

Religious Liberty



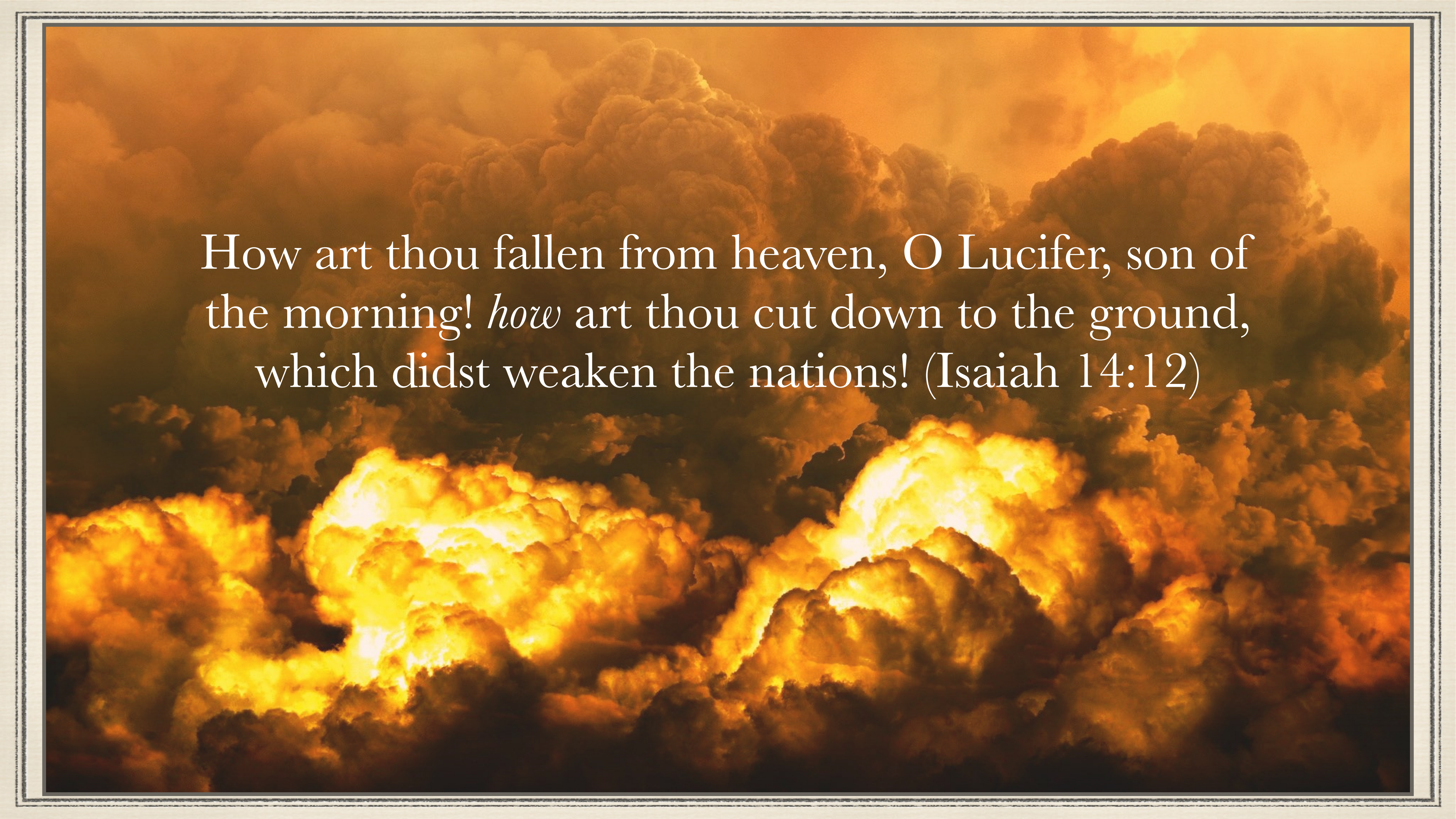
Lesson 11

The Right of Dissent

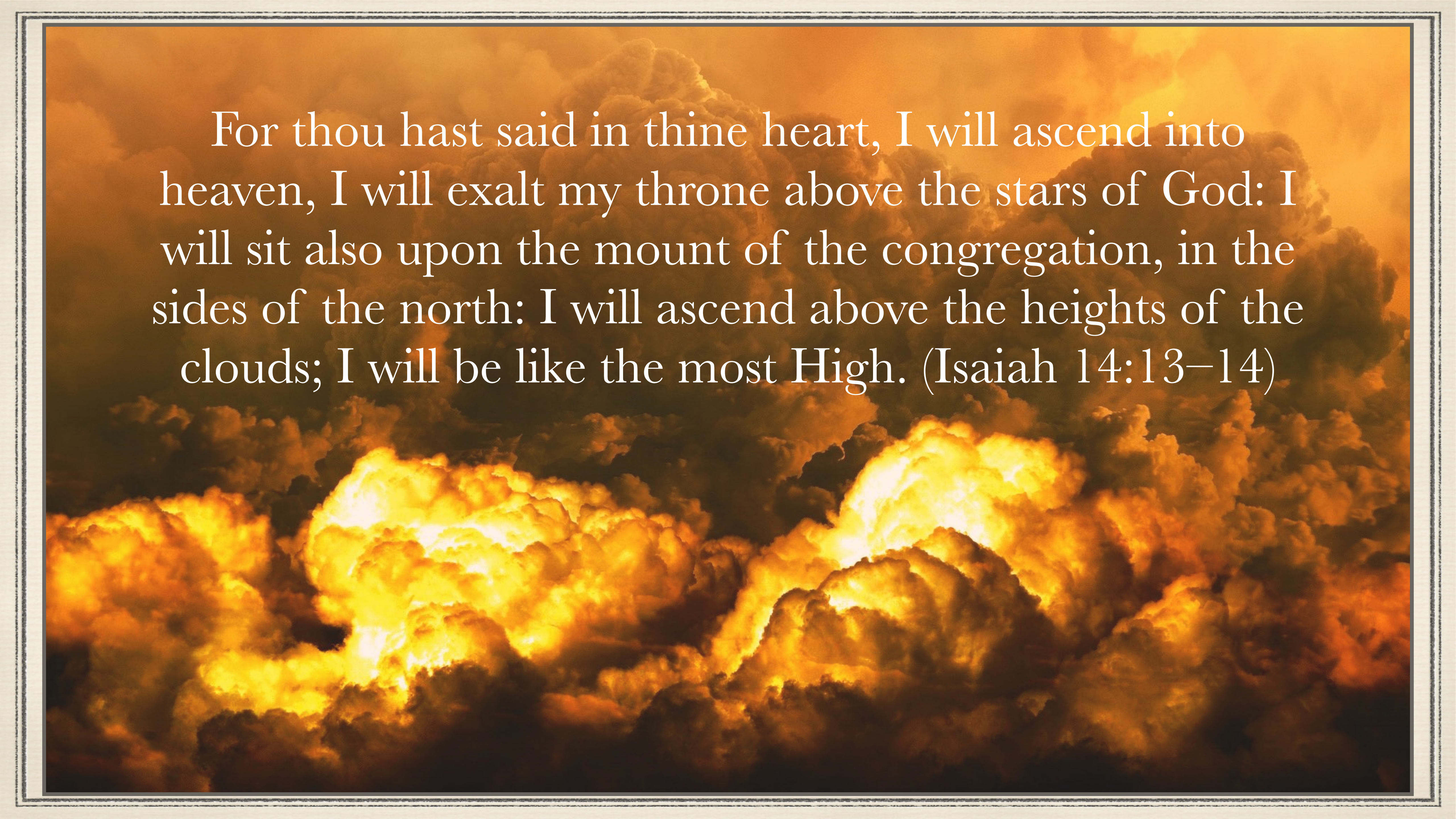
Dissent—to hold or express opinions that are at variance with those commonly or officially held

. . . be thinkers, and not mere reflectors of other men's
thought. (*Ed* 17.2)

Do we have a right to dissent?
Who was the first dissenter?



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! (Isaiah 14:12)



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 14:13–14)

Lucifer in heaven, before his rebellion, was a high and exalted angel, next in honor to God's dear Son. His countenance, like those of the other angels, was mild and expressive of happiness. His forehead was high and broad, showing a powerful intellect. His form was perfect; his bearing noble and majestic. A special light beamed in his countenance and shone around him brighter and more beautiful than around the other angels; yet Christ, God's dear Son, had the pre-eminence over all the angelic host. He was one with the Father before the angels were created. Lucifer was envious of Christ, and gradually assumed command which devolved on Christ alone. (*SR* 13.1)

