

## Lesson Four — The Present System of Rulership

*Day One — Powers and Principalities*

*Day Two — In the Beginning*

*Day Three — World Rulers*

*Day Four — Satan's Fall*

*Day Five — Angelic Dominion*

Last week we saw that God's stated purpose for the creation of man was that he would rule over the earth. But man fell and became disqualified to rule. We know that God has a plan of redemption for man, but even with redemption in place, we do not yet see man ruling as God intended. So the question is — Who is ruling now, and how does all of this fit into the overall picture of Scripture? This week, we will look into these things. Please pray for yourself and for the others in your study group. Ask the Lord to protect you this week as you study these things.

Some people struggle with the thought that man has been created to rule. Perhaps it is because they have never been taught this truth. And while it is true that *redeemed man* should bring glory to God, it also must be recognized that the first mention concerning the purpose of man's creation is that man is to rule. This stated purpose for man, found in the *very first chapter* of the Bible, is an often overlooked foundational truth. And *if this truth is ignored, then it will be impossible to grasp the big picture of the purpose for man relative to time and eternity*. Taking this full circle, when man does rule, he will ultimately be glorifying God, for having fulfilled his purpose for his creation. (Now that is something to think about!)

Since man is not presently ruling, we have a question to ask: WHO is ruling over the earth at this present time?

Of course, God is the Sovereign over the universe, being the Creator and Supreme Ruler over all of creation. He is the One Who *'had no beginning, is now, and shall have no end.'* He rules above all of creation from *the uttermost parts of the north* (Is. 14:13b). But for some, perhaps seemingly mysterious reason, He has placed created beings to rule over at least this part of His universe called earth.

And if man failed (and he did), then what is happening over the planet earth? Who is presently positioned as the ruler of this earth? Did God just skip having anyone else rule and He rules directly? Or is there some sort of hierarchy in place?

Our goal this week is to "fit together this puzzle section" which will answer these questions. By seeing the face of this puzzle section you may begin to understand a part of the overall scheme of things which you

may, or may not have previously understood. But beware! The process can be frustrating. You will want to know more. You will have more questions. You will want to see how this fits in the whole puzzle. Be patient! And pray! You must pray for wisdom. Pray that God will give you understanding. Pray that any blinders may fall off, that Satan will have no more ability to blind you from these truths, as these truths are vital to the overall picture. Hang in there! It will all come together for you. But it takes time and diligent study.

Let's see what we can learn from Scripture concerning *who* is positioned over this world's system, and perhaps answer the question *why*. We will first look at a few passages in the New Testament because herein it is stated so plainly. Tomorrow we'll get back to the Old Testament.

## Day One — Powers and Principalities

Last week in the lecture, we glimpsed some of the verses we will look at more closely today. As we saw last week, one very specific place in Scripture which deals with the question of rulership over this present world system is found in the Book of Ephesians. Read through the passage below, then look up the definitions in the Appendix.

### **Ephesians 6**

**12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers <746>, against the powers <1849>, against the world <165> forces <2888> of this darkness <4655>, against the spiritual forces <4152> of wickedness <4189> in the heavenly places <2032>.**

rulers <746>

powers <1849>

world <165> forces <2888>

darkness <4655>

spiritual forces <4152 (see def. #2)>

wickedness <4189>

heavenly places <2032>

Now that you have looked up all the definitions, write in your own words the description of those we struggle against.

Apparently this is a description of the hierarchy of the ruling forces over this world. Here are a few more New Testament passages that address the same topic —

**John 14** (Jesus is speaking)  
**30 I will not speak much more with you, for the ruler <758> of the world is coming, and he has nothing in Me;**

ruler <758>

What does Jesus call Satan?

**2 Corinthians 4**  
**4 in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.**

Who is *the god of this world*?

The following verse tells why the *ruler of the world* has no hold on Jesus —

**Colossians 2**  
**15 When He [Jesus] had disarmed the rulers <746> and authorities <1849>, He made a public display of them, having triumphed over them through Him.**

rulers <746>

authorities <1849>

From the previous two verses, who are the rulers and authorities to which Paul refers? (Notice that these are the identical words used in Eph. 6:12.)

Remember to continue to pray for proper understanding. It is only through the work of the Holy Spirit that one can begin to grasp truths in Scripture. See you tomorrow.

## Day Two — In the Beginning

Skim over yesterday's lesson, so your mind will be refreshed on our topic for the week.

Because this topic is so powerful, remember you must begin in prayer. Ask God to **cover you** and **to give you wisdom and insight**. Satan does not want you to know these truths about his character and purposes.

