

Levels in the Spiritual Realm

Many of us have taught on spiritual warfare without first explaining the hierarchy in the spiritual realm and also the personnel (characters, job descriptions and different players) in that realm. We have also often lumped it into one realm forgetting that there are various sectors within the spirit realm. If you join an organisation, one of the first things you do is to look at the organogram. You are interested in who the CEO and EXCO are. I love football and before my team plays, I am very curious to see who is in the squad and also who is in the starting line-up. We need to do the same when it comes to spiritual warfare. We also need to understand the power and might of the celestial beings we are dealing with. Angels are not fat cute babies with wings and halos. They are mighty celestial beings that fall into various categories and ranks. Some are primarily messengers whilst others are destroyers. Jesus, in His Matthew 26 arrest, states that if He wanted, He could call on His Father who could instantly send down 12 legions of angels to protect Him (by the way, that's about 72 000 angels). I find it interesting that Jesus did not model commanding angels, rather He emphasised the order being, we ask the Father. I am not sure why people think we can command angels. How can fleshly people like us be trusted to do that? Imagine the confusion it would cause when angels are being commanded to wipe out greedy landlords. God created this order and is interested in having us be aware of it too.

Jude 1:6 And the angels who did not keep their positions of authority but abandoned their proper dwelling—these he has kept in darkness, bound with everlasting chains for judgment on the great Day. It is crucial for the Church to teach on the subject of spheres and jurisdictions for spiritual activities. We must recognize that God our Creator was very intentional when He set out which realm we would operate in. *Ps 115:16 The highest heavens belong to the Lord, but the earth he has given to mankind.* We will examine the geography of the spirit realm, outlining its different sectors. In this message my goal is to also outline a type of "organogram" for the spiritual realm. It is important for believers to understand the various levels and roles in the spiritual realm so that we relate correctly to these varying dimensions. It is also important to note that the devil does not originate, but he produces counterfeits of what God has created. We will therefore also look at the ranks and levels in the kingdom of darkness. We need to know our enemy and his strategies.

*Daniel 10:11 He said, "Daniel, you who are **highly esteemed**, consider carefully the words I am about to speak to you, and stand up, for I have now been sent to you." And when he said this to me, I stood up trembling.* Although these realms are separate, they have influence on each other. People on earth can be regarded highly in heaven. I believe this has an impact on answered prayer and levels of angelic assistance. This angel at a certain point even describes the archangel Michael as Daniel's prince.

A. 8 Realms

1. Above the heavens

- God's glory dwells here and Satan aimed to be there.
Psalm 8:1 (NIV): "Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory in the heavens."

Psalm 108:4-5 (NIV): "For great is your love, higher than the heavens; your faithfulness reaches to the skies.

Be exalted, O God, above the heavens; let your glory be over all the earth."

Ephesians 1:20 (NIV): "He exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms."

Ephesians 4:10 (NIV): "He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe."

Isaiah 14:12-14 (NIV): "How you have fallen from heaven, morning star, son of the dawn! You have been cast down to the earth, you who once laid low the nations! You said in your heart, 'I will ascend to the heavens; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly, on the utmost heights of Mount Zaphon. I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.'"

2. The 3rd heaven or heaven of heavens

God's throne. Seraphim etc

Nehemiah 9:6 (NIV): "You alone are the Lord. You made the heavens, even the highest heavens, and all their starry host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them. You give life to everything, and the multitudes of heaven worship you."

2 Corinthians 12:2 (NIV): "I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven. Whether it was in the body or out of the body I do not know—God knows."

3. Mid-heaven or 2nd Heaven

Command post of Satan, powers and principalities. This is where angels do battle.

Colossians 1:16 (NIV): "For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him."

1 Peter 3:22 (NIV): "Who has gone into heaven and is at God's right hand—with angels, authorities, and powers in submission to him."

Rev 12:7-9 Then war broke out in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven. The great dragon was hurled down—that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him.

Satan and his angels first fell here. These verses also show how angels work together seemingly under higher ranking angels.

4. First heaven

Where birds fly. Some theologians believe that since the cross Satan is now the Prince of the Power of the Air, so he has gone even lower. In the book of the revelation, he is hurled to the earth and ultimately will end up in the pit.

5. Earth

This is the place of human habitation, but where Satan also prowls.

Job 2:2 (NIV): "And the Lord said to Satan, 'Where have you come from?' Satan answered the Lord, 'From roaming throughout the earth, going back and forth on it.'"

