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. God will never create a waste.

God will never create something void, without meaning. That is not like our God. Whatever he creates is perfect.

Whatever he creates is full of meaning. But strangely, you find, and the Earth was waste and empty. Maybe we say, but the Earth was waste and empty.

Now how did it happen? Evidently, there must be a catastrophe coming upon the Earth. Water began to surround the Earth. Darkness began to penetrate, fill the Earth.

The Earth became a waste. Everything was in disorder. And not only that, it is not only void, it is also empty.

It has lost its purpose. We do not know how long this exists, but we do know one thing. This must be what, in geology, it calls the Ice Age.

The Earth at one period was surrounded with water, with darkness, with ice. And that was the reason why we have all these fossils. It must be that the first Earth, with all those that inhabited the Earth, were destroyed.

And we do not know how long this Ice Age period lasted. But thank God, when you read verse two, it said the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. In other words, God began to restore the ruined Earth into a habitable place.

The Spirit of God was hovering like a mother chicken, hovering over its eggs. His will, his created power, began to come over the face of the water. And out of the energy of the Holy Spirit, we find the Earth was restored in part.

So that's how we find in verse three onward, in the first chapter. So the six days of creation, so far as we understand, is not the original first created world. Actually, it must be the restored Earth.

And the Lord used six days to restore this Earth to be habitable. Now, why did he do that? Because God is going to create man. So brothers and sisters, we are the late comers.

We did not exist in the first world. We came only at the beginning of the second world. And we all created even in the last day, the sixth day.

But thank God, when he created man, he created man in a very different way, in a way that he had never done before. Even when he created angels, he did not create the angels in his image, according to his likeness. He created them out of his wisdom, out of his power, out of his character.

That's true. But he did not create even the angels in his own image. That is his own inner nature and character.

He did not create even the angels in his own form, the outward form. No. Man is the only creation that is created in the image of God, after the form of God.

Now, we know that the word image is not what we use today. Because when we talk about an image, we are thinking of something that can be seen. But the image here refers to the inner nature, inner quality of God.

So when God created man, he created man according to his own character, according to his own nature, and after his likeness. The likeness here refers to form, outside form. But of course, we know that God has no form.

He is the invisible God. But among the Godhead, there is one who has a form. And that is the second person of the Trinity.

So we, even our outward form, is formed after the second person of the Trinity. So you find that man is created in such a wonderful and glorious way. That's how he created us.

Now, why did he do that? God never does anything without purpose. He does everything according to his purpose, to his eternal will, according to his good pleasure, for something that he has in his heart. Now, why did God create a man in such a special way? Now, we know today, of course, that he did it because he wants to use man as his vessel and instrument to defeat his enemy.

So brothers and sisters, we are created with a purpose. We are not created for ourselves, brothers and sisters, for our pleasure. We are created to fulfill God's wonderful purpose and his marvelous strategy.

We are created to be used by God to destroy God's enemy. And that will bring glory to him. That's how man was created in the first place.

And that's the reason why, after God created man, he gave man dominion over the fowls of the air, the beasts of the field, and the fishes of the sea. He committed man, the earth, to subdue it because the earth is under the control of God's enemy. And he raised a man to subdue it, to bring it back to the feet of God.

So brothers and sisters, we have to remember, we are something special in the strategy of God. How sad it is today that we think great of ourselves, but no matter how great we think of ourselves, we think too little of ourselves. Because according to the will of God, we are created with such a nature, with such a possibility, with such a commitment, with such a work to do, and how sadly we fail.

So that's the reason why, as you read the human history, you find in the beginning God created Adam and Eve, a corporate being, because one single person can never be able to contain the fullness of God, can never be able to defeat God's enemy. So he created a corporate person, the man and the woman, and to them he asked them to keep, to guard the garden, because the enemy is outside. But as brothers and sisters, we all know very well, we do not know how long Adam and Eve were in the garden of Eden, enjoying God's provisions, and enjoying even the fellowship of God.

We do not know how long it exists. Probably it wasn't a very long time. But then you find something happened.