Be sure to pray that the Lord will open your eyes. It is important to know our enemy in order to do battle with him. Satan has blinded our eyes to so much of what God desires the Church to know concerning His plans and purposes for the ages. There is good reason Satan tries to keep us blinded. It will become evident as we learn more. God desires us to seek Him diligently and He will reveal His truths to us as they are found in His Word.

Let's begin today by simply *thinking through* some questions. (Although I am not having you write out answers to these questions, *I do want you to think through these things.*)

- When was Satan created and when did he fall?
- Does Satan actually rule over this earth in a real and tangible sense?
- Has Satan ruled over the earth from the beginning or was he given dominion at some point thereafter? If thereafter, when was it?
- Why was Satan present (in a fallen state) in the Garden of Eden *so soon* after man's creation?
- Why did Satan desire to bring about Adam's fall? What was in it for him?

In order to answer these questions we need to look back at Genesis, the book of beginnings, and allow Scripture to interpret things for us. Having a correct understanding of *the beginning* is paramount in understanding other portions of Scripture. So please bear with the process of "fitting together this puzzle section" and examining it.

Last week in the first portion of the homework for Day One (pg. 42), we looked at the first two verses of the Bible. Please turn back to this section and review what you studied. For today's study you only need to review the first two verses in Genesis. Do that now.

Having these things fresh in your mind, consider verse two. Genesis 1:2 begins with the English word *And*, which has been translated from a Hebrew letter called a 'waw,' which prefixes a word. This Hebrew letter, found at the beginning of v. 2, can be translated in one of two ways. (Actually, while it is a Hebrew letter, we have to use an English *word* to translate it.) This Hebrew *waw* can be translated either **conjunctively** such as "and," or **disjunctively** such as "but." The Hebrew *waw* is used some 28,000 times in the Old Testament. Of those 28,000 times, it is translated about 25,000 times *conjunctively* "and" and about 3,000 times *disjunctively* "but." Context is usually the determining factor as to which way it should be translated. But Genesis 1:2 is rather unique in its position in Scripture in that there is little *preceding context* — only verse one. At first glance, this might make it appear somewhat difficult to determine just how the *waw* was intended for interpretation. But considering the first verse of Scripture and relating it to subsequent Scriptures, it is easy to see that this can be easily understood, even here in the second verse of all Scripture.

Specifically, we are looking to see if the *waw* was intended to *join* verses one and two in a conjunctive fashion — "and," or if it was intended to *disjoin* verses one and two in a disjunctive fashion — "but." Essentially the question is — Did God **create the earth formless and void** OR did the earth **become formless and void**?

With v. 1 preceding v. 2 in Genesis chapter one, we can now look to see if any other passages shed light on the correct way to translate this Hebrew letter. Isaiah gives us specific insight into this question. Let's study the passage thoroughly.

**Isaiah 45**

**18 For thus says the LORD, who created <01254> the heavens (He is the God who formed <03335> the earth <0776> and made <06213> it, He established it and did not create <01254> it a waste place <08414>, But formed <03335> it to be inhabited), “I am the LORD, and there is none else...”**

From this passage write out each thing *that the Lord did*. I’ll begin for you —

- 1) He created the heavens
- 2) He formed \_\_\_\_\_

Now look up the definitions:

created <01254>

formed <03335>

earth <0776>

made <06213>

a waste place <08414>

Below the verse is typed out again, only the pronoun “it” has been replaced with the noun “the earth.” This helps the verse to be more easily understood.

**Isaiah 45**

**18 For thus says the LORD, who created the heavens (He is the God who formed the earth and made [the earth], He established [the earth] and did not create [the earth] a waste place, But formed [the earth] to be inhabited), “I am the LORD, and there is none else.**

With the definitions in mind, write out what you learn from this passage.

Compare Isaiah 45:18 with Genesis 1:2 and write out the comparison.

Genesis 1:1 states that God created (Heb., *bara*) the earth. Genesis 1:2 gives a description of the earth laying in a formless (Heb., *tohuw*) state. Isaiah says that God, “**did not create (*bara*) the earth a waste place (*tohuw*).** What happened?

Remember to keep asking the Holy Spirit to be your Teacher. He will lead you into understanding as you seek Him. You do not have to have a degree in theology in order to understand God’s Word, even the seemingly most difficult or controversial portions of God’s Word. God reveals Himself to individuals who whole-heartedly seek Him. Scripture attests to this in many places, so don’t get discouraged. Rather, be challenged to search the Scriptures, diligently seeking God for guidance and understanding.

Tomorrow we will try to see what this all means, and why it matters.

Have a good day.

