

GOD'S SERVANT SATAN

by Jeffrey E. Miller

A biblical examination of Satan's role and purpose, challenging common misconceptions about the devil. The author explores what Scripture actually teaches about Satan as an instrument who ultimately serves God's sovereign purposes.

30 Chapters

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Preface

SATAN. It's not a very popular name. Definitely not in the "Top 10" list of potential baby names—although some parents may reconsider it once the child turns two. But think about what your own reaction is to that name. Some people are very fearful when they hear the name. Others just mock and laugh and consider Satan to be a myth or just a symbol or allegory. Many people's opinion falls somewhere in between—they see Satan as a real being in Bible days but really don't see how he fits into today's modern world and their personal lives. They assume that Satan is mostly restricted to "dark jungle areas" and has lost most of his influence in modern society and so they just ignore him. In any case, the majority of Christians don't usually give Satan much thought because they think that it's not important to know much about Satan since he's the bad guy—as long as we know God, right? But the Bible actually shows us that these views of Satan are reckless and dangerous because, whether we know it or not, we are in a serious war with Satan daily!

Ephesians 6:11-12 says: "Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. 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."

These verses written in the New Testament speak of a very realistic modern battle—"our struggle"—against the devil and his governing forces. Satan would love for us to ignore this unseen battle. Satan thrives where he is ignored. These verses describe a very powerful enemy: "rulers, authorities, and powers." They are not something to be ignored or toyed with. Imagine if your country was under attack by an enemy and you decided that you were just going to ignore that enemy. Would that make you safer? And remember, the fact that our enemy is UNSEEN can actually lead to more power or influence over us, because we may tend to underestimate or ignore those things we cannot see or hear or touch. Just like ignoring the power of an unseen disease—we can still become victims. So the more we understand about our enemy, the better equipped we are to resist him. Wise military commanders always study their enemies. And make no mistake—Satan is YOUR enemy and he's no dummy. He's had millions of victims already. So here's an important question: How much do you really know about your enemy Satan? The more you understand about him, the better equipped you will be to resist him.

"...in order that Satan might not outwit us. For we are not unaware of his schemes." (2 Corinthians 2:11)

So, who is this mysterious enemy of ours? The shadowy world of Satan and his work is not revealed in one specific book of the Bible, but rather, much like the story about God himself, God's foil—Satan and his story is woven throughout all of Scripture. So if we only focus on a few verses, then the true picture will be blurred or misunderstood. But if we follow the story of Satan systematically from Genesis to Revelation, then we see a clearer picture of this person we sometimes call the devil.

Yes, Satan is our enemy for sure, but there is so much more to this person and his story that we may not realize. His story forms one of the most amazing of all true stories. Yes, there's things that we would expect like witchcraft, sorcery, animism, etc.—it's all there in the Bible. But as we study his life story, we begin to get some other powerful answers about God that we've probably not considered much, and perhaps see a side of Satan that we've never really seen before. So I challenge you NOT to ignore this key character of the Bible anymore. Read his story—not just parts of it, because God himself wanted you to know it and he recorded it in the Bible for us to learn. You won't be disappointed.

Special Note This book is purposely written for a global audience—using common everyday non-theological language. The goal is that it may be widely understood and easily translated for those living in spiritually dark areas around the globe and those who have little access to good biblical teaching on this mysterious topic. Frequent use of subtitles is to assist teachers if they choose to use it in a classroom setting.

Introduction

Does God Have A Purpose For Satan?

God's "Servant" Satan—the title almost tastes like heresy! But if we stop to chew on it a bit, it forces us to consider a very awkward question: Is God really in charge of Satan? Many would quickly spit out "NO" as an answer, because we don't like to think of God as being in charge of someone so evil. But on the other hand, if God is not in charge of Satan, then God must not be all-powerful, and we don't like that idea either. Somewhere deep down we know that God IS in charge of Satan, but how does all that work? It's easier to ignore it. We just don't want to risk ripping open that bee's nest, because it's full of many other irritating questions, like: If God is in charge of Satan, then why doesn't God get rid of him? And, if God allows Satan to exist, then does that mean God promotes sin? Instead of avoiding these questions, we rip open the nest and discover some sweet surprises in the study of Satan's life. God's word does have answers to many of these questions, and more:

Where did Satan come from in the beginning?

Did God create Satan bad?

What is his history and future?

What are his abilities and limitations?

What is his strategy and his favorite weapons?

Does Satan's kingdom rule over human governments?

Does Satan see what I'm doing now?

Does Satan know what everyone is thinking?

How is Satan working in the modern-day church?

How do we fight against an unseen enemy?

Am I siding with Satan without knowing it?

Is God using Satan somehow in my life?

And perhaps the greatest question about Satan is:

Why does God allow Satan to still exist?? What is his purpose? The answers may surprise you.

Even though the life-story of Satan is rarely told, it forms one of the most amazing of all true stories. Not because Satan is amazing, but because of what we learn about God himself when we study Satan. We learn some things we probably never considered before. This story is not just about God's enemy, Satan. It's also about God's "Servant" Satan.

Outline: Profiles of S.A.T.A.N

1. Where Did Spirits Come From Anyway?

Chapter 1 Where Did Spirits Come From Anyway?

Lucifer Imagines A Different World

Lucifer could hardly believe what he was seeing—unimaginable power! The Lord God was speaking—and things just began to appear. Things he had never seen before—things without names. The other angels were also awestruck beyond their wildest dreams but they were much more verbal about it. They composed some new songs, even though they struggled for words as they tried to describe all these new creations: light, earth, water, oceans, rocks, trees, plants, seeds, fruit, flowers, stars, planets, the sun, the moon...on and on it went, day after day they just kept appearing. Each new creation had its own unique glory, reflecting some aspect of the Lord's creative powers and loving character—especially all those new living creatures like the fish in the sea and the birds in the air and many magnificent varieties of animals on the earth. The angels hardly had enough time to thoroughly investigate and admire each of these new wonders to come up with a new song, because something else new would pop up first. They always knew the Lord was powerful, but this was almost unbelievable—except it was very real.

Then finally on the sixth day, the Lord paused to announce that he was about to create his special masterpiece—a human being—something that would be a little bit like a self-portrait—made in his own image he said! Lucifer was tingling with wonder, amazed at what he saw before him—the very first man—Adam. But it's what the Lord said to this living self-portrait that really caught his attention. Lucifer couldn't believe what the Lord's intention was for this new man. Lucifer should have been praising the Creator and his new plan, but instead he began to imagine a different use for this man. And so begins our story of Satan, and your story and mine.

