

Satan and the Fallen Angels

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Section #1

Christ Preaching to the Spirits in Prison

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Notice I Peter 3:19-20: "...He [Christ] went and preached to the spirits in prison, who formerly were disobedient, when once the Divine longsuffering waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared...."

What does that scripture refer to? The *Ryrie Study Bible* says this: "some understand this to mean that **Christ, BETWEEN His death and resurrection**, descended into **Hades** and offered to those who lived **BEFORE Noah... a second CHANCE for salvation.**"

There are at least **3 ERRORS** with that explanation of the passage! Let's now *examine* this passage... and discern its *true* meaning.

(1) The **FIRST error** concerns **WHO** Christ preached to.

The **false** teaching is, that the "spirits in prison" (to whom Christ preached) were the spirits of **HUMANS** (who had *died* and were in hell). Yet, is it *true* that when Christ preached to "the spirits in prison," He was preaching to the spirits of dead men? No! There **are no** conscious "spirits of dead men." When a person *dies*, he is dead and unconscious... *until* the time of a yet-future resurrection! (See the booklet [What Happens When You Die?](#) Also see the following scriptures: Eccl. 9:5,10; Ps. 6:4-5; Acts 2: 29, 34; John 3:13; Dan. 12: 1-2; John 5: 28-29.)

So, **who was it**, to whom Christ actually preached? This will be answered (and dealt with extensively) a little later in this paper.

(2) The **SECOND error** concerns **WHEN** Christ did the preaching "to the spirits in prison."

The **false** teaching is, that Christ did the preaching **during** His 3 days and nights in the tomb. Yet, Christ could **NOT** have done any preaching at that time! Why? Because during that period of 3 days and 3 nights, Christ was **dead!** Just like when you and I die, He was dead and **unconscious**. And He would **still be** dead and unconscious (to this day), if it weren't for the fact that at the **end** of that 3-day period, God the Father **resurrected** Him.¹

The Apostle **John** said that when Christ came to this earth, He was **made flesh** (John 1:14). Furthermore, Paul said, that Christ *emptied* Himself (Philip. 2:7). He **gave up** immortality... **while** here in the flesh... **that** He might **DIE, for us.**¹

If Jesus Christ was **not** really **dead**, then the penalty of **your** sins is **NOT** paid... and you are **without** hope!¹

So... **WHEN was it**, that Christ preached to the spirits (or demons) in prison? The *answer* lies, in verse 20 of the passage in question. Verse 20 says, "**In the days of Noah**, while the ark was

being prepared.” Yes, it was *during* the 120 year period, while Noah was building the ark, that Christ (in His pre-human form) went and *preached* to the spirits in prison!

(3) Now for the **THIRD** error in this **false** interpretation of I Peter 3. The third error has to do with **WHERE** Christ did the preaching (when He preached to those “spirits in prison”).

The **false** teaching is, that Christ supposedly went down into the bowels of the earth (where “hell” *supposedly* is). That **false** concept of “hell” is mostly the result of 2 things: (#1) the **writings**—*not* of Christians—but of *pagans!* Yes, pagans, like Plato, Virgil, Homer, and the medieval poet Dante. (#2) The concept of “hell” is *further* confused, due to the *unfortunate* fact, that our English Bibles tend to translate *three different* Greek words (Hades, Gehenna and tartaroo), **all** as “hell”... despite the fact that these three words each refer to three entirely *different* things!

The popular (but false) concept is, that hell is located *within* the bowels of this earth... where Satan and his demons supposedly reside. Again, this concept comes from the writings of pagans, *not* from scripture. Yet, there are several scriptures that people use, to try to *support* that false concept of hell. And, several such scriptures are often cited *in conjunction with* our scripture in question—I Peter 3: 19-20. Let’s now look at two such scriptures.

I Peter 4:6 (Spirits of Dead MEN?)

Let’s now consider *one* of the reasons why people *mistakenly* think that the “spirits in prison” to whom Christ preached, were “spirits of dead **MEN**.”

In I Peter 4:3, it speaks of certain ungodly conduct. Now, notice verses 4 to 6:

“In regard to these [acts of ungodly conduct], they [that is, they who do those things] think it strange that **you** do not run **with them** in the same flood of dissipation, speaking evil of **you**. They will give an account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead. For this reason **the gospel was preached also to those who ARE DEAD...**”

So, when Peter states here that “the gospel was preached also to those who are **dead**,” some people try to connect **that** statement, with Peter’s *earlier* statement that Christ “preached to the spirits in prison.” Yet, what is Peter *actually* saying when he says that “the gospel was preached also to those who **are dead**”?

Well, when Peter **wrote** those words (almost 40 years *after* the Crucifixion), **many** Christians had already been living the way of life preached *by* the apostles... and **some** of them had already died. Many had suffered persecution and martyrdom.

Now, regarding those Christians who had already died, **when was it** that they had the gospel preached **to** them? *Obviously*, it was **while** they were still alive! In other words, verse 6 has the meaning that “the gospel was [previously] preached also to those who are [now] dead.”

Actually, there is an *alternative*, possible meaning to that phrase about the “gospel being preached to the dead.” It *could* be that Peter was here referring to *the living who have not*

repented, and are still “dead in trespasses and sins.” Such a meaning would be in accord with the following passage: “And you *He [Christ] made alive*, who **were** dead in trespasses and sins, in which you **once** walked according to the course of this world...” (Eph. 2:1-2). This meaning would *also* be similar to the statement in Luke 9:60, where Christ said, “...Let the dead bury their own dead...”

Ephesians 4:9 and Matthew 12:40

Consider now Ephesians 4:9 and Matthew 12:40. Those are two scriptures which people combine *with* I Peter 3, in an attempt to prove that Christ descended to “the heart of the earth” to preach to “spirits of dead men” who were there “in hell.”

“He [Christ] ascended [into heaven]... but... **first descended into the lower parts of the earth**” (Eph. 4:9).

“... so will the Son of man be three days and three nights **in the heart of the earth** [‘bowels of the earth,’ says some Bibles]” (Matt. 12:40).

With regard to the two scriptures above, notice what the following Bible commentaries say:

The expression “in the heart of the earth” ... **means simply the grave**, but this considered as the most **emphatic** expression of real and **total** entombment. (*Jamieson, Fausset and Brown*, W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1973, volume III, p. 75)

the Son of man ... will be three days and three nights in the “heart [perhaps an echo of Jonah 2:3; cf. Ps. 46:2] of the earth” — **a reference to Jesus’ burial, NOT his descent into Hades.** [*The Expositor’s Bible Commentary (NIV)*, Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1984, Volume 8, p.296]

... this obscure expression [“lower parts of the earth”] may simply signify **death and burial.** [*The Expositor’s Bible Commentary (NIV)*, 1978, Volume 11, p. 57]

All we *surely* know [regarding this phrase “lower parts of the earth”] is, that His [Christ’s] soul at death descended to Hades: i.e., underwent the **ordinary** condition of departed spirits of men. (*JFB*, Vol. III, p.410). [Here, *JFB* obviously means that, all we surely know is that Christ **went to the grave.**]

No argument can be drawn from it for a descent to the abodes of Satan. (ibid)

Finally, notice a *clearer* rendering of Eph. 4:9. The *New English Bible* more **properly** renders Eph. 4:9 as follows: “Now, the word ‘ascended’ implies that he [Christ] also descended to the lowest level, down to the **very** earth.”