1 Peter 5:8 (NIV): "Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour."

6. The Grave

This is also referred to as under the earth, the sea or the deep.

Genesis 1:2 (NIV): "Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters."

Exodus 20:4 (NIV): "You shall not make for yourself an image in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below."

Deuteronomy 5:8 (NIV): "You shall not make for yourself an image in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below."

Job 28:14 (NIV): "The deep says, 'It is not in me'; the sea says, 'It is not with me.'"

Philippians 2:10 (NIV): "That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth."

Revelation 5:3 (NIV): "But no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth could open the scroll or even look inside it."

Some righteous saints before the cross:

Matthew 27:52-53 (NIV): "And the tombs broke open. The bodies of many holy people who had died were raised to life. They came out of the tombs after Jesus' resurrection and went into the holy city and appeared to many people."

7. Abyss (Bottomless Pit, Hell)

Isaiah 14:11-15 (NIV): "All your pomp has been brought down to the grave, along with the noise of your harps; maggots are spread out beneath you and worms cover you. How you have fallen from heaven, morning star, son of the dawn! You have been cast down to the earth, you who once laid low the nations! You said in your heart, 'I will ascend to the heavens; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly, on the utmost heights of Mount Zaphon. I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.'" "But you are brought down to the realm of the dead, to the depths of the pit."

Numbers 16:33 (NIV): "They went down alive into the realm of the dead, with everything they owned; the earth closed over them, and they perished and were gone from the community."

Ezek 32:18 "Son of man, wail for the hordes of Egypt and consign to the earth below both her and the daughters of mighty nations, along with those who go down to the pit."

Luke 8:31 (NIV): "And they begged Jesus repeatedly not to order them to go into the Abyss."

Revelation 9:1-2 (NIV): "The fifth angel sounded his trumpet, and I saw a star that had fallen from the sky to the earth. The star was given the key to the shaft of the Abyss. When he opened the Abyss,

smoke rose from it like the smoke from a gigantic furnace. The sun and sky were darkened by the smoke from the Abyss."

Revelation 20:1-3 (NIV): "And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key to the Abyss and holding in his hand a great chain. He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil, or Satan, and bound him for a thousand years. He threw him into the Abyss, and locked and sealed it over him, to keep him from deceiving the nations anymore until the thousand years were ended. After that, he must be set free for a short time."

2 Peter 2:4 For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but sent them to hell, putting them in chains of darkness to be held for judgment;

Tartarus (legendary Greek equivalent to the pit), Some manuscripts say, "in gloomy dungeons".

This appears to be speaking of the angels who came down and had sexual relations with the daughters of men (to produce Nephilim), as opposed to all the fallen angels.

8. Lake of Fire

Future place of eternal punishment

Rev 19:20 But the beast was captured, and with it the false prophet who had performed the signs on its behalf. With these signs he had deluded those who had received the mark of the beast and worshiped its image. The two of them were thrown alive into the fiery lake of burning sulphur.

Rev 20:10-15 And the devil, who deceived them, was thrown into the lake of burning sulphur, where the beast and the false prophet had been thrown. They will be tormented day and night for ever and ever. 11 Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. The earth and the heavens fled from his presence, and there was no place for them. 12 And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. 13 The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what they had done. 14 Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death. 15 Anyone whose name was not found written in the book of life was thrown into the lake of fire.

Sheol is the Hebrew place of the dead, whilst Abraham's Bosom was a place of comfort for the Old Testaments saints.

Reflection Questions

How does understanding the hierarchy in the spiritual realm change your approach to spiritual warfare?

In what ways have you previously misunderstood the roles of angels, and how does this new perspective influence your prayer life?

Why is it important to recognize the distinction between different levels or sectors within the spiritual realm?

How does the analogy of an organogram or a football squad help you grasp the complexity of the spiritual realm?

What does the devil's tendency to counterfeit God's creation reveal about his strategies, and how can you guard against these deceptions?

How does understanding your place in the spiritual geography, specifically that the earth is given to mankind, empower you in your spiritual walk?

What are the dangers of trying to command angels directly, and why is it crucial to follow the divine order established by God?

How does the interaction between different spiritual realms affect your daily life and spiritual practices?

What practical steps can you take to deepen your knowledge of the spiritual realm and align your actions with God's divine order?

In light of the final destinations outlined in the sermon, such as the abyss and the lake of fire, how should this knowledge influence your sense of urgency in spiritual warfare?