Three Kinds Of Spirits

Everybody's story has a beginning and so does Satan's. But before we begin to talk about Satan's origin, we need to go back and introduce the spirit world in general first. Around the world, people have hundreds of different names for spirits or spiritual beings. Each culture and language group has its own traditional stories and variations of names. Some have many names, some, have just a few. But God's word, the Bible, teaches us that there are only three basic types of spiritual beings: God himself, various angels and human beings. Along with those, of course, we also need to introduce the places (or domains) where each of those spiritual beings exist. We can find them hidden in the very first verse of the Bible.

Genesis 1:1 says: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." In this verse we see the following:

God: he is the Beginning and Origin of all things. He existed before the earth and the universe existed, and so he has never needed any place (or domain) to exist. Therefore he is far more superior to all other spiritual beings and their domains because he is their creator! So in a sense,

God is a domain all by himself, 'For in him we live and move and have our being.' (Acts 17:28; Colossians 1:17).

The Heavens: "the heavens" were created as the primary domain or place of residence for angels.

The Earth: "the earth" is the domain of mankind. Man too was created as a spiritual being and we'll address that shortly.

Now let's focus on each of these three spiritual beings individually and their domains in more detail. The First Spiritual Being: God

Psalms 90:2 says: "Before the mountains were born or you brought forth the whole world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God." The Bible starts in Genesis 1:1 with God already in existence. God was not created. He always existed. Those who teach evolution or other alternatives will mock that theory, but let's face it, their theory requires much more faith to believe! Their explanations of how something so immensely complex and beautiful came from nothing are very unrealistic and their theories requires a huge amount of luck or chance—something that scientific minds don't normally like to believe in.

We believe that long before the heavens or land or food or water or a breath of air was created, God existed just fine on his own. It's hard to imagine the vast emptiness before the universe and our own world began—no planets, no sun or sunlight. No moon or stars, no earth or water, oceans or mountains. No streams or forests, just God. Was he lonely? Was he hungry? Was he lost in the dark? Was he afraid? No! God existed wonderfully, just fine all by himself, and he didn't need anything or anyone else to help him.

Colossians 1:17 says: "He is before all things, and in him all things hold together."

God was the creator of all those things, so he is not dependent on anything or anyone, including other spiritual beings. And since God is the creator of other spiritual beings and the domains where they live, then they need God in order to exist, from the beginning until now. God doesn't need the other spirits, nor does he need a place to live. God existed before time, so he is not limited by time. Other spirits are limited by time because they had a beginning. Since God himself created the other spirits, he alone determines the boundaries of where they live and where they can go and when. The Second Kind Of Spiritual Being: Angels From Genesis 1:1 we've learned that God first created the "heavens" (which is the domain of spirits called angels). And apparently their domain (heaven) was created before the earth was even made. We know this because Job 38 mentions angels as witnesses of the creation of the earth.

Job 38:4; Job 38:7 "...I laid the earth's foundation ...while the morning stars sang together and all the angels shouted for joy..."

God gave the heavens to the angels as their home or domain. We also learn that "the heavens" (plural) are referred to in three different ways throughout scripture:

First heaven: The Sky—the air or atmosphere that surrounds the earth (Genesis 1:6-8).

Second heaven: Space—the area where God placed the sun, moon and stars (Genesis 1:14-19).

Third heaven (or highest heaven): is also called Paradise (2 Corinthians 12:2-4). It's a special place created for nearness to God himself—a place of intimate fellowship with God.

Some people believe that heaven is God's home and that he has always lived there. But Genesis 1:1 shows us that God existed even before the heavens were created. Remember, God is not in need of a place to live like other spirits or humans.

1 Kings 8:27 says: "...The heavens, even the highest heaven, cannot contain you."

Isaiah 66:1 says: "This is what the LORD says: "Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool. Where is the house you will build for me? Where will my resting place be? Has not my hand made all these things, and so they came into being?" (also Jeremiah 23:24) So if heaven was not primarily made for God to live, then who was it for? The heavens were created as a place for other spiritual beings to live—initially angels. Since God exists everywhere, heaven is where God reveals himself the most. His glory is most visible to others in heaven. The domain of angels is called the "third heaven" or "highest heaven" probably because it is the place to experience the closest fellowship with God and visibly see his power and glory. In the Bible angels are often said to be living and communing in the presence of God in the third heaven.

God also says, "Heaven is my throne." A throne is a symbol of rule and authority, and so it seems that God created heaven similar to a king's throne room or presidential palace—a place from which God rules over his subjects. Since angels live in this "throne room," it gives us a clue that angels are part of God's authority structure and what some scholars call the divine council (Psalms 82:1; Psalms 89:7). Heaven is a wonderful place for the angels to live and meet with their God and King as they use his authority to serve and carry out his work. It's like the center of operations for the whole universe. The Third Kind Of Spiritual Being: Mankind When God created the heavens and the earth, he gave the earth to the third type of spiritual being: mankind (Genesis 1:26-28). We normally don't think of man as a spirit, but he is. Man is actually a spirit or soul hidden within a body. The body itself has no life of its own:

James 2:26 says: "...the body without the spirit is dead..." So the body is basically a house for the spirit of man. Think back to the creation of the first man:

Genesis 2:7 says: "Then the LORD God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being." The word for "breath" here in Hebrew is the same word for spirit. When God first began to create man, he created a lifeless body—perfectly created, but still without life. But after God put a spirit in the body of this man, then the body became alive. God's Spirit gives life to man's spirit, and man's spirit in turn is the life of that body. Without a spirit, the body is dead.

Since our spirits are invisible and housed in a visible body, we tend to think of ourselves primarily as physical beings rather than spiritual beings, but it seems that God sees us primarily as spiritual. That does NOT mean that the human body is bad or useless in God's mind. God always intended man's spirit to be housed in a body in order to glorify God. He always meant for both to function together—the spirit directing the body. So man is essentially a spiritual being at the core, but his spirit is linked so closely to a human body that only death separates the two. So now that we have introduced the three kinds of spiritual beings and their domains, we need to go back and fill in some details about where angels came from.

God Created All Angels Perfect And Gave Them Purpose

Angels are vastly different creatures than humans and much more intelligent and powerful, and it's probably very difficult for us humans to even begin to understand them since they are so very different. So God has not given us a lot of details about what angels are like and how they were created, but we have enough details to get a basic understanding.

We already know that God existed before the angels (spirits) and their heavenly domain were created. So, God must have created all these powerful angels, each one individually by his own power. Therefore, God is far greater than all the angels combined. God alone gave them life, knowledge and power. They are totally dependent on him and could not have come into being without him. God apparently made millions of these good angels. Revelation 5:11 also says that there are: "...many angels, numbering thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand" ...which is just another way of saying "more than we can count." And God gave power and knowledge to each one according to his will and purpose. Each one is a very powerful being with their own personality and distinct strengths, authority and areas of responsibility. Only an all-powerful, all-knowing God has the power to do that.