The enemy came into the garden. Now Adam and Eve were supposed to guard the garden. They were the wall to the garden of Eden.

God commissioned them for this work, but evidently they were not faithful to their work. Number one. Number two.

Man and woman are supposed to be together because they are one, but strangely you find here Eve seemed to have drifted away from man. The two seem to be apart, and when you are apart, the weakness will be revealed. And so the enemy used this failure of man to slip into the garden and tempted Eve.

But evidently Eve, he was before the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Now the Bible said God planted the tree of life in the midst of the garden, and beside the tree of life, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Now I often say, whatever God has planted in the garden of Eden is a good tree.

God will never create a bad tree in the garden of pleasure. All the trees bearing fruit are for the food of the body of man to nourish us. And this tree of the knowledge of good and evil actually is the food for the soul of man, for the mind of man, to make them wise, to know what is good, what is evil.

And then in the midst of the garden, the tree of life, it is the food for our spirit, that by eating the tree of life, we will have the life of God in us, and our spirit will be strengthened and be one with God. So everything in the garden was good, but God purposely planted these trees, two trees in the midst of the garden. Why? Because God created man according to his own image.

He is the perfect will in the universe. So when he created man, he gave man a will. Now what is a will if there is no choice? So you find God provided these two trees before man, give them an opportunity to choose.

Whether they choose the way of God by eating the fruit of the tree of life, they may receive life from God, united with God in life, and thus live a dependent life, fulfilling all God's purposes, or whether they would prefer to make themselves gods. They will know good and evil. They do not need to ask God.

Like children, they have to ask the parents what is good, what is bad, because they have no knowledge of that. They become independent, grown up in themselves, live by themselves and for themselves. Now you can choose this selfish way.

So you find these two ways God put before man. Let them choose. Unfortunately, men prefer the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Men want to be independent of God. They prefer to depend on themselves. They are able, but brothers and sisters, God knows very well that the tree of the good and evil, which is a good tree, but the good is the enemy of the best, and it proves to be the downfall of man.

Now do not blame Eve. Do not blame Adam. Even today, if these two trees are put before man, what tree will you choose? Is it not true that even today, how men choose to be independent of God? We can do it.

We do not need to depend upon God. We are our own king, our sovereign. Brothers and sisters, this is the spirit of the adversary, and unfortunately, we inherit this spirit.

So in other words, all who are born of Adam, we inherit from Adam his father nature. We all have this independent spirit within us. We do not want God, and this is the sad history of human history, but thank God he does not give up.

He still sticks to his own strategy. He believes that his strategy is the best one, so we find one day in the fullness of time, when everything seems to be in the right time, God sent his son into this world to be born a woman, to be born under law, that he may deliver us out of the law and give us sonship. This is how redemption comes to us.

So dear brothers and sisters, here we are this morning as the redeemed of the Lord. God never gives us, give up man. He still wants to use man to defeat his enemy.

So he sent his son into this world to be a man. Brothers and sisters, in Philippians chapter 2, it says, he who is equal with God, one with God, because he and the father are one, and it is not something to be grasped at. This is a hint that once before, someone is trying to grasp at that position, and we know that is Lucifer, the fallen angel.

But this is his right position, to be equal with God, because he is God. He is the image, the form of God. But thank God, in God's wisdom and arrangement, the father and the son are one.

So the father sent the son into this world, and the son is willing to be sent by the father. Now brothers and sisters, when we think of incarnation, I don't think we are able to really fathom what incarnation really involved. Because to think that God, the son, equal with God, sitting on the throne, worship by all the obedient angels, with honor and glory, but how he emptied himself.

This emptying is something beyond our human understanding. Brothers and sisters, we have nothing to empty. The only thing we empty is our sins.

But he has everything, and he emptied all the honor and glory, position, accompanied his Godhead. Of course he cannot empty himself of his Godhead, because that is what he is. Even when he was on earth, he was, he is God, because that is what he is.