Who, When, and Where?

Let’s now return to our initial discussion concerning I Peter 3: 19-20, where it speaks of Christ’s preaching “to the spirits in prison.” Regarding the questions “to *whom* did Christ preach?,” “*when* did He preach?,” and “*where* did the preaching occur?”... we have already proven as

false, the belief held by some, regarding those 3 questions. Furthermore, we have answered the question as to **when** it actually was that Christ did the preaching to these spirits in prison. It was **“In the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared”** (I Peter 3: 20).

Let’s *now* answer the questions: **Who were** “the spirits in prison” to whom Christ preached... and **where** did Christ perform that preaching?

As we will see below, it was **Satan and his fallen angels** to whom Christ preached... and He preached to them here **on earth!**

A Condition of Restraint and “Imprisonment”

Notice the following quote from the Living Church of God’s Personal Correspondence Department, *Response #L056*:

...**what does 1 Peter 3:18-20 mean?** The assumption is that Christ was preaching to the “souls of men in hell.” But notice the time element here. Christ was *not* preaching while he was three days and three nights in the grave, but during the “days of Noah while the ark was being prepared.” These were spirits, not men, because, as we have seen and Scripture proves, men do not have immortal souls. **The answer can be found in 2 Peter 2:4** “For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell [hell is a mistranslation from the Greek word **“tartaroo,” which means a condition of restraint or “imprisonment”**] and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment.” **Christ, during the time of Noah, was preaching to the sinning angels, or demons that followed Satan and are bound to the earth by the power of God until the day of their judgment.** [*The words within the bracket are likewise written by the LCG Personal Correspondence Dept.*]

Regarding the Greek word “**tartaroo**,” notice the following quote from the 1974 booklet *Is There a Real Hell Fire?*, published by the Worldwide Church of God, (author not identified):

Another Hell

The second Greek word translated “hell” is tartaroo. *It is used only once in the Bible.* “For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell [tartaroo] ...” (II Peter 2:4). The word here, very loosely translated hell, is **not a place** but a **condition**. It refers to the **condition of restraint that God has imposed upon those angels which rebelled against Him and followed Satan the devil...**

When Satan and his demons rebelled against God, He put them in a condition of restraint— much as modern governments put criminals in a condition of restraint—where they must remain until their time of judgment(Jude 6)

So, we see that Satan and his angels— **ever since their original rebellion— have been in a condition of restraint... a condition of “imprisonment” here on earth.** Remember, we are told in I Peter 3:19-20, that when Christ preached to these spirits during Noah’s day, these spirits were **“IN PRISON”!**

However, even though Satan and his fallen angels are in a state of “restraint” or “imprisonment,” they are being allowed by God to continue their RULE over this earth (II Cor. 4:4; John 12:31; John 14:30)! Yes, Satan **rules** this earth... and he is allowed to have **great influence** over humanity! Yet, despite that fact, God does place certain **restrictions** on Satan and his demons... restrictions which amount to a state of “imprisonment.”

Consider, now, **one** of the ways in which Satan is being restrained.

The return of Jesus Christ to this earth will be *immediately preceded* by a 3½ year period of devastating, worldwide turmoil. That time of devastation is composed of **Satan’s** wrath being poured out for 3½ years— the *final year of which* **God’s** wrath will also be *mightily* poured out.

What will be the *date* of Christ’s return? *Only* God the Father knows! (Mark 13:32). Consequently, only God the Father knows **when** the 3½ year period **begins**. So, how does *Satan* know **when to begin** pouring out his devastation upon the earth (the Great Tribulation)? How does he know when to **begin** it... since the 3½ year period **ends** in Christ’s return— and Satan doesn’t **KNOW** when Christ will return?!

The answer to this question seems self-evident. Satan, even better than you and I, *recognizes* world events... and he **knows** that he has “but a short time” (Rev. 12:12). Almost certainly, *even now*, Satan is **TRYING** to initiate the events of the Great Tribulation. Yet God Almighty is **restraining** him! God is restraining Satan, **UNTIL** the time is right... that is, **until** it is 3½ years prior to Christ’s return!

Actually, in light of the fact that Satan is filled with violence (and has, as a primary goal, the destruction of humans), it would seem to be a reasonable assumption that **ever since mankind has been on earth**, Satan has been **trying** to initiate “Great Tribulation” TYPE of activity... but has always been **restrained** by God from *implementing* such activity!

Furthermore, it would similarly seem likely that Satan has *continually* desired to make *assaults on heaven*... yet has somehow realized that he has been **restrained** from doing so. So, whenever God decides to **lift** that restraint, Satan will *then* lead his fallen angels **into** such an assault (as prophesied in Rev.12:7).

References:

1. “Why Christ Died and Rose Again” Herbert W. Armstrong, *Plain Truth* magazine, March 1982, Worldwide Church of God
2. *World Ahead Magazine*, Feb. 1996, p. 21 col. 2, Global Church of God
3. Living Church of God, Personal Correspondence Dept. #L056

Section #2

The History & Future of Satan and the Fallen Angels

(QUOTES from Herbert W. Armstrong & from the Living Church of God)

“What Is Uppermost in God’s Mind,” Herbert W. Armstrong, *Plain Truth*, July, 1977:

What was once here [on earth], and taken away? The government of God. Most people do not know that angels inhabited this earth before the first humans. When God first created the earth, the ANGELS shouted for joy (Job 38:4-7). This earth was their “ESTATE,” but they did not keep it (Jude 6). The angels on earth SINNED (II Peter 2:4). Their *king over the earth* was the super archangel LUCIFER (Isa. 14:12-15). He was PERFECT from his CREATION until iniquity (lawlessness — breaking the law of God’s government, in which he ruled) was found in him (Ezek. 28:15). This REBELLION of the ANGELS removed the government of God from the earth.

Lucifer’s name was changed to Satan. He still rules this world (Eph. 2:2; II Cor. 4:4). When Christ returns to rule, Satan will be REMOVED (Rev. 20:1-3). The government of God will be restored!