Colossians 1:16-17 says: "For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him." (NASB) This passage refers to the creation of invisible beings—the angels. It also shows us that they were given authority in certain areas of responsibility to God. God gave them authority and purpose and jobs to look after. They were created "for him"—for God's purposes. We'll discuss some of those later, but for now, it's important to understand that God is a perfect and holy God and so everything that he created, including the angels, was perfect and holy (Genesis 1:31). All the angels were good spirits when God made them. Later we'll see how some became evil.

What Type Of Bodies Do The Spirits Have?

Luke 24:39 says: "a spirit does not have flesh and bones..."(NKJV)

There are a few examples in the Bible of angels who are given the ability to become visible to humans temporarily. Usually they looked like other human beings and were seen by other people on a few special occasions. But generally, the Bible refers to them as "unseen" or "invisible." Most people think that angels or spirits don't have bodies. And it is true that they don't have the same flesh and bone type of body that people do. But keep in mind that these spirits can only be in one place at a time. The Bible talks about them gathering in one place or leaving one place and going to another or roaming around the earth (Job 2:2). Therefore, if they can only be in one place at a time, they must have some type of substance or "body" that is present in one location and moves from place to place. But it seems that God gave them a totally different type of body—something that is unseen by human eyes. We don't know for sure, but it could be possible that spirits are similar to air—having some substance but still invisible. Maybe that is why God used the same word for spirit as breath or wind in the Bible. Spirits are not hindered like we are by obstacles such as doors and fences. They can move through things that we can't. In some cultures, people are afraid of evil spirits and try to prevent them from entering their houses or villages by locking doors or putting up taboos of some sort. But those types of things can't prevent

spirits from going inside, because they have another type of body altogether. They can go through doors and walls. The Bible even gives examples of evil spirits actually entering into animals or people's bodies in order to control them or harm them. It seems that those spirits have a strong desire to hide or dwell inside of those bodies. We'll discuss them in another chapter.

Spirits Are More Powerful Than People But Nothing Compared To God

2 Peter 2:11 mentions that "...angels...are stronger and more powerful..." than humans. Angels (spirits) have incredible power. As we will see as we go through the Bible, angels can change the weather, move armies, influence kings and governments, enforce God's judgment and perform many other powerful acts. They can fly through space at incredible speeds but are unhindered by human limitations. Angels are much smarter than humans also. But even though it's true that angels are stronger and smarter than people, that doesn't mean that they are like God. They don't even compare with the power and wisdom of God. Only God is all-powerful since he alone is the source of all power. He is also the source of all wisdom and knowledge, so the angels don't even come close in comparison to God. God is totally different. He is omnipresent—existing everywhere at all times—but angels can only be at one place at a time. Angels have limitations, but God is not limited in power or wisdom, so he is totally superior and above all other spirit beings. God is Lord over everything, so therefore he's also over the entire spirit world. He created them, and they belong to him (1 Peter 3:22).

God Created Angels For His Own Purposes And Plans When God created angels he didn't make them slaves or robots. He created them with dignity and honor and the ability to enjoy a loving relationship with God, since that is what God is: he is a loving, relational God. So he wanted them also to be in a loyal relationship with him. He gave them great abilities and strengths, all of which show us God's perfection and power. God gave them the ability to learn and be curious (1 Peter 1:12), to express joy (Luke 15:10) and to appreciate God and honor and praise all that is good about him and to worship him (Hebrews 1:6). He also gave them purpose—to serve God by serving God's creation. What a privilege—to serve this awesome creative and caring God! Angels were created as powerful, highly honored spiritual beings in the service of the Most High God.

Here's an illustration to help us understand their relationship with God. If a highly skilled carpenter or builder builds a really nice house for himself, who would people praise when they see it? The carpenter of course. He would also have a purpose in mind for the house, so he has the right to decide what will be done with it. Because he made it. If he wants to live in the house himself, he can. If he wants someone else to use it, that's fine too. The builder can choose who will use it and how. Even if he chooses to leave it empty or even burn it down someday, he can do that because he is the creator and he doesn't have to ask anyone else, because he made it and it belongs to him. It's the same with God. He created all the angels so he should be the one who is praised and honored for how powerful the angels are. They are his creative handiwork, so he has ownership and authority over them. And he has the right to direct them however he feels is best. He also assigns specific jobs for them because he loves them and created them for a purpose. Did God Make Some Spirits Bad?

God is a good God, so when he made the angels, he created them all as good angels also. At that time there were no evil spirits (demons). God can't create anything bad because he's holy and righteous. Let's think about that word "holy" for a minute and use a word picture to help us

understand it. If you had a brand-new truck with a shiny paint job, would you let your friend borrow it to clean the manure pile out of his barn? No way! That paint job might not look too nice after that kind of a job. That would be work for an old beat-up truck. You would reserve your new truck for special work. That's similar to how God made the angels. When he made them, they were holy—set apart for God alone and his specific purposes. The angels were good and perfect, and God wanted them to do only good work, just like a man would set apart or reserve a nice new truck just for special work. That's what holy means—set apart only for God's specific purposes. It is true that evil spirits do exist now, but we will talk about them in the next chapter.

Heaven Created As A Place Or Domain For Angels To Live

God made heaven before he created the earth so the angels had a place to live and fellowship with him in heaven. Heaven is extremely different from our earth and it would be hard for us to understand what kind of a place it is and how wonderful it is. We don't know exactly where heaven is, but the Bible seems to show us that it is somewhere above us, beyond the sky and clouds.

Angels Are God's Servants To Help Mankind In the beginning, all the angels lived there in heaven with God. He created them to serve God in particular jobs, but it's not because God needs help with things or is lazy or unable to do certain types of work. We know that God is all-powerful, so he is able to create things or accomplish any task simply by thinking or speaking the words (Genesis 1:24). But it looks like God's main purpose for angels was to serve the humans that God placed on the earth (Hebrews 1:14) and take care of certain things on the earth that would affect those people. So God created and empowered angels to work alongside of him. Some scholars call these angels the assembly or divine council (Psalms 82:1; Psalms 89:7) because they help God administer things on the earth. In this way they glorify God and his creation. Later we'll see how the angels help people. But first we need to talk about demons.

2. Angel Rebellion

Chapter 2

Angel Rebellion Lucifer's Position Of Honor And Authority Among Angels

If you have ever seen a drawing of a large group of angels, the angels probably all looked alike. Probably that's because we really don't know much about them, but that's also how we often view them—as being all the same. But when God created the angels, he didn't make them all with the same strengths and knowledge like a mob without names or personalities, or like nameless machines or robots. They each have their own personalities and strengths and God gave them different jobs to do. The Bible also shows us that there are different categories of angels. Some are called Seraphim. They seem to be totally taken up with the holiness and worship of the Lord. We don't know much else about them (Isaiah 6:1-7).

