

Not Against Flesh & Blood

***A Seven Week Series on Spiritual Warfare
Week One: Creation & Chaos***

“For our struggle is not against flesh and blood,
but against the rulers, against the authorities,
against the powers of this dark world and against
the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.”

Paul, Ephesians 6:12 NIV

“One is hard-pressed to find any culture, prior to or contemporary with our own, that does not assume something like this [spiritual warfare] perspective. From a cross-cultural perspective, the insight that the cosmos is teeming with spiritual beings whose behavior can and does benefit or harm us is simply common sense. It is Westerners who are the oddballs for thinking that the only free agents who influence other people and things are humans.”

Greg Boyd, *God At War: The Bible & Spiritual Conflict*

“If we modern Westerners cannot “see” what nearly everyone else outside the little oasis of Western rationalism the last several centuries has seen, then perhaps there is something amiss with our way of seeing. It is just possible that the intensely materialistic and rationalistic orientation of the Enlightenment has blinded us to certain otherwise obvious realities. It is just possible that our chronocentrism—our tendency to assume that the worldview we hold at the present time is the ultimate true worldview—is preventing us from seeing significant features of reality.”

Greg Boyd, *God At War: The Bible & Spiritual Conflict*

Jesus, Matthew 13:36-39 NIV

36 Then he left the crowd and went into the house. His disciples came to him and said, “Explain to us the parable of the weeds in the field.”

37 He answered, “The one who sowed the good seed is the Son of Man. **38** The field is the world, and the good seed stands for the people of the kingdom. The weeds are the people of the evil one, **39** and the enemy who sows them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the harvesters are angels.

Matthew 13:40-43 NIV

40 “As the weeds are pulled up and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of the age. **41** The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil. **42** They will throw them into the blazing furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. **43** Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Whoever has ears, let them hear.

“The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil’s work.”