Mystery of the Ages (chapter 2: “Mystery of Angels and Evil Spirits”)

book by Herbert W. Armstrong, 1985, hardback edition

All of the following are **quotes** from the book [except certain statements within brackets]:

- p. 61 Angles were created to be ministers, agents, helpers in God’s creation. They were created as servants of the living God.
- p. 62 Job 38:1-7 shows the angels shouted for joy when God first created the earth.
- p. 70 First of all, God had created angels. After that, and *for* angels and *for* humans who were to be created later, God formed and brought into existence the earth and the entire universe.
- p. 72 Notice II Pet. 2:4-6 [“For if God did not spare the **angels who sinned**, but cast *them* down to hell and delivered *them* into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment; and did not spare **the ancient world, but saved Noah, one of eight people**, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood on the world of the ungodly; and turning the cities of **Sodom and Gomorrah** into ashes, condemned *them* to destruction, making *them* an example to those who afterward would live ungodly;]. First **in time order** “angels that sinned.” **Next in time sequence**, the antediluvian world **beginning** with Adam, carrying through to the Flood. **After that**, Sodom and Gomorrah.

p. 73 It is revealed in Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28, that **God placed the archangel Lucifer, a cherub, on a THRONE on the earth [Isa. 14: 13]. He was placed there as a ruler over the entire earth. God intended him to rule the earth by administering the government of God over the earth. And the government of God was administered on earth until the rebellion of the sinning angels. 6**

How long these angels inhabited the earth before the creation of man is not revealed.

p. 74-75 [The] sin of the angels resulted in the physical destruction of the face of the earth... [Gen. 1] Verse 2 reveals the *result* of the sin of the angels.

“And the earth was [became] without form, and void.” The words “without form, and void” are translated from the Hebrew *tohu* and *bohu*. A better translation is “waste and empty” or “chaotic, in confusion and in a state of decay.”

p. 81 “Notice here, once again, the principle of *duality*. Isaiah 14:12-14 applies to a time **prior** to the creation of the first human, Adam. But in Revelation 12:7 *and* in Daniel 12:1 Satan **at the END of the 6,000 years allotted to his rule on earth's throne [Isa. 14:13; II Cor. 4:4]**, tries **once again** to seize God's throne in heaven.”

p. 84 This Lucifer, then, had been stationed at the very throne of God. He was trained and experienced in the administration of the government of God. God chose such a being, well-experienced and trained, to be the king ruling the government of God over the angels who inhabited the whole **earth**. ... “Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity [lawlessness] was found in thee” (Ezek. 28:15). ...this superb being, the **highest** that even God could create **by fiat**, turned to rebellion against his Maker... As long as Lucifer continued in this perfect way, there was happiness and joy unspeakable over the whole earth. There was glorious peace—beautiful harmony, perfect love, cooperation.

p. 87 Lucifer was the supreme masterpiece of God's creative power as a single separately created spirit being. He was the most perfect in beauty, power, mind, knowledge, intellect, wisdom, within the almighty power of God to create. God can create nothing higher or more perfect, **by instantaneous fiat**. ...He had led all his angels astray and into the sin of rebellion.

p. 89 And whether or not it had been revealed to the angels, it was a supreme TRIAL AND TEST. It [earth] was to be the PROVING GROUND of obedience to GOD'S GOVERNMENT and their fitness to develop into final finished creation the millions of other planets in the vast universe.

p. 91-92 God changed the adversary's NAME to what he became, SATAN the DEVIL—Satan means adversary, competitor, enemy. Satan directed his supernatural powers henceforth to EVIL. He became bitter not only against God, but against God's law. **He used his subtle wiles of deception to lead the angels under him into disloyalty, rebellion and revolt against the Creator and finally into a WAR of aggression and violence to attempt to DEPOSE God and SEIZE THE THRONE of the UNIVERSE.**

... The penalty of sin by the angels was *not* death—for God had made them immortal spirit beings who **cannot** die. ... Their penalty (they are still awaiting **final** judgment up to now) was disqualification—forfeiture of their grand opportunity, perversion of mind, and a colossal earthwide CATAclysm of destruction wreaked upon this earth.

“Did God Create a Devil?”

booklet, 1973 (pages 1-13 by Herbert W. Armstrong; pages 14-26 by Garner Ted Armstrong)

*All of the following are **quotes** from the booklet [except certain statements within brackets]:*

p. 7 [speaking of Gen. 1:2]: In Jeremiah 4:23, Isaiah 34:11, and in other places in the Bible, you find the same words, *tohu* and *bohu*, meaning “chaotic” and “in confusion.” In every case that condition is **a result of sin**.

... In Isaiah 45:18 we have the plain statement that God created the earth NOT *tohu*, that is, not in confusion, not in disorder. But in Genesis 1:2, the earth was (because it had become) chaotic and in confusion!

... Now, what was the sin then that caused this physical destruction to the earth? It was not a sin caused by humanity, because there had been no man on the earth until the sixth day of that re-creation or that remaking. So it was not a sin of man.

p. 8 ... Next, let's turn to II Peter 2:4: “For if God spared not **the angels that sinned**.... “Here is the sin of angels mentioned.

... Now quickly turn over to Jude. In the sixth verse, you read this: “And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation [they had a place where they lived, a habitation, an estate, and they left it], he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.” Notice! It is the sinning angels who are reserved in those chains under darkness, restrained from light, restrained from truth until the judgment of the great day.

p. 9 The devil is the leader of fallen angels, as you will find in a number of places (John 12:31; Matt. 12:26; 25:41; Rev. 12:9). In 2 Corinthians 4:4 **the devil is called “the god of this world.” He is the king or the prince of the evil world that we live in today.**

p. 10 “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). The 15th verse returns to the **human king**.

Notice, this former archangel had been placed as ruler over the angels that sinned. He had a throne. **He said he would exalt his throne above the stars (angels) of God.** It already was exalted above the angels on earth – the angels that sinned with him. Now he was going to exalt it over GOD'S ANGELS in heaven. He was going to invade God's heaven, knock God off the throne of the universe, and rule the whole universe!

p. 12 Lucifer had allowed his beauty and perfection to fill him with vanity – with SELF-glory, SELF-desire. He became envious of God's power, resented authority over him. He plotted with his angels to marshal them into an invading army, to invade the heaven of God, to knock God off the throne of the Universe. Lucifer was going to BE God.

p. 13 A third of the angels united with Satan in the rebellion. That is what **caused** the chaos of this earth.

... He gave **Adam** a chance to **take the place of Satan the devil, sit on earth's throne, and restore the Government of God on earth. Adam rejected the tremendous opportunity, yielded to Satan who to this day remains on earth's throne as the god of this world.**

Christ, the second Adam, will soon come to sit on that throne and restore the Government of God (Acts 3:19-21). Remember, Lucifer had been placed in rulership.

... Adam had the chance to supplant him. In the contest to see if Adam would conquer, if he would obey God, he failed. He obeyed the devil instead, and man became the property of the devil, and the whole human race has been sold down the river to the devil ever since.

Jesus Christ came 4,000 years later and He entered the great contest – the contest of the temptation on the Mount. He REFUSED to obey the devil. He quoted scripture *correctly*. He obeyed God.

Finally, He turned to the devil, and He gave Satan a command. He said, “Get away from me,” and the devil obeyed!