The great Creator assembled the heavenly host, that He might in the presence of all the angels confer special honor upon His Son. The Son was seated on the throne with the Father, and the heavenly throng of holy angels was gathered around them. The Father then made known that it was ordained by Himself that Christ, His Son, should be equal with Himself; so that wherever was the presence of His Son, it was as His own presence. The word of the Son was to be obeyed as readily as the word of the Father. His Son He had invested with authority to command the heavenly host. Especially was His Son to work in union with Himself in the anticipated creation of the earth and every living thing that should exist upon the earth. His Son would carry out His will and His purposes but would do nothing of Himself alone. The Father's will would be fulfilled in Him. (Ibid.13.2)

He left the immediate presence of the Father, dissatisfied and filled with envy against Jesus Christ. Concealing his real purposes, he assembled the angelic host. He introduced his subject, which was himself. As one aggrieved, he related the preference God had given Jesus to the neglect of himself. He told them that henceforth all the sweet liberty the angels had enjoyed was at an end. For had not a ruler been appointed over them, to whom they from henceforth must yield servile honor? He stated to them that he had called them together to assure them that he no longer would submit to this **invasion of his rights** and theirs; that never would he again bow down to Christ; that he would take the honor upon himself which should have been conferred upon him, and would be the commander of all who would submit to follow him and obey his voice. (Ibid. 14.2)

Jesus did not contend for His rights. (*DA* 89.4)

There was contention among the angels. Lucifer and his sympathizers were striving to reform the government of God. They were discontented and unhappy because they could not look into His unsearchable wisdom and ascertain His purposes in exalting His Son, and endowing Him with such unlimited power and command. **They rebelled** against the authority of the Son. (Ibid. 15.1)

The history of God's people during the ages of darkness that followed upon Rome's supremacy, is written in Heaven. But they have little place in human records. Few traces of their existence can be found, except in the accusations of their persecutors. **It was the policy of Rome to obliterate every trace of dissent from her doctrines or decrees. Everything heretical, whether persons or writings, was destroyed.** A single expression of doubt, a question as to the authority of papal dogmas, was enough to forfeit the life of rich or poor, high or low. Rome endeavored also to destroy every record of her **cruelty toward dissenters.** Papal councils decreed that books and writings containing such records should be committed to the flames. (*GC88* 61.2)

Many earnestly desired to return to the purity and simplicity which characterized the primitive church. They regarded many of the established customs of the English church as monuments of idolatry, and they could not in conscience unite in her worship. **But the church, being supported by the civil authority, would permit no dissent from her forms.** Attendance upon her service was required by law, and unauthorized assemblies for religious worship were prohibited, under penalty of imprisonment, exile, and death.

(GC88 289.3)

Whenever the church has obtained secular power, **she has employed it to punish dissent from her doctrines.** Protestant churches that have followed in the steps of Rome by forming alliance with worldly powers, have manifested a similar desire to restrict liberty of conscience. An example of this is given in the long-continued persecution of dissenters by the Church of England. During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, thousands of non-conformist ministers were forced to leave their churches, and many, both of pastors and people, were subjected to fine, imprisonment, torture, and martyrdom. (*GC88* 443.3)

It was apostasy that led the early church to seek the aid of the civil government, and this prepared the way for the development of the papacy,—the beast. Said Paul, There shall “come a falling away, ... and that man of sin be revealed.” [2 Thessalonians 2:3] **So apostasy in the church will prepare the way for the image to the beast.** And the Bible declares that before the coming of the Lord there will exist a state of religious declension similar to that in the first centuries. (*GC88* 443.4)

There are many living martyrs today who suffer in silence, who trust in God when they are abused with the tongue and who are tantalized, who are hurt and wounded by coarse, harsh denunciations, whose lot seems to be to live and to suffer, receiving comfort only from Jesus who is the Source of their strength. Such souls are missionaries. They are Christ's noble ones, and their names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life.

Remember, Jesus knows it all—every sorrow, every grief—He will not leave you to sink, for His arms are beneath you. (*1LtMs*, Ms 9, 1868, par. 10, 11)

And there are/will be dissenters again
within the church . . .