Another category of angels is called Cherubim. From what we see in the Bible, it seems that Cherubim are usually found close to the throne of God, which means a high position of importance and authority—and high-ranking leadership over other angels. There are several passages in the Bible that refer to cherubim which we will mention. But first, we want to look at a couple of unusual and mysterious passages found in Isaiah 14:12-15 and Ezekiel 28:11-17.

These two passages talk about human kings (the kings of Babylon and Tyre) who lived long ago. Some scholars believe that one or both of them are also word pictures that talk specifically about the fall of Lucifer (Satan), because many of the things said about them could not refer to a human being. (2 Peter 2:4 and Jude 1:6 and some other verses in the New Testament are also references to Lucifer and other fallen angels.) The first verse is Isaiah 14:12, which refers to a king of Babylon. He is called a 'day star' which is sometimes translated 'Lucifer.' Some scholars believe that this king is also a word picture of a powerful cherubim connected with this king's power and that this passage is pointing to the fall of Satan or antichrist. Much of it is mysterious, but other passages describe him as a guardian cherub and being created perfect, glorious, and shining like a bright light. Whatever the case, we know that God created him as a brilliant example of God's love and creativity. Apparently, Lucifer was a leader over many angels. Some scholars think he was above them all.

God Himself Gave Lucifer His Power And Position

It's true that Lucifer was very powerful and had great authority, but he was still under God's authority (and still is.) Lucifer didn't give himself that high position of authority. It was all given to him as a gracious gift from God. Humans often become powerful in various ways—either through fame or inheriting wealth or being successful in business or through education or working in the government. But Lucifer didn't do any of that to deserve his special position. God himself just created him that way and assigned Lucifer to his high position of authority. It was God's choosing and creativity which made him the way he was. At First Lucifer Was Perfect, But He Had A Will To Choose At first Lucifer and all the angels were perfect—without any sin—just the way that God

had created them. They were created perfect, but God also gave them a choice to serve him or not. They were not like slaves or robots that were forced to obey him. They had a will with which to choose. They could choose to willingly submit to God or rebel against God.

Lucifer Chose To Be Proud And Rebel

Lucifer should have been happy and content with God's love and grace and the high position that God had given him. He should have been thankful and just love God in return and serve him. God had only been very generous and kind to Lucifer, and angels were not slaves—they were free to choose to submit to God or not. But eventually Lucifer himself turned his back on God. Instead of giving God the credit for everything he had received from his creator, Lucifer chose instead to exalt himself. Lucifer became proud.

Ezekiel 28:17 says: "Your heart became proud on account of your beauty, and you corrupted your wisdom because of your splendor..." (cf. 1 Timothy 3:6)

Isaiah 14:13-15 : "...you said in your heart, 'I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God, And I will sit on the mount of assembly... 'I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.'" (NASB) Lucifer Deceived Himself Into Thinking He Could Be Like God

Lucifer saw his own power and glory and wisdom, and he began to deceive himself—thinking that he could make himself be like the Most High God, maybe even better than God. He forgot that all his greatness and power came from God. Instead of being thankful to God, Lucifer became conceited. He no longer wanted to be under God's authority. Apparently, he wanted to become like God or take his place.

Other Angels Followed Lucifer In Rebellion

Lucifer was the first angel or spirit to rebel against God through pride and disobedience. But apparently, he must have enticed some of the other angels to join him in rebellion against God and become enemies of God. Many angels followed Lucifer in his rebellion. Perhaps it was many of those who were originally under his leadership who chose to follow his rebellion. We don't know, but either way Lucifer became the leader of a large group of thousands of rebellious angels. These evil spirits or evil angels are now called fallen angels or demons. Demons in the Bible and even those today are the very same angels which turned their backs on God long ago and have become his enemies.

God Already Knew About Lucifer's Evil Thoughts And Has The Right To Judge Him

Since God himself made all the angels, he knew all their thoughts, including Lucifer's. God already knew what they were thinking, and the evil mutiny they had in mind, even before they rebelled. Nothing is hidden from God. There is no way we can surprise God in any way. He knows our every thought, even before we can think them! And since God was Lucifer's Creator and gave him his power and knowledge, then Lucifer belongs to God and is responsible directly to him. God alone has the right to determine for Lucifer and the other angels what is good and what is evil, so he has the right to judge them also.

God Is Above Lucifer And The Evil Spirits Too Was God going to let Lucifer succeed in his rebellion? Would the thousands of rebellious angels frighten God into surrender? Would he allow Lucifer to take over his position as King of kings? Never! It would be like a proud, headstrong child deciding that he wanted to take over as the mayor of a city. Would the mayor allow the child to do it? It's laughable to even think that the mayor would allow such a thing. In the same way, there is no possible way God would allow Lucifer to take his place. Lucifer could never successfully overthrow God since God alone is the source of all power and wisdom. Only God can be King over all.

Lucifer Is Separated From God So now Lucifer had rebelled and become God's bitter enemy. What would God say? How would he respond? Would he say, "Oh, it's just a first-time offense. We'll let it go this time." Does God just brush off sin like that as if it's nothing? No way! He doesn't just let it slide by. God is holy and perfect and must judge sin and deal with it. So he separated himself from Lucifer. Separation from God meant that the life and character of God no longer existed in Lucifer. Lucifer no longer acted like the God who created him. Instead, Lucifer was now the opposite of God's character.

God Kicks Lucifer Out Of Heaven, But Still Has Use For Him When Lucifer rebelled, his sin separated him from God's fellowship. God chose not to fellowship any longer with Lucifer and the rebel angels. He doesn't want to live with them or have them live alongside the good angels. So God threw the rebels out of heaven.

Isaiah 14:12 says: "How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground..."(NKJV)

So, if you were God, what would you have done with Lucifer after that? Most of us would say that we would have sent him directly to his final punishment in hell. But strangely, God did not—not yet anyway. Instead, he sent him to the earth. Even though he is still God's enemy, in a strange sort of way he still remains one of God's servants. Since he is still under God's ultimate authority, God can still use him, his enemy, for his own purposes! We will continue to see many examples of that.

Romans 11:33-34 says: "Oh, how great are God's riches and wisdom and knowledge! How impossible it is for us to understand His decisions and His ways! For who can know the LORD's thoughts? Who knows enough to give him advice?" (NLT) Millions Of Angels Didn't Turn Their Backs On God

It's true that thousands and thousands of angels chose to follow Lucifer in rebellion, and some people believe as many as one third of all the angels rebelled (Revelation 12:4). But thankfully not all of them did. In fact, the majority of the angels chose to continue following God, so there are millions of them still in heaven who continue to do God's work (Revelation 5:11, Daniel 7:10). Later we'll discuss the good angels also and the type of work they do.