From that time on, the successor of Satan has been qualified to take over the rule of the earth. But Jesus went to heaven for 1900 years. He is soon coming again, and when He does, the devil will be DISPLACED. Christ will rule the earth, God's Laws will be restored. Order and peace will come at last!

p. 17-26 **At the beginning of Christ's millennial rule over the nations, Satan is to be BOUND, and cast into an abyss** (Rev. 20:1-3). This condition of restraint will last **during the thousand years**, and then the devil will be momentarily allowed freedom to deceive the nations again (verse 3)!

But consider what occurs next!

Jesus said He is going to cast unrepentant, carnal-minded HUMANS **into “everlasting fire, PREPARED FOR THE DEVIL AND HIS ANGELS”** (Matt. 25:41).

Notice, however, that these wicked HUMAN BEINGS are cast into an everlasting *FIRE* prepared for the devil and his angels.

Fire is a physical, chemical thing! Fire is the combustion of physical objects with oxygen which CHANGES the physical objects into ashes and gaseous vapor!

Notice that the wicked (the SAME ones Christ referred to) are to be ASHES under the feet of the righteous! (Mal. 4:3.) Therefore, this fire Christ spoke of in Matthew 25 is a fire that CONSUMES human beings! But Satan is a SPIRIT being! AND SPIRIT BEINGS ARE NOT AFFECTED BY FIRE! They are not material.

Yes — it may be POSSIBLE that Almighty God could create a fire that would perhaps consume a spirit — since ALL THINGS are possible with God! (Matt. 19:26.) But it is not a question of what God CAN do. It is a question of what God WILLED to do!

Let's continue!

The word “everlasting” in Matthew 25:41 is *aionion* in the Greek language. *Aionion* comes from the root *aion* which often means “age”! In this case, the correct translation into the English language should be “AGE-LASTING fire.”

... Together with this great False Prophet, Christ will lay hold of the Beast who is yet to arise, and throw them *both* into a *lake of fire*, burning with brimstone! (Rev. 19:20.)

These two are human beings — physical, breathing *men*, who are alive and drawing breath at this instant! The fire WILL CONSUME them. ***THIS LAKE OF FIRE IS GOING TO BE BURNING ALL DURING THE MILLENNIUM!*** (Isaiah 66: 23-24.)

During Christ's time, the Valley of Hinnom, just outside of Jerusalem, was the place where refuse and the bodies of criminals were thrown — into fires that were kept constantly burning. ... During the millennial reign of Christ and His saints, this valley will once more be kept perpetually burning — and the incorrigibly wicked ones who WILL to continue in rebellion against God's laws will be THROWN INTO this “lake of fire” as a stern witness to all the rest of the world! (Isa. 66:24.)

... Notice that **the devil WILL BE CAST into THE** (not just “a,” but the definite article “the” is in the Greek) **lake of fire where the Beast and the False Prophet WERE CAST!**

THIS IS THE SAME FIRE!

It was burning at the precise *beginning* of the millennium when the Beast and False Prophet were thrown into its flames; **it will be burning at the END of the millennium, when Satan is thrown into the same fire!**

That's WHY it is called an AGE-LASTING fire in Matthew 25:41 because it does, literally, LAST for an age — the millennial age!

... A commonly misunderstood explanation of this is found in I Peter 3:19-20. People have assumed, because they base their religious philosophies on the doctrine of the immortality of the soul, that Christ was busy PREACHING to some supposed “souls” of *men* in hell! What folly! Let's understand what really happened!

Your Bible plainly states the TIME element in these verses. Christ did the preaching, NOT during the three days and nights when He was DEAD in the tomb (I Cor. 15:3 and 20) but “WHEN once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing ...” (I Peter 3:20).

But notice to WHOM Christ witnessed about the flood. “By which also he went and preached unto the SPIRITS IN PRISON”! (Verse 19.)

Who were these “spirits”? Certainly **not** MEN — nor the “souls” of men, since *men do not have* immortal souls!

Turn to II Peter 2:4 for the answer! “For if God spared not the angels (spirits) that *sinned*, but cast them down to hell (PRISON — ‘hell’ is a mistranslation from the Greek *tartaroo* which means a “**condition or position of RESTRAINT,**” as an “**imprisonment**”), and delivered them into CHAINS of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment.”

The “spirits in prison” are the sinning angels, or the DEMONS that have perverted their ways and followed Satan, and are **BOUND to the earth — imprisoned here by the power of God until their day of JUDGMENT.**

The final enemy of Christians is death itself. When the plan of God is finally completed, even death is to be completely destroyed! (I Cor. 15:26.) Just before the establishment of the **new heavens and new earth**, all that is corrupt, all **that is physically combustible**, will be consumed in a vast, **WORLDWIDE lake of fire!**

The Lake of Fire

This tremendous conflagration will be so intense, so white-hot, that the surface of the whole earth will literally melt with the fervor of the flames! Peter describes this awesome time as a melting of the very elements, a time when all the works on the earth are burned up—dissolved!

(II Peter 3:10-11.)

Christ shows this time occurs **AFTER the final Great White Throne Judgment** when God's plan is complete — and all who have been added to His family are already born of Him. After this final judgment, even death and the grave are destroyed (Rev. 20:13-15).

The surface of the earth will become for a time just as if it were the blazing surface of the sun! This is the great Gehenna fire that Christ talked of, that will destroy the wicked.

It is into this vast, seething **lake of fire that Satan and his angels will have been cast.**

But remember! This fire is PHYSICAL! It CONSUMES the bodies of the wicked, and is so intense it even melts the rocks and elements of the earth until they are liquefied.

BUT SATAN AND HIS ANGELS ARE SPIRIT BEINGS! Fire is PHYSICAL, and cannot BURN spiritual beings! Spirit IS NOT COMBUSTIBLE!

Now notice an important verse!

The New Heavens and New Earth

In the glorious picture of the new heavens and new earth, John wrote a description of the temple, and the beauty of God's new creation. A key scripture is Revelation 21:27! God expressly shows Satan and his angels will not BE in the new heavens and the new earth! “And there shall IN NO WISE ENTER INTO IT any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.” Satan will **not** be there! And the fire will BURN UP the wicked, and the works of the earth (Rev. 20:14; 21:8).

Peter tells us we can look forward to the new heavens and new earth wherein dwells **righteousness!** (II Peter 3:13.) It is evident from God's Word that **Satan and his angels will not be anywhere in the new heaven and new earth!**

Then where are they to be?

Let's go on — and see what your Bible actually reveals!

Since fire cannot consume spirits — then how can they be punished? Many people fail to realize that MENTAL torment is **far worse** than physical torment!

... A **disembodied** spirit — one that cannot any longer physically manifest itself — is an **uncomfortable, miserable** spirit! Jesus described this condition of mental torment when He said, “When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking **rest**; and finding none, he saith, I will return unto my house whence I came out” (Luke 11:24).

This is further illustrated by the account of Christ's experience with the many demons who had entered the man in the country of the Gadarenes. Jesus commanded the spirits to come out of the man, and they “besought him **much** that he would not send them away out of the country” (Mark 5:10). “And all the devils [demons] besought him, saying, Send us into the swine, that we may **enter into** them” (verse 12).