The enemy of souls has sought to bring in the supposition that a great reformation was to take place among Seventh-day Adventists, and that this reformation would consist in **giving up the doctrines which stand as the pillars of our faith** and engaging in a process of reorganization. Were this reformation to take place, what would result? The **principles of truth that God in His wisdom has given to the remnant church would be discarded.** Our religion would be changed. The fundamental principles that have sustained the work for the last fifty years would be **accounted as error.** (*18LtMs*, Lt 242, 1903, par. 13)

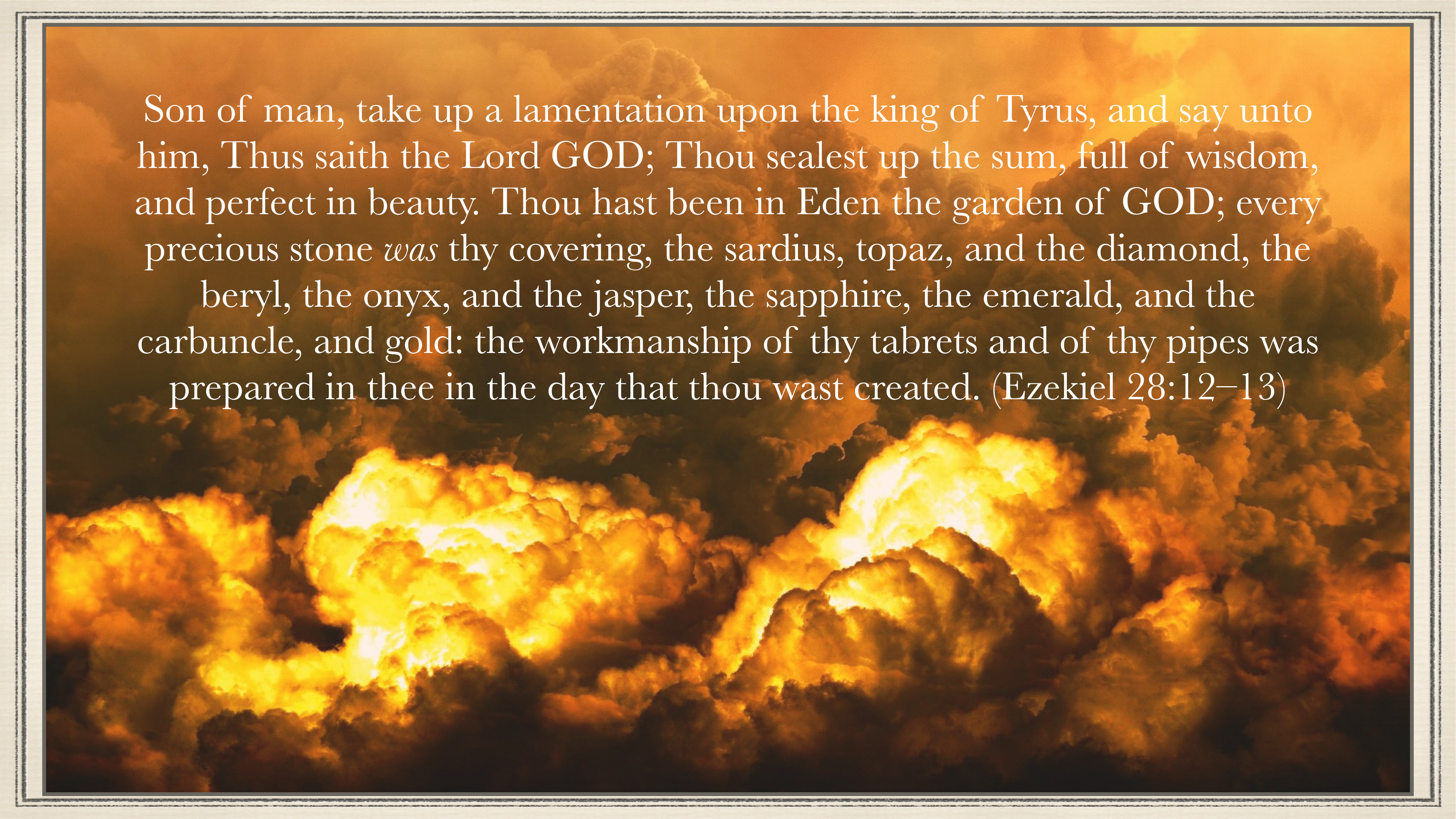
A new organization would be established. Books of a new order would be written. A system of intellectual philosophy would be introduced.

The founders of this system would go into the cities and do a wonderful work. The Sabbath, of course, would be lightly regarded, as also the God who created it. Nothing would be allowed to stand in the way of the new movement. The leaders would teach that virtue is better than vice; but God being removed, they would place their dependence on human power, which, without God, is worthless. Their foundation would be built on the sand, and storm and tempest would sweep away the structure. (*18LtMs*, Lt 242, 1903, par. 13)

And within the land . . .