God Prepared Hell For Lucifer And His Followers

God has prepared a place of punishment for Lucifer and the other angels that became his enemies. This fiery place is called hell, but it's important to understand that Lucifer isn't there yet. God just prepared hell for them in advance (Matthew 25:41), and he will send them there later after he finally judges them. Hell is translated from the word Gehenna in the Bible and it is the final

place of torment for all the rebellious angels—they will be there forever (Revelation 20:10). It is also called the second death and the lake of fire. There are other Hebrew and Greek words in the Bible that some people think refer to this place called hell and are sometimes even translated that way. But they refer to death, the grave or a temporary place of imprisonment for rebellious spirits like demons. Some of the other names that can be confusing are: Sheol, Hades, Tartarus and Abyss. We won't discuss all the meanings of these now, but we can rest assured that God can and will punish the proud angels like Lucifer and his followers. That's why he created hell.

Hell is a real place and God can't allow the demons to continue in their disobedience forever. God's holiness and righteousness demands that he punishes sin and those who disobey him. Later he will also judge all the people that have followed Satan and turned their backs on God. They will also be judged and sent to hell—a place for people who don't want to trust God.

Matthew 25:41 says: "Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.'"

Lucifer Gets A New Name: Satan

Lucifer and his rebel angels hate God bitterly, and ever since God kicked them out of heaven, they have been fighting against him constantly. Their whole goal and purpose is to oppose God in every way and try to ruin anything he does. Lucifer has become God's main adversary, so God gave him a new name, Satan, which means 'adversary' or 'enemy' because he has become God's most bitter enemy. Sometimes he is called the devil, and the evil spirits or angels that followed Satan are called demons. The Evil Angels Now Roam Throughout The Earth

God is holy, and he chooses to separate himself from fellowshiping with Satan and the demons. So he kicked them out of heaven and now Satan and his demons live on the earth. These evil spirits (demons) don't just live in faraway lands or deep jungle areas, but everywhere on the earth. And yet, even though it's true that they live in every country on earth, we must remember that they aren't omnipresent (everywhere at once). Only God is omnipresent. Satan and his demons can only be in one place at a time. If they want to go somewhere else, they must leave the place they are and go to the other. So now they roam around the earth and sky and are very actively seeking to confuse and deceive us all (Job 2:2; 1 Peter 5:8). In some places, people often think of these earthly spirits as good spirits which are there to help us in some way. But actually these earthly spirits just want to deceive and trick us and ultimately destroy us if they can. On the other hand, God's good angels who live in heaven usually work unnoticed and are rarely seen on the earth.

There Is Just One Kind Of Evil Spirit, Not Different Kinds In Different Places

Various cultures around the world have their own customs and beliefs about good and evil spirits, and different names for each. But actually, there are not many different types of spirits in various countries. God only made angels. Some of those angels are still in heaven with God, but the angels which rebelled against God are now living on this earth. We call them fallen angels or demons, and no matter what country they are in, all demons are the same angels that followed Lucifer in rebellion long ago. They may try to deceive people by appearing in various forms in different places and may even try to portray themselves as harmless or good spirits. But they are still all part of Satan's evil army of demons who now live on the earth as our enemies. These same spirits have tried to deceive our ancestors for hundreds of years. And they want to deceive us also.

How does it make you feel when you consider that their primary goal and purpose is to deceive and destroy you and your children? Do you ever think about it? Does it concern you? It should. They are not just God's enemies. The Bible says they are our enemies too. We are at war with these powerful spiritual enemies and we cannot just ignore them. They have already had many victims and the Bible tells us to be aware of them. Ignorance is dangerous. We need to learn their methods and how they operate. And we must be very careful so they don't deceive us and make us their victims also. This is not a game that they play! Whether we like it or not, we need to take it seriously! So let's take a closer look at how this spiritual war began and how our early forefathers were deceived by Satan.

3. Satan Steals Man's Kingdom And Domain

Chapter 3 Satan Steals Man's Kingdom And Domain A Loving Creator Prepared Everything On Earth For Mankind So far we've talked about two types of spirit beings: God and the angels. Now let's go on to the third type of spiritual being—humans. But first let's talk about mankind's domain or kingdom—earth. When God was getting ready to create man, he first prepared everything to be in place in advance before he placed humans on the earth. Everything man would require was in place for him to enjoy. God wanted it to be a perfect environment for humans to live. So he made the soil and water and plants and animals, the trees and flowers, the mountains and oceans, the sun, moon and stars and all sorts of other things both large and small. He also provided things like flowers and grass and other types of food for the many kinds of animals, birds and fish and all the sea creatures.

All these amazing and beautiful things show God's great power and beautiful creativity while also providing everything that was needed for animals and humans to eat and live well. Every insect had food to eat—God didn't forget one detail. Our loving God created a perfect world for mankind to live well and thrive (Genesis 1). So, after he had created and prepared everything in man's domain, then he was finally ready to create the first human. The Spirit Of A Person Is The Life Of That Person When we see other human beings walking around, we don't normally think of them as spirits because we all have physical bodies. But people are primarily spiritual beings. In God's eyes we are spirits that have bodies. God created the very first human, Adam, as a spiritual being.

Genesis 2:7 says: "Then the Lord God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being."

We've talked about this verse before. The word 'breath' here has two meanings in Hebrew. One meaning is 'breath' and the other is 'spirit.' This means that when God gave a spirit to man, he also gave him life (the breath of life). Notice here that when God first took dirt and formed Adam's body, it wasn't alive yet—it was perfectly made, but it was just a lifeless body. But after God breathed his breath (spirit) into this body it became alive. So the invisible spirit of a man is the actual real person, whereas the body is more like a house for that spirit to live in. So the spirit of a man can leave his body, but if it does, then his body will be dead and lifeless (John 19:30). A body without a spirit will decay and become dust again, because the spirit is the life of that body.

God Created Man As A Spiritual Being, Like Himself God is a Spirit and he made man "in his image," so that man is a spiritual being in the image of God.

Genesis 1:26-27 : "Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness..." God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them." (NASB) The Holy Spirit Is The Source Of Life For Man's Spirit The human spirit comes from God himself, and that spirit gives life to man's body. So God's Spirit is the source of life for the human spirit and body of man.

John 6:63 says: “The Spirit gives life. (2 Corinthians 3:6 b) In many places in the Bible God’s Spirit is called the Holy Spirit. He’s always been one with God the Father and God the Son. Together we call them the Trinity. The Holy Spirit has existed from eternity past, and as part of the Trinity, he took part in the creation of the earth (Genesis 1:2). And apparently when God created man and put the spirit of life within him, the Holy Spirit was also joined with that spirit of man.

Job 33:4 says: “The Spirit of God has made me; the breath of the Almighty gives me life.” The Holy Spirit gives life to man and God intended the Holy Spirit to always be an essential part of man—an indwelling full-time companion for perfect fellowship and unity, and to direct his every thought and help him with every plan that he makes in life.

Job 32:8 says: “...it is the spirit in a person, the breath of the Almighty, that gives them understanding.”