When Philip was performing miracles at Samaria, he cast out many demons, who came out of people “crying with **loud voice**” (Acts 8:7) showing their frustration and anger at being deprived of their dwelling place! (Luke 8:28.)

...His [Satan's] punishment will plainly be **mental, spiritual**, NOT PHYSICAL!

Many have misunderstood verse 16 of Ezekiel 28. Notice that God is speaking of the beginning of the creation in this account of Satan's original rebellion. But, just as the Bible so often uses DUAL meanings, so THIS is history and prophecy at the same time! God refers to the “stones of fire” in verse 13. Notice how these same stones are used in the description of the Holy City!

Compare with Revelation 21:18-21. Remember, the “mountain” (nation, or government) of

God is ultimately going to be ON THIS EARTH! God CAST LUCIFER OUT of that mountain, throwing him DOWN from his attempt to be above God's throne! God's throne is then to be ON THIS EARTH! God will *again* cast Satan out of His presence!

“... Therefore I WILL [both past and *future*] cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God: and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, FROM the midst of the stones of fire” (Ezek. 28:16). The word *destroy* is explained by the word FROM! God does NOT say Satan is to be DESTROYED! He DOES say Satan is to be **DESTROYED FROM a certain place** — the midst of the stones of fire, or the location of God's seat of authority...

Satan Will NOT Be Destroyed!

Now, let's notice *further* proof that Satan is NOT to be destroyed. Turn again to Revelation 20, and verse 10.

Notice that the devil is cast into the lake of fire where the Beast and False Prophet *were cast*, AND Satan and his demons shall be tormented day and night forever and ever!

This expressly states Satan will be tormented for the AGES OF THE AGES! (See *International Critical Commentary*, an interlinear or other such Bible helps.) This expression in the Greek means for all eternity — **for time everlasting!**

BUT!

Notice carefully the verse states Satan will be thrown into the lake of fire AND tormented forever! It does **not** say that he will *remain in the fire forever!* The fire is on this earth! The fire is an AGE-LASTING fire, which will **not** be burning after God's new heaven and new earth are established! Since Satan is to be tormented FOREVER, and the fire is to finally *consume* the physical objects it is burning until it burns *out*, Satan does **not** remain in this lake of fire forever!

Satan is a spirit! Fire cannot consume spirit — and A SPIRIT CANNOT DIE!

Jesus Christ said so!

For a clinching proof, turn to Luke the twentieth chapter. In verse 34, Christ begins to explain to the hypocritical Sadducees about the resurrection. “... The children of this world marry, and are given in marriage: But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world [age], and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage: **NEITHER CAN THEY DIE ANY MORE, for they are equal unto the angels ...**” (verses 34-36).

Jesus tells us the angels CANNOT DIE! Satan is a fallen angel! Therefore Satan CANNOT DIE!

... I Corinthians 6:2-3! “Do ye not know that the saints shall *judge the world?* And if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? **KNOW YE NOT THAT WE SHALL JUDGE ANGELS?**”

There it is!

We shall judge angels! Remember, the wicked spirits, including Satan, **are presently being reserved, being kept in restraint, UNTO JUDGMENT! That judging is yet to be done!**

Now do you see?

The Bible plainly reveals Satan will be cast into the lake of fire, **but the lake of fire will END when the new heavens and new earth are established**, and Satan is to be tormented unto the **ages of ages!** It also shows his torment *while* in that fire is going to be MENTAL, at seeing all he has strived toward, worked for, plotted for, **burned up.** Christ preached to the spirits on this earth *during the time of the flood* as a WITNESS to them! **The flood was a type of the yet future destruction of the earth—this time by FIRE! Christ was warning them of the impending destruction of all their works — and their everlasting banishment from this earth!** The exact nature of their ETERNAL punishment is YET TO BE DECIDED!

YOUR BIBLE REVEALS *YOU* MAY BE INSTRUMENTAL IN DECIDING THAT PUNISHMENT!

Jude gave a slight indication of the possibility of the *nature* of that punishment when he used the **demons** as a *type* in warning Christians about false teachers who had crept in unawares. In reading through the book of Jude, you come to verse 6, where the demons are mentioned, to the next few verses, where these “filthy dreamers” are described. Notice how their error is EXACTLY that of the sinning angels in that they too tried to *usurp* authority!

... Jude continues to describe, “Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; **wandering stars** [see Rev. 1:20, **where stars are symbols of angels**] **TO WHOM IS RESERVED THE BLACKNESS OF DARKNESS FOR EVER**”! (Verse 13.)

Notice, in Enoch's prophecy, he spoke of coming *judgment*, “... Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, to execute *judgment* upon all ...” (verses 14-15).

As has already been proved — the *angels* (demons) are definitely included among those to be judged by the saints! Could this be an indication of their final fate? They are *miserable* when disembodied — wandering through “dry places, seeking rest”! Could this statement in Jude give us a picture of their punishment? “... **Wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever**”! (Jude 13.)

Before looking at some additional quotes from Church literature, let's first add this notation, regarding the question of whether Satan will be destroyed:

Will Satan ultimately be DESTROYED?

When considering the question of whether Satan will be destroyed, it is important to be mindful of the following, regarding Ezekiel chapter 28 and Isaiah chapter 14:

Ezekiel chapter 28:

Verses 1-10 refer to a *human* figure.

Verses 11-17 (i.e., through the *first part* of verse 17) refer to *Satan/Lucifer*.

Notice verse 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...” “At *this point*” *within* verse 17, says Mr. Armstrong, “the context *returns* to the soon-to-appear, **human**, *religious*-political ruler—of whom the prince of ancient Tyre was a forerunner” (*Mystery of the Ages*, p. 86). Discussion of this *human* figure continues through verse 19.

Isaiah chapter 14:

Verses 12-14 (and *only* verses 12-14), refer to *Satan/Lucifer*.

Verses 4 to 11 and **verses 15 to 21**, refer to a *human* figure.

That is explained by Herbert W. Armstrong, in his book *Mystery of the Ages*, pp. 78-80.

The Living Church of God apparently believes that **verses 10-16** refer to *Satan/Lucifer*— as evidenced in their document “*L031, PERSONAL CORRESPONDENCE DEPARTMENT*,” shown immediately below).

L031

LCG PERSONAL CORRESPONDENCE DEPARTMENT

Dear Friend,

Thank you for your question about **Satan's access to God and heaven** as shown in the scriptures.

