



Cherreguine Bible Doctrine Ministries

The Pattern of Angelic Negative Volition

A. The pattern of angelic negative volition began with Satan. It is brought out clearly and distinctly in Isaiah 14; probably more so than anywhere else in Scripture. While it began with him it continued when one-third of the “stars of heaven” rejected the provision of grace which God made for them.

B. We know that a definite period of time elapsed when the angels who had followed Satan in the prehistoric revolt were given the opportunity to ‘repent,’ to change their minds and either return to the winning team, or follow the arch-rebel to their doom.

How do we know this? Because God is a God of perfect justice, uncompromisingly fair. And the divine principle of ‘Grace before judgment’ stands, unequivocally, throughout all of eternity.

Illustrate ‘Grace before judgment’ from history on a timeline-- beginning with [1] Adam and Eve outside the Garden, spiritually dead and alienated from God {promise of Gen. 3:15 is the promise of grace; coats of skin in Gen. 3:21 are the provision of grace}; [2] Genesis 6, 120 yrs.; [3] ministry of Jeremiah {cf. background}; [4] Church {Grace}-- Tribulation {Judgment}; [5] Millennium, 1000 yrs. of grace before the final judgment on the ‘Gog and Magog Revolution.’ Before their volitional poles were locked, either positively or negatively, the angels were given plenty of time with ample opportunity to turn their backs on the plan of rebellion which Satan instigated.

C. There’s a passage in Hebrews-- Hebrews 2:1-3-- which seems to indicate something akin to an angelic message of redemption. From what we’ve already seen in ch. 1, and ch. 1’s relationship to the AC, the context seems to lead in this direction. Let’s take a look at it.

In the midst of his argument that the Son of God is greater than the angels of God, we have an exhortation and a warning. Hebrews 2:1 say’s, “For this reason [because Jesus Christ is superior to / angels, having been seated at / right hand of / Father, having finished His substitutionary work, and because He has sent out guardian angels to render service to ‘those who will inherit salvation’] we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard [what they ‘heard’ was / pure, undiluted Gospel of Grace], lest we drift away {from it [‘lest it slip from our minds altogether, lest it disappear from our memories;’ / word picture in / Greek here is of someone being carried away by / swift current of a river while / anchor, that foundation of safety and security which they need to save their lives is all / while within their reach].} For if the word spoken through angels proved unalterable [and it did, 1st cl. cond.; here is / offer extended by God / Father, and delivered by / elect angels to / fallen angels], and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense [and they did, conclusion to / 1st cl. cond.; / fallen angels got exactly what they deserved; this includes a final exclusion from / offer itself, and a final destination in / lake of fire-- Mat. 25:41], [now our writer draws / conclusion he’s been building towards in / form of a question] how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation [/ answer is-- we can’t, and we won’t!]?...” vv. 2-3.

1) V. 2 is given for one reason only-- as a warning to all those who reject the message of salvation by grace through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Since God's grace provided a means of redemption for fallen angels in eternity past, and since His decision was to exclude them from further opportunity once the provision was terminated, the human race is warned that there will also be a final exclusion from salvation once their opportunity is terminated. There are three ways in which man's opportunity might be terminated.

a. Physical death. Once you die, having rejected Jesus Christ in time, there is no second chance! Hebrews 9:27 says, that "...it is appointed for men to die once, and after this {comes} judgment."

b. The 2nd Advent. Upon Christ's Return to planet Earth there will be a judgment on all unbelievers. In Eschatology we call this the 'Baptism of Fire.' John the Baptizer spoke of Jesus, saying in Matthew 3:11-12 and Luke 3:16-17, "...As for me, I baptize you with water; but One is coming who is mightier than I, and I am not fit to untie the thong of His sandals; He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. And His winnowing fork is in His hand to thoroughly clear His threshing floor, and to gather the wheat into His barn ['wheat' represents believers]; but He will burn up the chaff [which are unbelievers] with unquenchable fire."

The modus operandi of the Baptism of Fire, that identification of all Tribulation unbelievers with hellfire, is totally opposite from the Rapture. In Matthew 24:40-42 Jesus said, "Then there shall be two men in the field; one will be taken, and one will be left. Two women {will be} grinding at the mill; one will be taken, and one will be left. Therefore be on the alert, for you do not know which day your Lord is coming." At the Rapture the one who is taken is the CA believer; the one who is left is the unbeliever. Here the one who is taken is the unbeliever; and the one who is left is the Tribulation believer. These are the same ones Christ spoke of in v. 13 of this ch. as "enduring to the end" so that they shall be "saved," i.e., delivered physically through these final judgments and into the Millennium.

c. The 'final revolt judgment,' the judgment of the 'Gog and Magog revolution.' For this we look back to a passage we just finished in the Book of Revelation, 20:8-9. It says, "And they [Gog and Magog, symbolic names for / allied enemies of Christ] came up on the broad plain of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city, and fire came down from heaven and devoured them."

2) The content of the angelic message is not given to us, but I can tell you what it definitely was not. It was not the Gospel of Grace. It was not the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. Scripture makes it abundantly clear that Christ died only for the sins of mankind, not angelic-kind. Titus 3:4 says, that "...when the kindness... and love" of God "for mankind [there's the key word] appeared, He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior," vv. 5-6.