Why Did God Give Man A Spirit? So why did God give man a spirit and make him a spiritual being? He didn’t give his Spirit to other creatures or animals. But God did give man a spirit, so he could be a spiritual being like God himself, in his image—so he could be like a son. In fact, in Luke 3:38 the Bible calls Adam “the son of God.” So God wanted children that would be similar to himself—made in his image as spiritual beings—so that they could have fellowship together with their Father God, and so that the Father could rule the earth through his children. God created man as a heavenly being—a spiritual being with a direct connection to God. But he put this spiritual being in a physical body and made him ruler over the earth on behalf of God his Father. All the other living things of the earth like trees and animals don’t have spirits and they don’t have the same kind of intelligence that man has, so they don’t have the same ability to be in close fellowship with God and love him. God wanted man to be special, so he created him as a son in his own image. God gave part of himself—his very own Spirit—to Adam, in order to be united or joined with Adam’s spirit, so that they could communicate easily together and understand each other and fellowship together in every way.

Woman

After God created Adam, he wanted to create a woman as a life-long partner and companion for Adam. But God did not start all over by creating a totally different human altogether. Rather he created the woman (Eve) out of Adam’s body by using one of Adam’s ribs. So woman was also created in God’s image just like Adam was (Genesis 1:26). At that time they both had a very close friendship with God and the Spirit of God was in perfect fellowship with their spirits. These days we don’t really know anyone who has that same kind of perfect fellowship that Adam and Eve had with God. Why is that, and what has happened that made mankind become so distant from God and unfriendly towards him? It was sin!

Satan Wanted To Break The Fellowship Between God And Man When God had created Adam and Eve he put them in a beautiful garden. They didn’t lack anything. Everything was peaceful for them and they had perfect close fellowship with God and with each other. God’s Spirit was in perfect harmony with Adam and Eve’s spirit and nothing hindered their closeness. But Satan had lost his fellowship with God and he hated the fact that Adam and Eve had a loving relationship with God. Satan was probably jealous and wanted to separate them and create a division between them. Satan knew that God had forbidden the fruit of one of the trees, so he wanted to tempt them

to rebel and disobey God and eat the fruit so there would be a division between them and God.

God's Kingdom And Man's Kingdom

Satan also wanted to steal man's kingdom. But before we talk about that, we first need to understand how God's kingdom works. A kingdom is basically the government of a king. Most kings govern or rule over one nation, and some very powerful kings even rule over other kings in several countries. But God is the Supreme Ruler or King over all countries and all people groups around the world, and over all the angels in the heavens—even Satan and his demons.

1 Chronicles 29:11 says: "Yours, LORD, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the majesty and the splendor, for everything in heaven and earth is yours. Yours, LORD, is the kingdom; you are exalted as head over all."

It's also important to understand that the Bible teaches that God's kingdom has always existed and always will exist because the Kingdom of God is eternal. It had no beginning and will never end.

Daniel 4:3 says: "... his kingdom is an eternal kingdom; his dominion endures from generation to generation." (2 Peter 1:11) So we see then that God's kingdom has always existed, and it is the supreme authority over all other kingdoms that exist under it. All kingdoms and all authority come from God himself.

Romans 13:1 says: "...for there is no authority except that which God has established..."

2 Chronicles 20:6 says: "...You rule over all the kingdoms of the nations...and no one can withstand you."

Man Is Given A Kingdom—Under God When God created the earth and everything in it, he wanted mankind to be in charge of the earth. The Bible specifically says that one of the main reasons he created mankind in his image was in order that they rule. And so just like their Father who was King over all, Adam and Eve were given a kingdom to rule also—the earth.

Genesis 1:26 says: "Then God said, 'Let us make humankind in our image, after our likeness, so they may rule...'" (NET) Psalms 115:16 says: "The highest heavens belong to the LORD, but the earth he has given to mankind." So God created the earth to be man's kingdom. Just like God gave the heavens as a domain to the angels, now God wanted man to rule the domain of the earth as God's designated king (Psalms 8:6). God is a King and he made man to be a king also—the king of the earth. The earth was to be man's special domain and he was to be God's agent or representative ruler over this kingdom called earth. The earth would be a sub-kingdom—it would be the Kingdom of God under mankind. Man was to look after the earth and rule over it in the same way God would. But the earth still belongs to God and always will (Psalms 24:1)—because God is...

...the King of kings and Lord of lords. (1 Timothy 6:15) Satan Wanted To Steal Man's Kingdom

What was Satan thinking when God created the world and put man over it as ruler of the earth? We don't know for sure, but we do know that Satan was very proud and wanted to be like God and rule like a king. He failed to overthrow God in heaven, so now that God created the earth and gave it to mankind to rule, Satan was probably very jealous of man because God had given him a

special kingdom to rule over. Maybe Satan thought he could rule the earth instead. Adam and Eve were supposed to rule earth in close fellowship with God under his authority. But Satan knew that these humans were not as powerful as he was. Maybe he could somehow defeat these humans. Satan despised and hated God, so by tempting Adam and Eve to rebel against God he could possibly steal the kingdom from them by becoming their king. And since God had told Adam and Eve to be fruitful and fill the earth with people, maybe Satan thought that Adam and Eve could create a whole race of people that would rebel against God. Perhaps they would become a world full of enemies against God, just like him. We're not sure of everything Satan was thinking, but we do know what he did. He started out by disguising himself inside a snake. So let's read Genesis 3 and see what Satan did in order to steal the kingdom of man.

Genesis 3:1-5 says: "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'?" The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, 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.'" "You will not certainly die," the serpent said to the woman. "For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

Satan Hid In A Snake

So here in Genesis 3 we read the story about how Satan used a snake to talk to Adam's wife, Eve. These days snakes generally aren't in the habit of talking to people, but Satan, who is a spirit being, hid inside the snake and took control of the snake and did the talking (2 Corinthians 11:3; Revelation 12:9). Satan didn't want to frighten Eve in any way, so he hid inside a creature that Eve would be familiar with. Of course at that time snakes were harmless and didn't bite people, so Adam and Eve weren't the least bit afraid of this snake or any other animal for that matter. They could walk among them and touch and hold them as much as they liked. The animals had no fear of man either (until Genesis 9:2). So Adam and Eve probably spent a lot of time exploring God's creation and admiring all of God's incredible creatures with their many amazing characteristics. Each day brought new discoveries and new praise for their wonderful creator! Apparently at that time, snakes were considered the cleverest of all the animals God had created. Maybe this snake was really good at climbing trees or blending in with the leaves or maybe he was always quietly sneaking up on Adam and Eve for fun. Regardless of what made him so clever, most likely Satan had studied Eve carefully and thought she would admire the snake for all its great qualities and not be surprised by discovering some new skill that the snake had, like talking (3:1).