After God created the earth, the angels of God shouted for joy (Job 38: 4–7). The angels were with God in heaven, before He created the earth. Then, when He created earth, He placed many of the angels in positions of service on the earth. Travel from heaven to earth seems to be quite easy for angels. Later, **after Satan's rebellion against God and failed attempt to take God's throne and be like the Most High, Satan WAS cast back down to earth** (Isaiah 14:10–16; Ezekiel 28:13–17). **Isaiah 14:4 also refers to Satan as the king of this world. Satan has been a failure as ruler of this world because he rejected God. But until Christ's return to this earth to take the reins of power, Satan is still referred to as the ruler of this world (John 14:30).**

There are many scriptures that detail Satan's workings and deceptions on this earth. Satan is also recorded as rising to heaven to accuse the elect before God (Rev. 12:10). There is a specific example of just such accusations made before God by the devil in heaven, found in the book of Job. "Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came among them. And the Lord said to Satan, 'From where do you come?' So Satan answered the Lord and said, 'From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking back and forth on it.' Then the Lord said to Satan, 'Have you considered My servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, one who fears God and shuns evil?' So Satan answered the Lord and said, 'Does Job fear God for nothing? Have You not made a hedge around him, around his household, and around all that he has on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land. But now, stretch out Your hand and touch all that he has, and he will surely curse You to Your face!'" (Job 1: 6–11). Here we see an example of Satan both "walking to and fro on the earth" as well as presenting himself before God.

But the Bible does show there is *coming* a time when Satan and his angels will be cast out from heaven (Revelation 12:7–9). It is not going to be a pleasant time on earth when it happens. "...Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea! For the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.' And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child" (vv. 12–13, KJV).

We do not know exactly when this prophecy of Satan being cast back to earth will be fulfilled. But we do know it will be shortly before the end of this age, and probably relatively soon. When this does occur, Satan will no longer be allowed to return to heaven (see v. 8). Eventually, Satan will also be cast from the earth into the abyss—unable to deceive the world any more. Then, later, he will be banned to the gehenna hell—permanently banned from both God and His saints—forever and ever (Revelation 20).

L056LCG PERSONAL CORRESPONDENCE DEPARTMENT

Dear Friend,

Thank you for your questions about **Christ preaching to the dead** and, if He did, that it proves the immortality of the soul. Many have *combined* Eph. 4:9 with 1 Peter 3: 18–20 and 1 Peter 4:6.

We will start with Ephesians 4:9 “(Now this, ‘He ascended’—what does it mean but that He also first *descended* into the lower parts of the earth?).” The expression and other references in the Old Testament, simply refer to the grave. Jesus Christ was killed and spent three days and three nights in the grave (Matthew 12:40).

Some attempt to use this scripture to prove that the dead are not really dead, linking it with 1 Peter 4:6. A key to Peter’s remark is to understand that the Bible shows that the “dead know nothing” and that “there is no work or device or knowledge or wisdom in the grave where you are going” (Ecclesiastes 9:5, 10). It is obvious that the dead cannot receive any communication whatsoever. The preaching is for the living, not the dead.

Who are these dead? At the time Peter wrote this epistle (67 to 69AD) many thousands of Christians had been living according to the gospel preached by the Apostles. They were converted, lived Christian lives and had died. When was the Gospel preached to them? Obviously while they were yet alive. A *parallel [alternate]* explanation is that the term “dead” is used in reference to people who have not repented and are not forgiven by God. They are still “dead” in their trespasses and sins, not yet having received God’s Holy Spirit (Luke 9:60; Ephesians 2:1).

God’s true Church is commissioned to preach the Gospel. There are some who live physically who are dead spiritually, because they have not yet obeyed the Gospel of the Kingdom. They remain in ignorance and in sin, continuing to live and to be judged by the standards of men, rather than “according to God in the spirit.” Ultimately, they will be given a chance to receive salvation. Please reread our booklet [Is This the Only Day of Salvation?](#) It will explain this important subject to you.

In view of this, **what does 1 Peter 3:18-20 mean?** The assumption is that Christ was preaching to the “souls of men in hell.” But notice the time element here. Christ was not preaching while he was three days and three nights in the grave, but during the “days of Noah while the ark was being prepared.” These were spirits, not men, because, as we have seen and Scripture proves, men do not have immortal souls. The answer can be found in 2 Peter 2:4 “For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell [hell is a mistranslation from the Greek word “**tartaroo**,” which means a condition of restraint or “**imprisonment**”] and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment.” **Christ, during the time of Noah, was preaching to the sinning angels, or demons that followed Satan and are bound to the earth by the power of God until the day of their judgment.**

An excerpt from Lesson 6 of the 32-lesson *“Ambassador College Bible Study Course”*:

What is the “Lake of Fire”?

And now comes a most interesting revelation! Exactly what is the gehenna fire that will consume the wicked? When and where will it occur?

1. Are all who stubbornly refuse to repent and who persist in breaking God's commandments ultimately to find themselves in a lake of “fire and brimstone”? Rev. 21:8.

COMMENT: We've already seen that the fate of the wicked is gehenna fire. So gehenna and the lake of fire are the same. A very large fire would have the appearance of a fiery lake, hence its description.

2. Will it cause the death of the wicked? Notice Revelation 21:8 once again. Which death will it cause? Same verse.

COMMENT: Mortals naturally die once, because we just “wear out” (Heb. 9:27). But if anyone dies the second death, that individual will have been judged by God to be guilty of persistent disobedience and incorrigible rebellion. The second death will be for all eternity!

3. Does Rev. 20:13-15 verify that the incorrigible will be cast into this future lake of fire?

4. Does a forerunner of this lake of fire begin at Christ's second coming? Rev. 19:20. Will the two chief human enemies of Christ be cast into it at that time? Same verse.

5. How long will this fire last? Matt. 25:41.

COMMENT: The word “everlasting” is aionion in the Greek. Aionion comes from the root aion which often means “age.” In this case, the correct translation into the English language should be “AGE-LASTING fire.” This “lake of fire” is going to be burning all during the Millennium — the “age” of Christ’s rule.

During the millennial reign of Christ and His saints, the fires in the Valley of Hinnom will again be kept burning as a stern witness to all the rest of the world! (Isa. 66:23-24).

6. Much later — after the Millennium and after God's plan for mankind is complete — will the flames of the “lake of fire” purify the earth's surface, burning in one vast worldwide inferno? II Pet. 3:10. Will all the things man has created be burned up, as well as the rest of those people who will not have received salvation and eternal life because of willful rebellion against God? Same verse and Revelation 20:15 once again.

COMMENT: Here is God's — not man's — description of what the final “hell fire” will be like! It is yet in the future. It has not yet occurred. Nothing is said anywhere in the entire Bible about “souls” descending into the earth into “hell fire,” or of torture for all eternity! Rather, the Bible shows that all incorrigible human beings and their works will suffer destruction once for all eternity. All other teachings to the contrary have come to us from paganism!

7. Are the wicked to be reduced to ashes by the fire which will consume the earth's surface? Turn to Malachi 4:3 once again. Can ashes be tormented forever and ever? Of course not! The

death the incorrigible wicked will have suffered will be an eternal, everlasting punishment, not an everlasting punishing. There is a big difference between punishment and punishing! “The wages of sin is death” (Rom. 6:23), not eternal life in hell fire!