But everything that accompanies God, he emptied himself, and come to be a man, and even born in a manger, the lowest of man. And you know, when you read his earthly history for 33 and a half years, from the beginning, the enemy tried to destroy him, because the enemy knew that this is the man that will be his end. So you remember how he used King Herod, trying to kill all the boys within two years in the Bethlehem area.

But God has already sent his son down to Egypt. And then you find, even when he came back, he lived in a small place, Nazareth. He learned to be a carpenter.

We do not know his hidden years, but we know one thing, that he lived his hidden years as a perfect man. He obeyed his parents. He learned the trade.

He became the carpenter, famous for his carpentry work. And he supported the family, because the father must have died early. He was hidden for 30 some years, 30 years.

And when he stepped out, you find he came out as a man, as a man. He came to be baptized by John the Baptist. Now, John the Baptist says something noble in here.

John the Baptist said, I could not baptize you. You should baptize me. But he said, let's do it for righteousness sake.

This is the way that God has ordained for this time. It is the way of repentance, in order to go back to God's purpose. And you know our Lord Jesus, he was baptized as man, as a representative man.

Even though he had nothing to repent of, he took all our sins as they were, and repented before. And no wonder, when he came out of the water, the heavens opened, and said, this is my beloved son, in whom I'm well pleased. And immediately afterwards, he was led by the Spirit of God to the wilderness, to be tempted of evil.

He was alone in the wilderness for the days, for the nights, without eating and drinking. Not like Adam and Eve. When they were tempted, they were in the best environment, in the Garden of Eden.

But when our Lord Jesus was tempted, he was in the desert, in the wilderness, alone, by himself. And what is his temptation? The devil came to tempt him, and said, now, if you are the Son of God, you can easily turn these stones into bread, and fill your stomach with food. In other words, his temptation is, the enemy tried to tempt him to act as God, not as man.

Now, if he should act as God, he cannot represent man anymore. Because only man can die for man. Only a perfect man can die for sinful man.

But how our Lord Jesus overcome all these temptations, he remained as man, and submitted himself to God his Father. He overcame the enemy. The enemy left him for a time.

And during his three open public years, how the enemy tried every means to tempt him, to remove him from that position of man, to be God. But he couldn't do that. He was obedient to his Father.

Evil unto death, and death, the death of the cross. So dear brothers and sisters, we find the second man came to the fight. And on Calvary's cross, he drew the enemy out of this world.

He broke the head of the enemy. He took all these principalities, authorities, under the enemy captive, and made them a show of his victory. In other words, his victory is decisive.

Our Lord Jesus as the man, the representative man, he has overcome the enemy, completely and perfectly. He says it is finished. And that is the finished work of Christ.

Brothers and sisters, today we are in the good. So strictly speaking, the conflict is not between you and the enemy. The conflict is between God and the enemy.

But because we are the vessel and the instrument used by God to finish the enemy, therefore, we are involved in the conflict. But dear brothers and sisters, to us, it is the fight of faith. We cannot fight it by ourselves, but we can only fight it by believing in the finished work of Christ.

So brothers and sisters, this is the reason why we have conflict today. Formerly, we were the allies of God's enemy. But now, we are his enemy.

So no wonder our Lord Jesus said, in the world, you have tribulation, but be not afraid, because I have overcome. Our Lord Jesus said, I sent you out as sheep among the world. You will have tribulation, suffering, but you don't need to be afraid, because he has overcome.

So brothers and sisters, this is the reason why there is conflict in our lives. This is the reason why the gates of Hades are all open to attack the church that God has built. So may the Lord strengthen our faith.

Let's pray. Dear Lord, as we come into this marvelous work that are doing today, we praise and thank thee because our Lord Jesus Christ has already overcome, and we are in the train of his victory. Oh dear Lord, do deliver us from any fear, knowing that thou has overcome.

We praise and thank thee that by faith, we may fight a good fight. We may be able to accomplish, to finish up the work that has left for us to do. So Lord, may this be reality to each and every one of us.

We ask in thy precious name. Amen.

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