## Day Three — World Rulers

Remember to pray for spiritual discernment and insight, and for God to hedge you up with His protection.

In the first day’s homework this week, we saw that Satan is called “the god of this world,” “the ruler over the earth.” Keeping this in mind, here are a few more questions for you to ponder —

- When did Satan gain dominion over the earth? Was it before or after he fell?
- Does his dominion over the earth continue to this day?
- Why did he desire to see man fall?
- If a believer’s free gift of eternal life cannot be revoked for any reason, then why does Satan even bother with Christians? What does he hope to gain?

These are good questions to consider. They are also questions which should be answered if we are to know and do battle with our enemy, an enemy who is against our very created purpose, and one who fights at every turn to keep us from understanding.

The importance of believers knowing the purpose for their creation becomes evident as we begin to understand more and more about these *first things* in Scripture. It is also important so that we might make the goal of our life the fulfillment of God’s purpose for us. In order to do that, it is essential for us to gain understanding in these areas.

It is equally important to know and understand that which is set against our attaining this goal, in order that we might be able to endure and remain steadfast. Therefore, we *need* this puzzle section. We need to see Satan’s role in this overall scope of Scripture. We need to have a clear understanding of how he fits into all of this. We will take a look at Satan and his part in this picture. (Be sure to ask God to cover you with His mercies as you study.)

First, there is something that we need to understand about the heavenly rulers in relation to earthly rulers. Let's check out something from the writings of Daniel the prophet. Then we'll go to Ezekiel and Isaiah, and hopefully, this picture will come into focus.

The prophet Daniel has written some interesting things concerning the angelic world and just how far-reaching their authority is. As a young man, Daniel had been taken into captivity by King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. Daniel had purposed in his heart to live faithfully for God, and not to become unfaithful in a strange land filled with strange gods. As a result, the One and True God used Daniel in mighty ways during his captivity and beyond. Daniel proved himself faithful throughout the Babylonian captivity.

Some time after Nebuchadnezzar had taken Judah, the Southern kingdom, into captivity, the Medes and Persians defeated the Babylonians. The Babylonian kingdom came into the hands of the Medes and the Persians, which was a dual kingdom, and the second in the line of world kingdoms prophesied in the Book of Daniel.

Daniel remained there during the Medo-Persian reign. It was during the Medo-Persian reign in Babylon that Daniel received a peculiar vision which filled him with much fear and confusion. He prayed and fasted for the interpretation of the vision for 21 days, until an angel came to him with the interpretation. Below is the detail of what happened.

We are looking at this passage for the purpose of grasping an understanding of the angelic forces and their relationship to earthly rulers. So at this point, rather than studying this passage for its prophetic purposes, we want to look at this passage for the purpose of gaining understanding about the powers and principalities in the heavens in relation to earthly rulers. We want to notice what the messenger angel says *about the angelic realm*.

**Daniel 10**

**12 Then he [the messenger angel] said to me, "Do not be afraid, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart on understanding this and on humbling yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to your words. 13 But the prince <08269> of the kingdom of Persia was withstanding me for twenty-one days; then behold, Michael, one of the chief <07223> princes <08269>, came to help me, for I had been left there with the kings <04428> of Persia. 14 Now I have come to give you an understanding of what will happen to your people in the latter days, for the vision pertains to the days yet future."**

Remember at this time, we are using this passage to gain a better understanding of the angelic world, not to look at the prophetic information. So remain focused on the picture drawn here which describes the angelic world.

Look up all the definitions.

prince <08269>

chief <07223>

king <04428>

Re-read the previous passage with the understanding of these definitions.

Remember that the messenger angel is describing the angelic world in v. 13; he is not speaking of the physical world. Below are some questions for consideration.

*When* was the messenger angel sent with the interpretation in response to Daniel's prayer?

Who resisted the messenger angel in reaching Daniel?

Who came to the aid of the messenger angel?

Again, we are not presently looking at prophecy per se, but rather we are trying to understand the angelic realm a little better. In Daniel 10:15-17, after the messenger angel gives Daniel the interpretation of his vision, he then says:

**Daniel 10**

**20 Then he said, "Do you understand why I came to you? But I shall now return to fight against the prince <08269> of Persia; so I am going forth, and behold, the prince <08269> of Greece is about to come. 21 However, I will tell you what is inscribed in the writing of truth. Yet there is no one who stands firmly with me against these forces except Michael your prince <08269>."**

Look back at vv. 13 and 21 in Daniel chapter ten. Keeping in mind what the definition for this word *prince* <08269> is, what is the picture here?

To whom will the messenger angel return to fight?