When the protection of human laws shall be withdrawn from those who honor the law of God, there will be, in different lands, a simultaneous movement for their destruction. As the time appointed in the decree draws near, the people will conspire to root out the hated sect. It will be determined to strike in one night a decisive blow, which shall **utterly silence the voice of dissent and reproof.**

The people of God—some in prison cells, some hidden in solitary retreats in the forests and the mountains—still plead for divine protection, while in every quarter companies of armed men, urged on by hosts of evil angels, are preparing for the work of death. It is now, in the hour of utmost extremity, that the God of Israel will interpose for the deliverance of his chosen. (*GC88* 635.1,.2)



Son of man, take up a lamentation upon the king of Tyrus, and say unto him, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty. Thou hast been in Eden the garden of GOD; every precious stone *was* thy covering, the sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold: the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee in the day that thou wast created. (Ezekiel 28:12–13)

- ❖ Ezekiel 26:1–3; 27:2–8
- ❖ Then we get to Ezekiel 28:2, 12–19—the prince or king of Tyrus. Who is this?

Prince. Hebrew is *nagid* and means “a chief,” “a leader.” According to Josephus, the Tyrian king at the time of Nebuchadnezzar’s siege was Ethbaal. However, the prophet is doubtless decrying the insolence and inordinate pride of Tyre’s leaders generally.

And Tyrus did build herself a strong hold, And heaped up
silver as the dust, And fine gold as the mire of the streets.
Behold, the Lord will cast her out, and he will smite her
power in the sea; And she shall be devoured with fire.
(Zechariah 9:3–4)

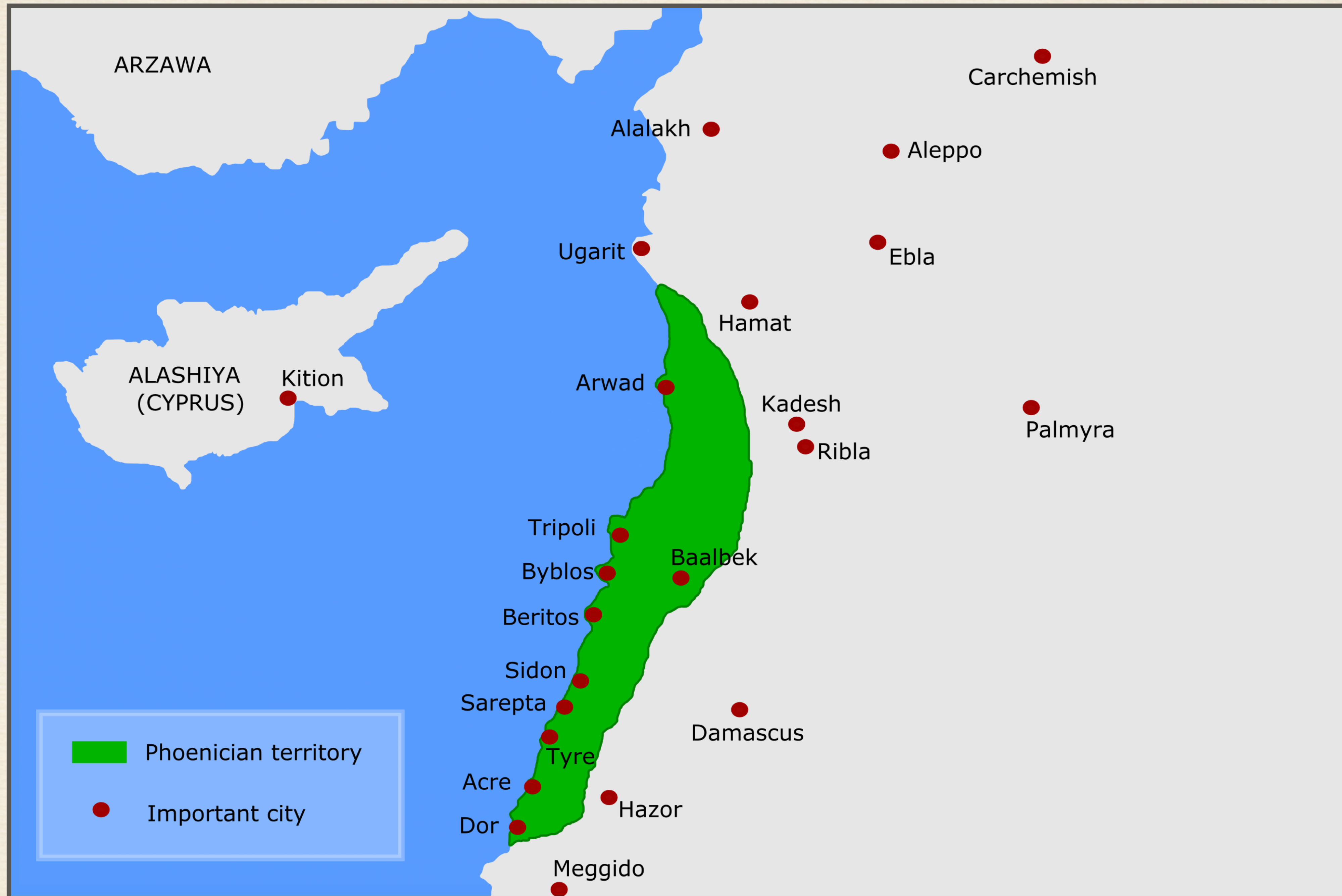
Who hath taken this counsel against Tyre, the crowning
city, Whose merchants *are* princes, whose traffickers *are* the
honourable of the earth? (Isaiah 23:8)