Satan Doesn't Usually Work Out In The Open. He Uses Disguises And Trickery So why would Satan disguise himself when he talked with Eve? This story shows us Satan's true character. He doesn't usually come out in the open and do his dirty work. Instead he hides and disguises himself and uses deceit to draw people into sin. That's a very typical enemy tactic—they usually hide what they are up to. Satan is a deadly enemy. And even though he often pretends to be friendly, he doesn't want to help us in any way, but rather he wants to destroy us completely. He is God's enemy and ours also.

Satan Mixes God's Word With Lies

Satan is the “father of lies” (John 8:44) which means he keeps creating new lies all the time. He uses all kinds of deceit and schemes to trick people into their own ruin. He’s not stupid. He’s extremely clever about how he presents the lies since he doesn’t want us to know that we are being deceived. So he doesn’t make it obvious. Instead, he mixes a little bit of error with a lot of truth. So it takes away our natural suspicions and we believe every bit of it is true. That’s exactly how he deceived Eve—through partial truths.

Word Picture: The Way To Hide A Hook And Catch Fish

Satan’s methods are similar to what fishermen use every day. If they want to catch fish, they don’t just throw in a hook on a line. That doesn’t attract fish. Instead they hide the hook inside some bait to tempt the fish. The fish will not notice the hook hidden inside of the bait until it’s too late and he’s caught.

Satan tempts us in a similar way. His lies are like the hook he uses to ruin us. But he doesn’t leave his lies exposed out in the open. He usually hides a small lie inside of a lot of truth, just like the hook hidden in the bait. If we believe this hidden lie, it’s like a fish happily swallowing the hook and ending up in the frying pan. Satan has many ways to hide his lies in order to deceive and destroy us. It’s his full-time job. On the other hand, God always tells the truth.

Satan Tempts Eve With The Bait

Satan really wanted to destroy Adam and Eve’s life, so he tempted Eve with a promise that if she ate the fruit, she would become enlightened and become wiser—“like God.” This lie was bait on the hook. Satan told Eve:

“You will not certainly die,” the serpent said to the woman. “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 3:4-5) Does this sound a little familiar? When Satan told Eve: “...you will be like God,” does this remind you of something else? Actually, Satan had deceived himself in a very similar way—he also wanted to become like God. Now he was tempting Eve with the same lie that he deceived himself with. The Names And Profiles of S.A.T.A.N.

If we look at what Satan said to Adam and Eve in Genesis 3:1-5, it will help us understand the ways he works now too. The letters in his name form an acronym that can help remind us of some of his other names. God used these names throughout the Bible to teach us about Satan’s methods and his character. This chart can also be used to form a simple mini-outline of Satan’s story which we will introduce here with the temptation of Adam and Eve. We’ll expand the meanings of these names as we follow Satan’s story progressively through the Bible.

God Wanted Man To Do The Right Thing

It’s very important to understand that God was the one who put the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil in the garden. Satan did not. Even if Satan did not exist or if he had never rebelled against God, the tree would still have been there in the garden. And even if Satan had never tempted Adam and Eve, God still wanted that tree to be there. God was not trying to trick Adam and Eve so they would fall into sin. He had a purpose for putting the tree there—He wanted them to choose to do the right thing. God is perfectly good and always had Adam and Eve’s best interests in mind when he told them NOT to eat from that tree—no tricks or hidden agenda. He just

told them the simple truth. “Don’t eat it,” he said. Was this a test? Yes, in a way it was a test of loyalty and love, because without a choice, there is no love. But this choice or test was not a temptation because God does NOT tempt people to evil (James 1:13). He was not trying to trick them into eating the fruit. God did not secretly want them to fail, but instead he wanted them to PASS THE TEST—to do the right thing. Doing the right thing is called righteousness. God highly values righteousness because he himself is righteous and he created us to be like him—to imitate his righteousness. So yes, this was a test of righteousness. God wanted Adam and Eve to trust him completely and obey him by doing the right thing. Even though Adam and Eve were innocent, they were still not righteous. They were still untested.

Righteousness Is Not Just A Lack Of Sin—It Involves A Choice

Some people think that righteousness in the Bible means being forgiven or being without sin. But righteousness is more than just a lack of sin. Righteousness involves a choice to do what is right when there is an option. God wanted Adam and Eve to choose to do the right thing—to trust God alone and therefore obey him (by not eating that fruit). If Adam and Eve trusted God and chose to do the right thing, that would be righteousness. They would be acting righteously—reflecting God’s righteousness.

God Allowed Satan To Tempt Adam And Eve

God knew that Satan wanted to tempt mankind, and he allowed it. We don’t know all his reasons but we do know that he wanted them to resist Satan. By resisting they would become even stronger to resist Satan and evil. Possibly that could have stopped Satan forever. We don’t know. But even if Satan had never come to the garden and tempted mankind, God still wanted them to make this good choice. So God gave man a choice to reflect God’s character—a choice to willingly choose righteousness.

If man by faith in God chose the right thing (and obeyed), that would greatly honor God and give him glory because man would be acting as God would—and so he would be reflecting God’s character and his glorious image. But God did not force man to honor him. Forced honor is not honor. Forced love is not love. It had to be man’s choice. God gave man a choice to do the right thing, but Satan lied and made the wrong choice sound enticing and good.

Adam And Eve Submitted To Satan And Died Spiritually

God did not want Adam and Eve to rebel against him or be hurt by Satan. He wanted them to trust him—to believe and submit to him. Unfortunately, Adam and Eve chose to trust and submit to Satan instead—by eating the fruit from the tree that God had forbidden. By disobeying God they became “children of disobedience” (Ephesians 2:2; Ephesians 5:6; Colossians 3:6). By submitting to Satan they immediately placed themselves under his rule.

Romans 6:16 says: “Don’t you know that when you offer yourselves to someone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one you obey...?” So now Adam and Eve served Satan and were in Satan’s family—in Satan’s kingdom. They died spiritually immediately, which means that they were now separated from God’s Spirit. God’s Spirit was no longer joined or linked to man’s spirit. God’s Spirit was now separated from man’s spirit, so man’s spirit no longer had the Spirit of God to guide and control his thoughts and actions anymore. They were now separated and distant and it

was quickly obvious, because they were immediately ashamed and hid from God. And even when God called out for them, they were afraid of him (Genesis 3:9-10). This was a new thing—a totally new feeling. Adam and Eve had always been very close to God in every way. They had walked and talked with ease with their loving Father, and enjoyed great fellowship together. But now they were ashamed and hiding from him. This is how we know that they were already “spiritually dead” in relation to God. God is the origin of life, so therefore the meaning of death is to be separated from him. Adam and Eve’s spirits were no longer in close fellowship with God. In God’s eyes, their spirits were like dead men who do not hear and do not respond. And so now none of Adam’s descendants hear God’s voice very well. The spirit of man is now like a dead man that doesn’t listen to God.