1 John 3:8b

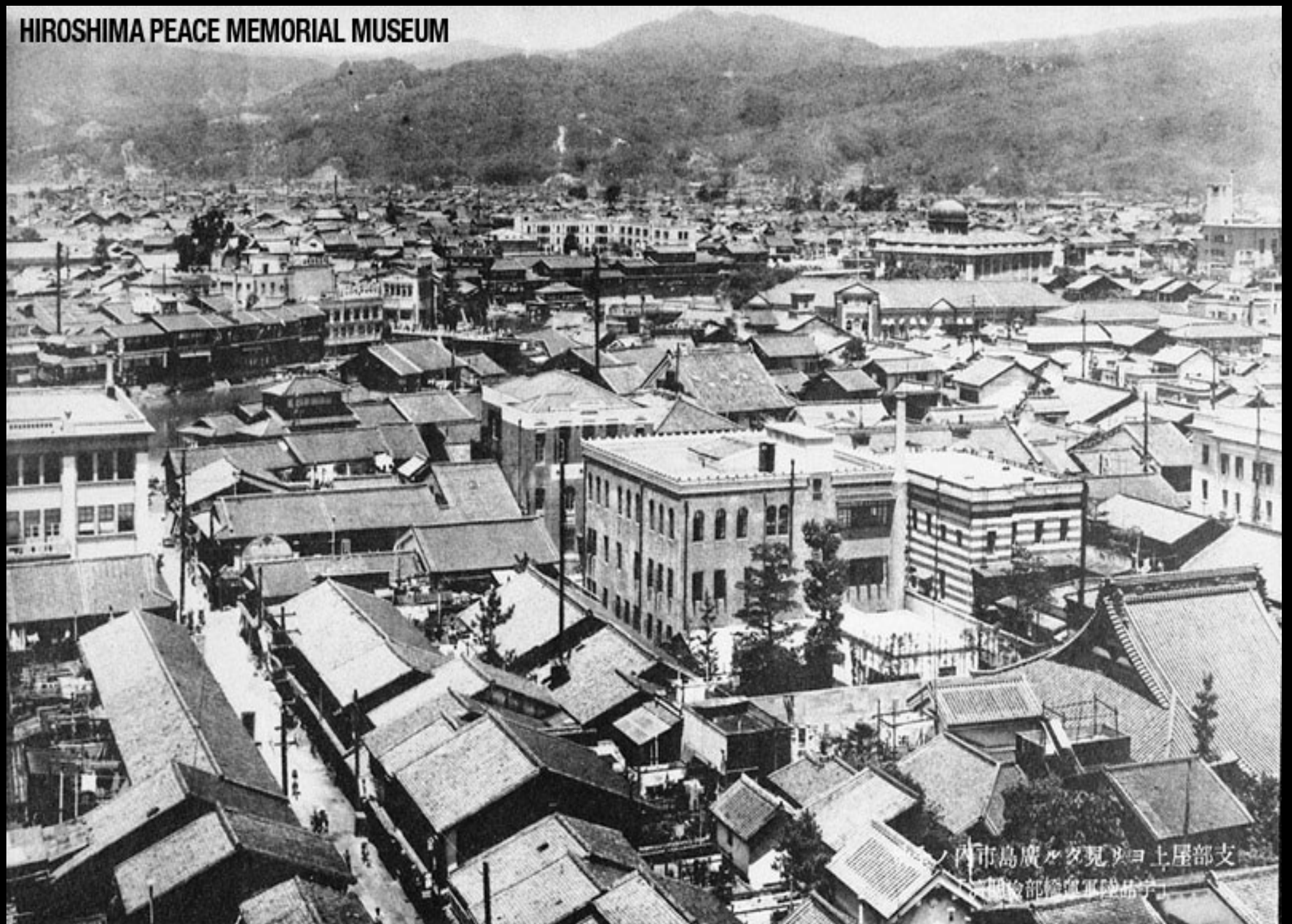
Genesis 1:1-2 NLT

1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. 2 The earth was formless and empty, and darkness covered the deep waters. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the surface of the waters.

v. 1 heavens & the earth – “spiritual & physical realms”

v. 2 *tohu wa bohu* – “chaos & desolation”

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Genesis 1:26-28 VOICE

26 Now let Us conceive *a new creation*—humanity—*made* in Our image, *fashioned* according to Our likeness. And let *Us grant* them authority over all the earth—the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, the domesticated animals and the *small* creeping creatures on the earth.

27 So God did *just that*. He created humanity in His image, created them male and female. **28** Then God blessed them and gave them *this directive*: “Be fruitful and multiply. Populate the earth. *I make you trustees of My estate*, so care for My creation and rule over the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, and every creature that roams across the earth.”

Genesis 3:1-5 NIV

1 Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God really say, ‘You must not eat from any tree in the garden’?”

2 The woman said to the serpent, “We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, **3** but God did say, ‘You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.’”

4 “You will not certainly die,” the serpent said to the woman. **5** “For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”

Genesis 3:6-7 NIV

6 When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. 7 Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.

John, Revelation 12:3-4 NIV

3 Then another sign appeared in heaven: an enormous red dragon with seven heads and ten horns and seven crowns on its heads. **4** Its tail swept a third of the stars out of the sky and flung them to the earth.

Revelation 12:7-9 NIV

7 Then war broke out in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. 8 But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven. 9 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.

Isaiah 14:12-15 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.”

But you are brought down to the realm of the dead,
to the depths of the pit.”

Ezekiel 28:12-17 NIV

“You were the seal of perfection,
full of wisdom and perfect in beauty.
You were in Eden, the garden of God;
every precious stone adorned you:
carnelian, chrysolite and emerald,
topaz, onyx and jasper,
lapis lazuli, turquoise and beryl.
Your settings and mountings were made of gold;
on the day you were created they were prepared.
You were anointed as a guardian cherub,
for so I ordained you.
You were on the holy mount of God;
you walked among the fiery stones.”

“You were blameless in your ways
from the day you were created
till wickedness was found in you.
Through your widespread trade
you were filled with violence,
and you sinned.
So I drove you in disgrace from the mount of God,
and I expelled you, guardian cherub,
from among the fiery stones.
Your heart became proud
on account of your beauty,
and you corrupted your wisdom
because of your splendor.
So I threw you to the earth;
I made a spectacle of you before kings.”

Satan's Fall & Fury

“I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven.”