Who hath taken this counsel against **Tyre**, the crowning *city*, Whose
merchants *are* princes, whose traffickers *are* the honourable of the
earth? The Lord of hosts hath purposed it, To stain the pride of all
glory, *And* to bring into contempt all the honourable of the earth.
Pass through thy land as a river, O **daughter of Tarshish**: *There is no*
more strength. (Isaiah 23:8–10)

For the king's ships went to Tarshish with the servants of Hiram: every three years once came the ships of Tarshish bringing gold, and silver, ivory, and apes, and peacocks. And king Solomon passed all the kings of the earth in riches and wisdom. (2 Chronicles 9:21–22)

Tarshish *was* thy merchant by reason of the multitude of all *kind of* riches; with silver, iron, tin, and lead, they traded in thy fairs. (Ezekiel 27:12)

But Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the Lord, and went down to Joppa; and he found a ship going to Tarshish: so he paid the fare thereof, and went down into it, to go with them unto Tarshish from the presence of the Lord. (Jonah 1:3)



107 miles



Richardprins

THE WORLD

as Peopled by
the DESCENDENTS of
NOAH

Shewing
the Countries possessed by
SHEM, HAM & JAPHET
and their posterity
after the
CONFUSION of TONGUES



- JAPHET**
- GOMER**
 - Ashkenaz
 - Riphath
 - Togarmah
 - MAGOG**
 - MADAI**
 - JAVAN**
 - Elishah
 - Tarshish
 - Kittim
 - Dodanim
 - TUBAL**
 - MESHECH**
 - THIRAS**