3) The one thing that the first 3 vv. of Hebrews 2 does make clear is that negative volition toward the Word of God is the path of destruction, that arrogance toward the Living Word and the Written Word leads to destruction for both mankind and his angelic counterparts.

Principle: Arrogance always leads to a rejection of Jesus Christ.

4. To resolve this prehistoric battle an 'inferior creature' was placed on one tiny planet--Earth. Man's faith, directed toward the Person and Work of Jesus Christ resolves the AC.

A. Apparently Satan appealed his sentence to the lake of fire, contending that God's judgment was not fair. To question God's judgment is to slander His character, and this He will not tolerate. So Omnipotent God set into motion a plan for refuting Lucifer's accusations. This plan centers around mankind. What is going on in human history resembles a duel. Satan challenged God by maligning His character. God determined to show all of creation that He alone is righteous and just, that apart from Him there is no good, and He does this by letting Satan attempt to prove otherwise in combat.

B. So, how can there be a fair fight between an omnipotent God and an angel created by his own hand, you say?

Well, in the human realm a strong man challenged by a weaker man might level the ground by fighting with one hand tied behind his back. In essence, that is exactly what God is doing. He tied His own hands by limiting His omnipotent power so that it could become operative only through the free and unhindered decision of a creature inferior even to the angels. Hence, we see that man was created for the purpose of resolving the AC, and that volition is the one and only issue in this spiritual battle.

C. The resolution of the conflict centers on the Person and Work of the Lord Jesus Christ. Long before man was even created, God knew that he would fall to temptation, and so He provided a way of salvation for all men. In this he simplified the battle-plan by narrowing man's options in every circumstance to two possible choices-- for the plan of God, or against the plan of God.

1) Man could choose for the plan of God, which is to take the side of grace and truth by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

2) Or he could choose against the plan of God, which is to take the side of evil and deception by relying on himself. As all creation watches, the AC plays out in the souls of men on planet Earth. God will let it run just long enough to prove, without a shadow of a doubt, that His love, His grace and His justice are impeccable. In his book, *The Invisible War*, Donald Barnhouse describes it this way. He writes:

"War has been declared. The great, governing cherub had become the malignant enemy. Our God was neither surprised nor astonished, for, of course, He knew before it happened that it would happen, and He had His perfect plan ready to be put into effect. Although the Lord had the power to destroy Satan with a breath, He did not do so. It was as though an edict had been proclaimed in Heaven-- 'We shall give this rebellion a thorough trial. We shall permit it to run its full course. The universe shall see what a creature, though he be the highest creature ever to spring from God's Word, can do apart from Him. We shall watch this experiment, and permit the universe of creatures to watch it, during this brief interlude between eternity past and eternity future called time. In it the spirit of independence shall be allowed to expand to the utmost. And the wreck and ruin which shall result will demonstrate to the universe, and forever, that there is no life, no joy, no peace apart from a complete dependence upon the Most High God, Possessor of Heaven and Earth.'" Donald Grey Barnhouse, *The Invisible War*, p. 51.

3) The issue comes down to this: Will man, who is inferior to the angels, yet equipped with volition, with free will identical to theirs, choose for or against the plan of God.

a. If even one member of the human race, with volition identical to the angels in eternity past, accepts the Word of God-- the Living Word, Jesus Christ, for the unbeliever; the Written Word, Bible doctrine, for the believer-- this proves both the absurdity and the arrogance of Satan's objection. If an inferior creature responds to the Word of God, then a superior creature certainly should have! Once again, the superior creatures-- namely, Satan and his angels-- are under indictment for their rejection of the will of God.

b. Scripture records for us how the elect angels in Heaven rejoice over one sinning believer who turns from the path of reversionism back to the plan of grace, back to the path of growth and blessing in the Spiritual Life. Cf. Luke 15:1-32.

c. Why do the elect angels rejoice? Because every time a believer in the AC makes an uncoerced, unpressured, volitionally free decision that is compatible with the will of God and the Word of God, God is both honored and glorified in time and it vindicates His righteous judgment against Satan and the fallen angels in eternity past! That's why. Likewise, every member of the human race that accepts Jesus Christ as Savior serves to resolve the AC, and that decision of faith, that volitional choice made in the absolute freedom of his or her own soul, confirms the immutability of the elect angels' position.

d. Since God terminated whatever message of angelic redemption He offered them, their volitional poles have been locked in place, which means that the designations 'elect' and 'fallen' stand for all eternity. There is no chance that an elect angel could fall, or that a fallen angel could switch sides back to the winning team. The 'line in the sand' has already been drawn; the judgment was declared in eternity past.

In the Olivet Discourse-- Matthew 24-25-- Jesus, speaking of Himself as the Eternal Judge before whom all must stand, said in Matthew 25:41, "Then He will also say to those on His left [unbelievers], 'Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels.'" Notice He makes it very clear that it "has been prepared for the devil and his angels," not for man, man goes there by default. To reject the Person of Christ and to reject the provision of grace which He made, is to share, by your own choice, in the judgment of Satan and the fallen angels in the lake of fire.