Jesus, Luke 10:18 NIV

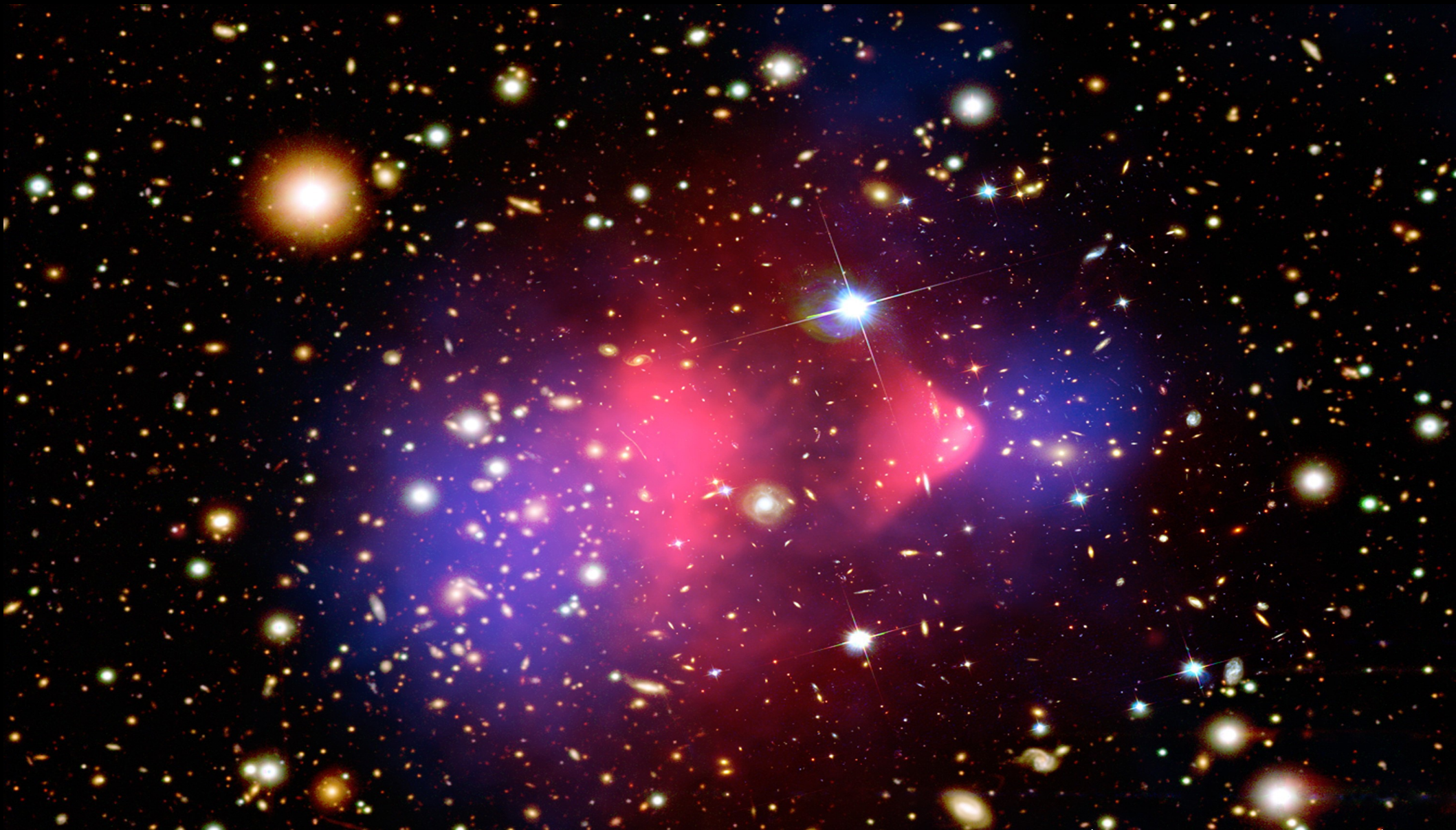
- Satan *accuses* us and exploits human weakness;
- He is the “tempter” and “father of lies”;
- He is the “prince” and “ruler of this world”;
- The devil (*diabolos*—the one who scatters!) seeks to tear apart creation and repel the unifying force of the Spirit of God.

According to Athenagoras, defender of Christ's deity and the Trinity, Satan was originally...

“the spirit which is about matter [seen & unseen] who was created by God, just as the other angels were... and entrusted with the control of matter and the forms of matter.”

Athenagoras, *A Plea For Christians* (4th cent.)

Dark Matter vs. Dark Energy



Paul, Romans 8:18-21 VOICE

18 Now I'm sure of this: the sufferings we endure now are not even worth comparing to the glory that is coming and will be revealed in us.

19 For all of creation is waiting, yearning for the time when the children of God will be revealed.

20 You see, all of creation has collapsed into emptiness, not by its own choosing, but by God's. Still He placed within it a *deep and abiding* hope

21 that creation would one day be liberated from its slavery to corruption and experience the glorious freedom of the children of God.

Romans 8:22-23 VOICE

22 For we know that all creation groans *in unison* with birthing pains up until now. **23** *And there is more;* it's not just creation—all of us are groaning together too. Though we have already tasted the first-fruits of the Spirit, we are longing for the total redemption of our bodies that comes when our adoption as children *of God* is complete—

Romans 8:24-25 VOICE

24 for we have been saved in this hope *and for this future*. But hope does not involve what we already *have or see*. For who goes around hoping for what he already has?

25 But if we wait expectantly for things we have never seen, then we hope with true perseverance and eager anticipation.

Creation & Chaos—*A Summary*

- God created out of love, inviting his creation in on the divine character and community;
- Sometime in the primordial cosmos, angelic beings rebelled against God's good order;
- Chaos was mixed with the creative process, sin and rebellion worked its way into humanity;
- God takes the initiative and steps in to judge and redeem his “fallen” creation;
- Jesus inaugurates the Kingdom that drives out Satan, and *will* “weed” out evil in the world.

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