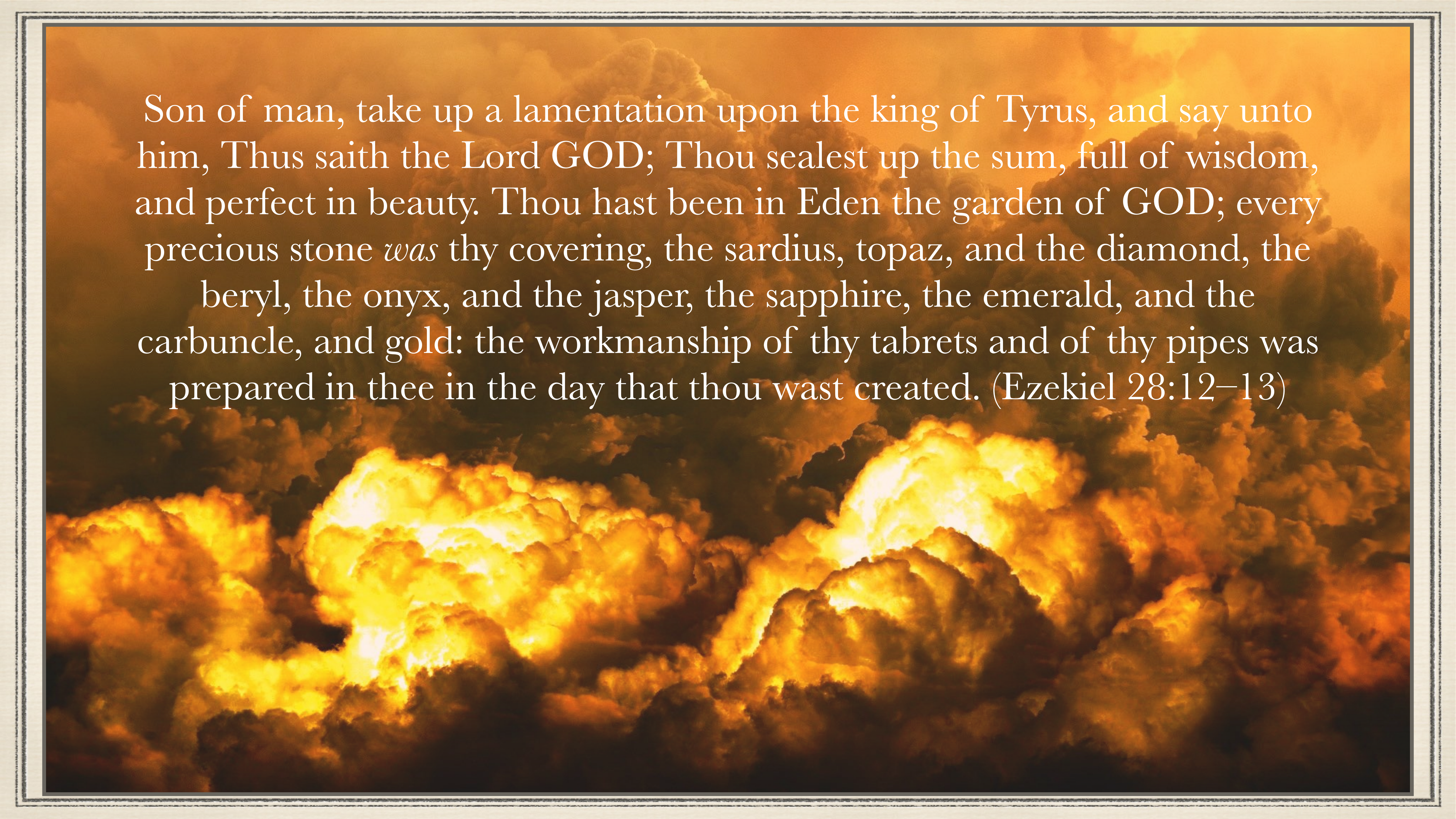
- HAM**
- CUSH**
 - Seba
 - Havilah
 - Sabiah
 - Sheba
 - Raamah
 - Dedan
 - Sabtecha
 - Nimrod
 - MIZRAIM**
 - Ananim
 - Lehabim
 - Naphthim
 - Fathrusim
 - Cashubim
 - Caphtorim
 - CANAAN**
 - PHUT
 - Sidon
 - Heth
 - Jebusite
 - Amorite
 - Girgasite
 - Hivite
 - Arkite
 - Sinitie
 - Arvadite
 - Zemarite
 - Hamathite

- SHEM**
- ELAM**
 - ASHUR**
 - PELEG**
 - Reu
 - Scrug
 - Nahor
 - Terah
 - JOKTAN**
 - Almodad
 - Sheleph
 - Hazarameveth
 - Jerah
 - Hadoram
 - Uzal
 - Diklah
 - Obal
 - Abimael
 - Sheba
 - Ophir
 - Havilah
 - Jobab
 - ARAM**
 - LUD
 - Uz
 - Eral
 - Gether
 - Mash





When Ezekiel beheld the literal king of Tyre in vision, God also allowed Ezekiel to understand the **invisible powerful being whom the king of Tyre served which is Satan.**



Son of man, take up a lamentation upon the king of Tyrus, and say unto him, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty. Thou hast been in Eden the garden of GOD; every precious stone *was* thy covering, the sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold: the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee in the day that thou wast created. (Ezekiel 28:12–13)

- ❖ Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God
- ❖ Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth ...
thou was upon the holy mountain of God
- ❖ Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that
thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee
- ❖ I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of
God: and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub

Do we have a *right* to dissent, perhaps
even an *obligation*?

Satan is the archdeceiver, and he is also
the archdissenter from righteousness
and truth.

