

A The rules of Conflict:

❖ **The god of this world.**

- Until the arrival of Christianity, almost the entire world worshipped idols. But what was behind these idols (Deut. 32:17; 1Co. 10:20)?
- Behind the pantheons of Egyptian, Canaanite, Roman and Greek gods were demons, fallen angels. But they are not content to be worshipped through idols or false gods. They make efforts to actively dominate this world and its inhabitants.
- When God's people wanted to rebuild the Temple, there was a battle to influence the thoughts of King Cyrus (Dan. 10:1-13.) Satan ("the prince of the kingdom of Persia") fought against Gabriel for three weeks, until he received help from Jesus himself ("Michael".)
- God does not use all of His power against Satan. He allows the enemy to have a certain degree of power on this planet. Why? Because God is love, and He does not use coercion or force anyone to obey Him.

B The Limits of Conflict:

❖ **Time limits.**

- The Bible makes it clear that Satan has been given authority over this world (Luke 4:6.) At one point in history, he transferred that authority to a religious political power (Rev. 13:1-2.)
- This power was also granted other powers (Rev. 13:5, 7,) but temporal limits were imposed on it: 42 months, which are "a time, and times, and half a time," that is, 1,260 years (Rev. 13:5; 11:2; 12:6, 14.)
- Satan himself has also been given time limits (although they are not measured in exact years.) Since Jesus won on the cross, the devil has "a short time" (Rev. 12:10-12.)
- Best of all, we know that God has set a time when Satan and his angels will lose all dominion and power (Rom. 16:20; Rev. 20:7-10; Mt. 25:41.)

❖ **Physical limits.**

- The book of Job helps us understand the limits that God imposes on Satan.
 - (1) During a council of heavenly beings, Satan appears among them (Job 1:6-7)
 - (2) In the face of the public accusations that Satan had made against God, He points out the case of Job. (Job 1:8)
 - (3) Satan maintains his accusations, claiming unfair protection towards Job (Job 1:9-11)
 - (4) God allows him to attack Job's possessions, but not his person (Job 1:12)
 - (5) In the face of Job's faithfulness, Satan insists on maintaining his accusations against God (Job 2:4-5)
 - (6) God allows him to physically harm Job, but not to kill him (Job 2:6-7)
- This teaches us that there are rules in the Cosmic Conflict. There are parameters in the heavenly court within which accusations against God can be resolved, but without God violating the sacred principles inherent in love and justice.

C The Weapons of Conflict:

❖ **Restrictions for both parties.**

- God is almighty, Satan is not. God can impose restrictions on the enemy, the enemy cannot impose restrictions on God. However, because of God's very disposition, He has limited His own course of action, without any decrease in His power.
- One of Jesus' functions when He became incarnate was to "destroy the works of the devil" (1 John 3:8.) So what is stopping God from crushing the rebellion right now?
- God has limits, such as the granting of free will and other rules, that prevent Him from eradicating evil from this world, which can cause people to question God's existence or goodness.
- But it is prophesied that there will be a time in history, and it will happen soon, when all will have taken their part in the Conflict (Rev. 22:11.) Then God will be free to act to completely destroy evil. Evil will not continue forever.

❖ **A weapon at our disposal.**

- Why are there rules in Cosmic Conflict?
- The issue in conflict is not who is stronger. The issue is who is right. And the question is: Is God fair or unfair in his dealings with his creatures?
- In order to resolve the issue, a fair trial is necessary. For this trial to be fair, certain rules (largely unknown to us) must be respected.
- One of the rules we know is that there is a power that breaks boundaries: prayer (Mk. 9:29.)
- In a way, when we pray we "authorize" God to act in a way that He would not do if we did not ask Him to.
- It doesn't matter whether or not we understand how this weapon works. The important thing is that it works. Through prayer we can make James's advice a reality: "Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you" (James 4:7.)