8. Will Satan be cast into the same fire that will have consumed the “beast” and the “false prophet”? Rev. 20:10.

COMMENT: Notice that Satan himself will be in “hell fire.” But since he is a spirit being, he will not be destroyed by the flames (see Luke 20:36). Neither will he play the role of torturing people as he is often represented by the doctrines of this world. Revelation 20:10 shows that Satan is to be **TORMENTED** unto the ages of the ages — “FOREVER AND EVER”! His torment will last forever. But not this fire. It will last only as long as combustible material remains to be consumed. Satan's eternal torment will be mental anguish resulting from seeing all that he has striven toward, worked for and plotted for burned up as the earth is purified by fire! No wonder Satan has deceived humans into believing that the fate of sinners is condemnation to eternal torments!

9. Will the beast and the false prophet still be in this fire? Rev. 20:10.

COMMENT: Some Bibles use italics to show that the word “are” in this verse was supplied by the translators. It is not found in the Greek manuscripts. The phrase should read, “where the beast and the false prophet were” — the unwritten verb in the Greek should be understood to be in the same tense as the verb in the first half of the sentence. The Amplified Bible has it correct. These two mortal individuals will have been destroyed 1,000 years before the time Satan is cast into these flames.

[continued below]

Section #3

Has There Been an Assault on Heaven in the Past?

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Prior to discussing any possible **past** assault on heaven by Satan and his angels, let's first understand this. The book of Revelation makes it very plain that there will be an **END-TIME** assault on heaven by Satan and the fallen angels.

The 12th chapter of Revelation is mostly devoted to a discussion of the following: **(1)** the *birth* of Christ [verses 1-5]; **(2)** Satan's attempt to *destroy Christ* [verse 4]; **(3)** Satan's attempt to *destroy Christ's Church* [verses 6, 13-17].

In verses 6 through 17, "the woman" represents God's true Church. Actually, in verse 13, "the woman" represents both the New Testament **and** the Old Testament Church— "the church in the wilderness" (Acts 7:38 *KJV*) — which gave birth to the "male Child" (Rev. 12:5).

In chapter twelve's brief *chronology of events*, verse 6 speaks of Christ's Church fleeing from Satan-inspired persecution (and basically existing in the shadows for 1,260 years—from about 325 A.D. to 1,585 A.D.). Then, verses 11 through 17 speak of the very **END-TIME** Satan-inspired assault on God's true Church. Yet, what about verses 7 through 10 of that passage?

Verses 7 through 10 speak of an unsuccessful **assault on heaven** by Satan and the fallen angels. And, by reading the *context* of that assault (that is, by reading verses 6 through at least verse 14), it is obvious that this assault on *heaven* will occur **shortly prior to** Satan's *end-time* assault on God's true *Church*. (Also see page 24.)

A PAST Assault on Heaven?

In his book *Mystery of the Ages*, Herbert W. Armstrong discusses the pre-Adamic world... a world with Lucifer and his angels **administering GOD'S government over the earth**. At some point, Lucifer and his angels began to **rebel** against God—against God's law and against God's way of life.

It is plain that in pre-Adamic times, Lucifer and his angels began rebelling against God. Yes, there was a "rebellion," and that rebellion *continues* to this very day! However, did that *rebellion* (during pre-Adamic times) involve those angels ascending *from* their earthly domain, for the purpose of an attempted **assault in heaven**, against the Godly domain?

Have Satan and his fallen angels, at any point **in the past**, ever been "cast down?" "Casting down" would imply a casting down **from** heaven **to** the earth. And since Satan and

his demons were already **on** earth, then any “casting down” would imply that they had made an ascension *from* earth to heaven—an **assault on** heaven! Do the scriptures reveal the occurrence of any such past, attempted “assault on heaven”?

It seems *very likely* that there **was** a *past* assault on heaven. Yet, it probably cannot be stated with 100% *certainty* that such event ever occurred.

Why the uncertainty? Basically, because we cannot be absolutely *sure* whether certain scriptures relating to this issue, are speaking in an *historic* **or** in a *prophetic* (future) sense.

Nevertheless, let’s now consider what evidence there is, that such an assault occurred in the past.

The following *three* items lend support to the contention that Satan has, **in the past**, made a failed assault on heaven. (Such an assault would be in *addition to* his future end-time assault—which is plainly spoken of in Rev. 12: 7-9.)

(1) **Ezekiel 28: 11-17** (NKJV)

¹¹ Moreover the word of the LORD came to me, saying, ¹² “Son of man, take up a lamentation for the KING of Tyre [Satan], 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. 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 [removed] 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...”

Lucifer became evil **prior** to the time of Adam... probably *long* before Adam’s creation. Remember, the evil Satan was *in* the Garden of Eden, where he tempted Eve.

Verse 16 above, seems to be speaking of Satan being cast out of heaven **PRIOR TO the creation of Adam**. And, such “casting out of heaven” would *imply* an ASCENT of Satan FROM earth TO heaven... in light of the fact that Satan and his fallen angels were already residing on (and ruling over) earth.

The Living Church of God *agrees* that verse 16 is speaking of a **pre-Adamic** casting down of Satan (see the quote on page 23, from “L031, LCG PERSONAL CORRESPONDENCE DEPT.”).

Furthermore, consider this. **Of the following Bible translations, ONLY the KJV** renders verses 16 and 17 as *future-tense* [“will cast” and “will destroy”]:

KJV, NKJV, NASB, NRSV, NIV, NET Bible, Young’s Literal Translation

Therefore, all except one of the translations above, render verses 16 and 17 as having occurred in the past.

(2) Luke 10: 16-19 (NKJV)

“He who hears you [said Christ to ‘the seventy’] hears Me, he who rejects you rejects Me, and he who rejects Me rejects Him who sent Me.”

Then the seventy returned with joy, saying, “Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name.”

And He said to them, “**I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven.** Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you.”

It is *possible*, however, that when Christ said, “I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven,” Christ might have been speaking *prophetically* of the end-time.

(3) I Peter 3: 19-20 and II Peter 2: 4-6

(This third and *final* “proof” is probably the most compelling of all! Yet, due to the length of discussion, it is being listed last.)

I Peter 3: 19-20 (NKJV)

He [Christ] went and preached **to the spirits in prison**, who formerly were disobedient, when once the Divine longsuffering waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water.

We see in the passage above, that Christ preached to “spirits in prison.” These “spirits” were NOT “spirits of dead *men*”... because there **ARE NO** conscious “spirits of dead men.” These “spirits,” therefore, **had** to have been **fallen angels!**

Now, **when** did Christ preach to these fallen angels who were in prison? It was **during** the days of Noah. Therefore, it is plain that the fallen angels (Satan’s demons) were “**IN PRISON**” **during** the days of Noah.

Now, **where** was their prison located? It was located in the *same* place where it is *currently* located... here on earth! Earth is where Satan has his throne. And, **until** the time arrives when *Christ* will set up His Kingdom on this earth, Satan (*aided by* the fallen angels) will remain as “the god of this world”! (II Cor. 4:4).