- ❖ Arch—combining form can be used for chief or principal, like archbishop, or can mean chief or preeminent in an unfavorable sense

- ❖ Archdeceiver

- ❖ Archrebel

- ❖ Archfiend

- ❖ Archfoe

- ❖ Archenemy

- ❖ Archapostate

- ❖ Archadversary

God abhors indifference and disloyalty in a time of crisis in his work. The whole universe is watching with inexpressible interest the closing scenes of the great controversy between good and evil. The people of God are nearing the borders of the eternal world; what is of more importance to them than that they be loyal to the God of heaven? All through the ages, God has had moral heroes, and he has them now; those who, like Joseph and Elijah and Daniel, are not ashamed to acknowledge themselves his peculiar people. Such men make their wills and plans subordinate to the law of God. For love of him, they count not their lives dear unto themselves. Their work is to catch the light from the Word, and let it shine forth to the world in clear, steady rays. Fidelity to God is their motto. (*RH* September 18, 1913, par. 9)

Follow after charity . . . (1 Corinthians 14:1)

See that none render evil for evil unto any *man*; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all *men*. (1 Thessalonians 5:15)

But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you,
do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which
despitefully use you, and persecute you; (Matthew 5:44)

And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.

(Ephesians 4:32)

And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour. (Ephesians 5:2)

Kind—gentle

Tenderhearted—compassionate

Love—agape

Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become *as* sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. (1 Corinthians 13:1)

Agapē—love that is based on principle, not on emotion.

And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my **beloved** Son, in whom I am well pleased. (Matthew 3:17)

To me *belongeth* vengeance, and recompence; (Deuteronomy 32:35)

For we know him that hath said, Vengeance *belongeth* unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people. (Hebrews 10:30)

In matters concerning the kingdom of Christ **no compulsion or forcing of conscience is permitted**. No blood is to be shed, no force of arms employed, no prison is to be opened for the incarceration of one who does not choose the kingdom of God and his righteousness. (*RH* March 26, 1895, par. 5)

A single angel destroyed all the first-born of the Egyptians and filled the land with mourning. When David offended against God by numbering the people, one angel caused that terrible destruction by which his sin was punished. The same destructive power exercised by holy angels when God commands, **will be exercised by evil angels** when He permits. There are forces now ready, and only waiting the divine permission, to spread desolation everywhere. (*GC 614.2*)

As the Sabbath has become the special point of controversy throughout Christendom, and religious and secular authorities have combined to enforce the observance of the Sunday, the persistent refusal of a small minority to yield to the popular demand will make them objects of universal execration. It will be urged that the few who stand in opposition to an institution of the church and a law of the state ought not to be tolerated; that it is better for them to suffer than for whole nations to be thrown into confusion and lawlessness. (GC 615.2)

The people of God **will then** be plunged into those scenes of affliction and distress described by the prophet as the time of Jacob's trouble. "Thus saith the Lord: We have heard a voice of trembling, of fear, and not of peace.... All faces are turned into paleness. Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it." Jeremiah 30:5–7. (*GC* 616.1)

No man can serve God without enlisting against himself the opposition of the hosts of darkness. Evil angels will assail him, alarmed that his influence is taking the prey from their hands. Evil men, rebuked by his example, will unite with them in seeking to separate him from God by alluring temptations. When these do not succeed, then a compelling power is employed to force the conscience. (*GC* 610.2)

Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. (2 Timothy 3:12)

As the movement for Sunday enforcement becomes more bold and decided, the law will be invoked against commandment keepers. They will be threatened with **finer and imprisonment**, and some will be **offered positions of influence, and other rewards** and advantages, as inducements to renounce their faith. But their steadfast answer is: “Show us from the word of God our error. (*GC 607.1*)

As the storm approaches, a large class who have professed faith in the third angel's message, but have not been sanctified through obedience to the truth, abandon their position and **join the ranks of the opposition**. By uniting with the world and partaking of its spirit, they have come to view matters in nearly the same light; and when the test is brought, they are prepared to choose the easy, popular side. Men of talent and pleasing address, who once rejoiced in the truth, employ their powers to deceive and mislead souls. They become the most bitter enemies of their former brethren. When Sabbathkeepers are brought before the courts to answer for their faith, **these apostates are the most efficient agents of Satan to misrepresent and accuse them, and by false reports and insinuations to stir up the rulers against them.**

(GC 608.2)

We cannot just dissent from evil. We must also assent for truth
and righteousness.

They are slaves who fear to speak
For the fallen and the weak;
They are slaves who will not choose
Hatred, scoffing and abuse,
Rather than in silence shrink
From the truth they needs must think,
They are slaves who dare not be
In the right with two or three.

James Russell Lowell