Then who will be the next heavenly prince to come?

History has proven the messenger's declaration to be true. The very next worldwide kingdom which came into power after the Medo-Persian kingdom was the Grecian kingdom under the direction of the earthly ruler, Alexander the Great. The angel was evidently explaining to Daniel the warfare which takes place in the heavens; and the resulting changes of power taking place on earth only reflects changes of power that first takes place in the heavens. History records a change of world power on earth, which apparently only reflected a change in the heavens, as well. Very interesting, don't you think?

Think for a moment. What picture does this put into your mind concerning the kingdoms of the world in relation to the angelic realm? What is the relationship between the heavens and the earth?

Meditate on these things throughout the day. See you tomorrow.

## Day Four — Satan's Fall

Yesterday we looked at the apparent connection between earthly and heavenly rulers. Today we will see this distinction between two classes of rulers a little more clearly in our study passages. Pray for understanding.

In Ezekiel chapter twenty-eight, God tells the prophet to take up a lamentation against “the ruler of Tyre.” The first ten verses of this chapter speak of the earthly ruler (28:2b, 9) and the pending judgment upon him since he lifts himself up in pride. These first ten verses obviously deal with the *earthly* king of Tyre. (If you like, feel free to read the first ten verses from your Bible.)

But the following verses (vv. 11-19) speak of the corresponding heavenly ruler — Satan. It becomes evident that these verses speak of Satan because of the words used to describe this ruler. Study the passage thoroughly, then we'll study it further in the lecture. (This text is double-spaced for good observation.)

### **Ezekiel 28**

**11 Again the word of the LORD came to me saying, 12 Son of man, take up a lamentation over the king of Tyre and say to him, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD,**

**“You had the seal of perfection, full of wisdom <02451> and perfect in beauty. 13 You were in Eden <05731>, the garden <01588> of God; Every precious stone was your covering: the ruby, the topaz and the diamond; the beryl, the onyx and the jasper; the lapis lazuli, the turquoise and the emerald; and the gold, the workmanship of your settings and sockets, was in you. On the day that you were created they were prepared. 14 You were the anointed <04473> cherub who covers, and I placed you there. You were on the holy mountain of God; you walked in the midst of the stones of fire. 15 You were blameless <08549> in your ways from the day you were created until unrighteousness was found in you. 16 By the abundance of your trade you were internally filled with violence, and you sinned; therefore I have cast you as profane from the mountain of God. And I have destroyed you, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire. 17 Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty; you corrupted your wisdom by reason of your splendor. I cast you to the ground; I put you before kings, that they may see you. 18 By the multitude of your iniquities, in the unrighteousness of your trade you profaned your sanctuaries. Therefore I have brought fire from the**

**midst of you; it has consumed you, and I have turned you to ashes on the earth in the eyes of all who see you. 19 All who know you among the peoples are appalled at you; you have become terrified and you will be no more.”**

NOTES:

Look up the following words and write out the definition which best fits the context.

wisdom <02451>

Eden <05731> (This is the same Hebrew word used in Gen. 2:15 as to where God placed the man after he had been created. But note the difference in the description of the garden.)

garden <01588>

anointed <04473>

blameless <08549>

After looking at these definitions, write out any new insights.

Give a description of Satan in his *un*fallen state (vv. 13 , 14).

What two places does this passage use in locating where Satan was in his unfallen state (vv. 13, 14)? Give a description of both of these places mentioned.

Let's look again at the description of Satan's fall. Remember that the prophets often received visions "in motion," so to speak, which is why some prophecies concerning the future are written in past tense — the

prophet having written about something they had already seen in a vision. The actual event may or may not have taken place in time and space at the timing of the writing. But they saw the whole of it as having taken place. (This clue is particularly helpful in trying to understand the writings of the prophets.)

**Ezekiel 28**

**15 “You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created, until unrighteousness was found in you. 16 By the abundance of your trade you were internally filled with violence, and you sinned; therefore I have cast you as profane from the mountain of God. And I have destroyed you, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire. 17 Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty; you corrupted your wisdom by reason of your splendor. I cast you to the ground; I put you before kings, that they may see you. 18 By the multitude of your iniquities, in the unrighteousness of your trade, You profaned <02490> your sanctuaries. Therefore I have brought fire from the midst of you; It has consumed you, and I have turned you to ashes on the earth In the eyes of all who see you. 19 All who know you among the peoples are appalled at you; you have become terrified, and you will be no more.”**

Only one additional word to look up —

profaned <02490>

Whose sanctuaries did Satan profane (v. 18)?

How did he defile them?

Describe Satan after his fall.