Yet, even though Satan and his fallen angels are being allowed to temporally **rule** the earth, God has placed certain “restraints”... certain “restrictions” on them. And those “restrictions” amount to Satan and his fallen angels being under a degree of “imprisonment” here on earth!

Remember... these spirits (these fallen angels) were **IN PRISON** when Christ preached to them during the days of Noah.

We can now logically **connect** this “imprisonment” of the fallen angels **TO** the “tartaroo” imprisonment spoken of in II Peter 2:4.

From the following quote, notice the **connection** that is made between the “imprisoned” angels (I Peter 3:19) and the “*tartaroo*-imprisonment” of the angels (II Peter 2:4):

...what does 1 Peter 3:18-20 mean? ... **The answer can be found in 2 Peter 2:4** “For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell [hell is a mistranslation from the Greek word “**tartaroo**,” **which means a condition of restraint or “imprisonment”**] and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment.” Christ, during the time of Noah, was preaching to the **sinning angels, or demons that followed Satan and are bound to the earth by the power of God** until the day of their judgment.
(Living Church of God’s Personal Correspondence Department, *Response #L056*)

Now that we have shown a **connection** between the “imprisoned angels” of Noah’s day (I Peter 3:19) and the “angels cast down to tartaroo [imprisonment]” (II Peter 2:4), let’s now focus on *another* important fact: When God imprisoned the angels on earth, that imprisonment was **initiated by their being “cast down”!** Peter says they were cast “down **TO** tartaroo”... that is, cast “down **TO** imprisonment.”

Yet, since these angels were **already residing here** (on earth), this means that they had made an ascent **from** earth **TO** heaven (in an failed assault on God’s throne), and were then **CAST BACK DOWN** to earth!

So, **prior** to the time of Adam, these sinning angels (led by Satan) had ascended **FROM** earth, **TO** heaven (in an obviously failed **assault** on God’s throne)... and were cast **back down** to earth... and **imprisoned** here on earth.

Thus, we see a strong indication of a PRE-ADAMIC assault on heaven... an assault which resulted in Satan and his fallen angels being “cast” back down to earth!

Finally, let’s consider one additional factor, which **strengthens** the evidence of a **pre-Adamic** assault on heaven. Let’s consider the passage in II Peter chapter 2, *more fully*. We already looked at verse 4. Let’s now consider verses 4 *through* 6:

For if God did not spare **the angels who sinned**, but cast them down to hell [“tartaroo”] and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be **reserved** for [final] judgment; and did not spare **the ancient world [the world from Adam to Noah]**, but saved Noah, *one of eight people*, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood on the world of the ungodly; and turning the cities of **Sodom and Gomorrah** into ashes, condemned *them* to destruction, making *them* an example to those who afterward would live ungodly; (II Peter 2:4-6)

Notice, now, what Herbert W. Armstrong said concerning the *above* passage:

Notice II Peter 2:4-6. **First in time order** “angels that sinned.” **Next in time sequence**, the antediluvian world beginning with Adam, carrying through to the Flood. **After that**, Sodom and Gomorrah. (*Mystery of the Ages*, 1985, p. 72)

So, Mr. Armstrong says that this scriptural passage in II Peter is “**in time order.**” And, that being the case, when this scripture states that God cast the sinning angels “down to tartaroo,” this means that this “casting down” occurred **PRIOR TO** the time of “the ancient world”... **prior to** the time of Adam!

Therefore, we have a **SECOND** indication *from Peter*, that there was a PRE-ADAMIC assault on heaven. The *first* indication, involves the **connection** between the “imprisoned angels” of Noah’s day (I Peter 3: 19) *and* the “angels cast down to tartaroo [imprisonment]” (II Peter 2: 4). The *second* indication is that the II Peter 2: 4-6 is in *time-sequence*.

NOTE: What about the phrase “reserved for [final] judgment,” referred to in II Peter 2: 4? That phrase “reserved for [final] judgment,” does *not* shed light on whether the “casting down” occurs during pre-Adamic times **or** during the end-time. Regardless of when this “casting down” occurs, the FINAL judgment of these fallen angels is determined **later** (as discussed in the quotes from the booklet *Did God Create a Devil?*, pp. 17-26).

L031

LCG PERSONAL CORRESPONDENCE DEPARTMENT

After God created the earth, the angels of God shouted for joy (Job 38: 4–7). The angels were with God in heaven, before He created the earth. Then, when He created earth, He placed many of the angels in positions of service on the earth. Travel from heaven to earth seems to be quite easy for angels. Later, **after Satan’s rebellion against God and failed attempt to take God’s throne and be like the Most High, Satan WAS cast back down to earth (Isaiah 14:10–16; Ezekiel 28:13–17).** Isaiah 14:4 also refers to Satan as the king of this world. Satan has been a failure as ruler of this world because he rejected God. But until Christ’s return to this earth to take the reins of power, Satan is still referred to as the ruler of this world (John 14:30).

END-TIME Assault by Satan

Revelation chapter 12 *[Also see discussion on page 19.]*

⁴ His [Satan's] tail drew a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman [the OLD Testament Church] who was ready to give birth, to devour her Child as soon as it was born...

⁷ **And war broke out in heaven [now speaking of *end-time* events]: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, ⁸ but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer. ⁹ So 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.**

Isaiah 14: 12-14

¹² "How you are **fallen from heaven**, O Lucifer, son of the morning! **How you are cut down to the ground, You who weakened the nations!**
¹³ For 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.'

Herbert W. Armstrong stated that the above passage from Isaiah "is speaking of a war in heaven **to occur in our present time** [which is also] described in Revelation 12:7-9" (*Mystery of the Ages*, p. 80). Yet, he also stated that, according to "the principle of duality," this passage *also* "applies to a time *prior* to the creation of the first human, Adam" (p. 81).

Why did Mr. Armstrong believe that the passage in Isaiah applies to the end-time? Well, consider verse 12. Speaking to Lucifer/Satan, it says, "you are cut down to the ground, **You who weakened the nations!**" So, this casting down to the ground *seems* to have happened AFTER Satan had weakened the nations. Yet, in **pre-Adamic** times, Satan had NOT YET "weakened the nations" (unless it is speaking of *angelic* nations... which seems unlikely).

As for verses 13-14, these verses address only Satan's **ambition**... his PLAN... with no indication of whether this planned assault has *already* been attempted.

NOTE: Some might say that since verse 12 uses the term "Lucifer" rather than "Satan," then that is *proof* that verses 12-14 are *strictly* referring to pre-Adamic times. However, since God **names** things, to describe what they *are*, then it would certainly seem that **AS SOON AS** Lucifer began **rebellious** against God (and drawing a third of the angels to join him in rebellion), then **from that time forward** (in pre-Adamic times), "Lucifer/ Bringer of Light" would have **been** "Satan/Adversary." And, that being the case, then usage of the term "Lucifer" would seem to shed no light on whether the passage is speaking of a pre-Adamic or an end-time casting down of Satan.