In the order given, list all that God says He will do to Satan because of his actions.

Now summarize today’s study.

## Day Five — Angelic Dominion

Today we want to continue with yesterday's lesson. We want to look at what it was that Satan did when he defiled his sanctuaries (Eze. 28:18). In other words, what did he do that was so bad? Be sure to pray for insight and understanding.

First, from yesterday's passage, write out how Ezekiel described Satan's fall (Eze. 28:15-18a).

Now, let's compare Scripture with Scripture. In Isaiah chapter fourteen, Isaiah apparently reflects on the details of this past act of Satan's rebellion, as he prophesies future actions of Satan when he will be operating through a human world-wide ruler, the Antichrist. This description of Satan and his fall is found within another context that reveals earthly rulers corresponding to heavenly rulers. The context makes it obvious that Isaiah is talking about the end of the tribulation when the Antichrist falls (see Isa. 14:4-10). Then Isaiah refers to the power behind the Antichrist, Satan, and flashes back to his fall in eternity past.

In this portion of Isaiah's prophecy, the nation of Israel is seen celebrating the fact that this oppressive ruler (the Antichrist) has fallen. It becomes obvious that Isaiah is talking about the spiritual ruler behind the earthly one as he describes Satan's fall —

### **Isaiah 14**

**12 “How you have fallen from heaven, O star of the morning, son of the dawn! You have been cut down to the earth, you who have weakened the nations! 13 But you said in your heart,**

**‘I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God,  
And I will sit on the mount of assembly in the recesses of the north. 14  
I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like  
the Most High.’**

**15 Nevertheless you will be thrust down to Sheol, to the recesses of the pit...”**

Put into your own words what Satan said he would do.

By the very fact that Satan says he *will ascend* (mentioning ascending twice) along with the text saying that he will *be thrust down*, indicates that his place is somewhere between earth and God's Throne. The text also gives evidence beyond any doubt that Satan has a throne (i.e., “I will raise my throne...”). With these thoughts in mind, answer the following questions.

What is Satan called in v. 12?

Based upon that, of whom might the “stars of God” be referring?

Specifically, where does Satan want to sit?

But what will happen (v. 15)?

What is the verb tense in v. 15?

The ‘Mount of Assembly’ is the description of the location of God’s Throne with an interesting location — *the recesses of the north*. The Book of Job gives more insight into what this place is and what activity occurs there. In Job 1:6-7, we see God calling together “the sons of God” (the angels) seemingly for them to give Him an account of what is going on in their own sanctuaries. We only get the account of earth because that is the only scope of activities which God has seen fit to reveal to man. (Remember, the main setting of this overall story is the earth.)

**Job 1**

**6 Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them. 7 The LORD said to Satan, “From where do you come?” Then Satan answered the LORD and said, “From roaming about on the earth and walking around on it.”**

Then we see this assembly happening again. This could well indicate that this ‘assembly’ takes place with some regularity.

**Job 2**

**1 Again there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them to present himself before the LORD. 2 The LORD said to Satan, “Where have you come from?” Then Satan answered the LORD and said, “From roaming about on the earth and walking around on it.”**

The phrase “sons of God” in the Old Testament is a name referring to the angels. (Stars of God refers to the same thing, only it seems that “stars of God” may be a specific class of angels. We’ll discuss this in detail in the lecture.)

When asked, Satan said that he had come from “*roaming about on the earth and walking around on it.*” This is a statement of jurisdiction, if you will. The earth is Satan’s domain. But according to Isaiah, evidently Satan felt it wasn’t enough for him to have such a limited domain. He wanted to “raise his throne above the stars of God,” and to “sit enthroned on the Mount of Assembly.”

What do you think this would imply?

Satan is the present ruler of this world, with innumerable fallen angels who joined him in his rebellion against God in eternity past. He continues to be in this position of rulership as head over the other fallen angelic rulers.

We'll cap this week's lesson with one more passage. It is a passage found in the New Testament and has to do with Christ's temptation in the wilderness. This is His third temptation recorded in the Gospel of Matthew.

**Matthew 4**

**8 Again, the devil took Him to a very high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory; 9 and he said to Him, "All these things I will give You, if You fall down and worship me."**

**10 Then Jesus said to him, "Go, Satan! For it is written, 'YOU SHALL WORSHIP THE LORD YOUR GOD, AND SERVE HIM ONLY.'"**

NOTES:

What did Satan offer Jesus (v, 8, 9)?

Does it appear that Jesus indicated in any way that Satan did not have the power to give Him the kingdoms of the world? Why, or why not?

As we close for today, summarize what you learned today.

See you in class.