Man Became God’s Enemy And Joined Satan’s Kingdom

God had created man to be like him (Genesis 1:26-27) and he gave him a spirit so he could fellowship closely with God. But now man had chosen to become rebellious like Satan, and follow his own desires and was no longer close to God. God’s Spirit was no longer living in man to guide him. When children are born today, they also are born into Adam’s family which is part of Satan’s kingdom and family. As they grow up, they don’t have to be taught to be rebellious or do evil. They do it naturally, all by themselves, because their spirits are also separated from God.

Satan Hides The Truth About Hell And The Spirits Of Dead People

Satan knows that he will someday be sent to a place of eternal punishment (hell), so he wants to drag everybody else there with him too. But he doesn’t want us to know about hell and fear it. So for hundreds of years he spread lies to deceive our ancestors. He used demons to spread those lies so that people everywhere think that when they die, they stay nearby. Some people think the spirits of the dead remain close by, near to their own family or in their houses. Some think that they go to a place in the jungle or to a mountain somewhere, or a water hole or a lake or the ocean.

Satan has also used many kinds of deception to make people think that his spirits (the demons) which roam the earth are actually the spirits of their dead ancestors. He does this so we’ll believe they’re still here in this world with us and that we can communicate with them if we want. The demons try to deceive us so we’ll be afraid of them instead of being afraid of hell. But God doesn’t lie to us. He says that the spirits of the dead no longer live with the living people here on the earth (Luke 16:19-31) and they are not allowed to communicate with us. We’ll talk about that more later.

Satan Pretends To Be Our Friend Until We Die

Satan is a master of changing his disguise. So sometimes he likes to use demons to frighten us and at other times he tries to act like our friend. He wants to befriend us until we end up in hell, which would make him very happy. So he lied to our forefathers, making them believe that some of the demons were “good spirits” which would help them in various ways. In some countries, people try to get the spirits to give them guidance concerning the future or help with food in their gardens or healing for sicknesses or many other things. But instead, these spirits don’t want to help us at all. They just deceive people until their lives are destroyed.

Parable Of The Blind Pig

Consider an illustration. In some places around the world, people raise pigs without using fences. And so sometimes they purposely blind the pigs so they won't wander far from home. They want to fatten them up, so after they blind them, they start feeding them a lot of food so they will just lie around close to home and grow very big. They treat them almost like pets. The pigs love their masters and love being with them. They don't know that their owners have one thing in mind—to fatten them up to kill. This is a good picture of what Satan did with many of our ancestors. They didn't realize that Satan and his demons were trying to make them spiritually blind by deceiving them in order to destroy them later—just like the owner of the pig was just pretending to be nice to the pig. Satan and the demons just wanted to befriend them for their own purposes, so they fed them with lies until they died. Did Satan Defeat God, Or Not?

Satan tempted Adam and Eve to sin and they fell because they didn't believe God's words. By following their own thoughts and desires, they rebelled and turned against God. Satan won a great victory against mankind. But did he also defeat God by defeating mankind? Was God surprised when this happened to Adam and Eve? No, not at all. God knows everything long before it happens, and he knew this would happen. God allowed man a choice and man chose the wrong way. But Satan can't defeat God. From the beginning, God had a wonderful plan to rescue mankind from Satan. So he told Satan right away that he would be defeated, and he gave Adam and Eve a promise that it would be fulfilled.

God Promised That Satan Would Be Defeated—By A Human! In Genesis 3:15 God spoke to the snake (and Satan) and said:

“And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.” This prophecy is a word picture which foretells that a human being (the offspring of Eve) would someday come and do battle with the snake (referring to Satan). Since the Bible usually traces the lineage through the male (in this case Adam), it is unusual for this prophecy to say that this promised one who would fight with Satan would be an offspring of Eve. This is the first biblical clue that this promised one who would defeat Satan would not have an earthly father. The Bible also says that the snake would attack the heel of the man, while the man would attack the head of the snake. We know that Satan isn't really a snake—he was just hiding inside the real snake. So this word picture shows us that while this man is fighting with Satan, Satan would try to destroy him ('strike his heel'). If a snake strikes someone on the heel, that shows he is attacking from behind. This shows us that Satan would use deceit in order to try to destroy this promised one. But the promised one will still completely triumph over Satan ('crush his head'). We know that if you crush the head of a snake, it will die, because the head of the snake is a symbol of his strength. From this we see that this man would be victorious over Satan's power and authority, and Satan would be totally defeated. This is how God planned to redeem those who are under Satan's power so they can live again in fellowship with God.

What would Satan's reaction be to this kind of prophecy? Satan had abused his power and taken advantage of Adam and Eve who were weaker in power than he. He thought he had struck a hard blow against God when he had defeated these two humans and gotten them on his side so that all their offspring would now be enemies of God. But now God had prophesied that actually a human (from Eve) would be the one to fight with Satan and win. Satan would not have been happy to hear that a human could defeat him! How would that be possible? Is The Order Of This Prophecy

Backwards??

It's interesting to note the order of the events in God's prophecy in this verse above. It says:

...he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel." This order would seem to be backwards. In the word picture, it would seem more logical that the snake would strike the heel first, and then the heel would fatally crush the head of the snake afterwards. But if we consider that God is the one in control of how things happen, we realize that God will not be surprised by Satan's attack. He was anticipating it ahead of time so in God's mind he is crushing the head of the snake, even before Satan (the snake) strikes—because God always knows ahead of time what Satan will do. But Satan does NOT know what God will do!! So even though Satan may sometimes deceive himself and think that he is ahead of God and winning against him, instead he is always losing.

Things That Aren't Powerful Will Defeat Satan's Power

Even though Adam and Eve were together at the time of temptation (3:6), Satan had focused on talking to and tempting the woman, Eve. We don't know exactly why Satan chose her. It could be that Adam was more cautious, and Eve was more accepting of new ideas and quick to try out something different, so Satan thought she would be more vulnerable and easier to trick with his deceitful words (1 Timothy 2:14). But after they disobeyed, God said that it would actually be someone from the woman's lineage that would be the one to defeat Satan. God wanted to show Satan that whatever he thought was a weakness, God would use to defeat him. Satan could not defeat God.

We've heard God's promise. Satan heard it too, and he would have thought about it a lot and worried too. Satan is a very powerful spiritual being—so could this prophecy possibly come true? Could a human being actually defeat a strong spirit like Satan? From that point on, Satan must have thought about the prophecy often. So he watched and waited for that man that was promised to come. He planned to kill that promised one as quickly as possible. Satan certainly didn't want any offspring of Eve to come and defeat him.

Satan Wanted To Kill The Man Of Promise

Later, Adam and Eve had their first two sons named Cain and Abel. Satan watched them carefully. Would one of these sons be the man of promise who was to come and defeat him? Cain and Abel both wanted to come close to God and be accepted by him, but Cain didn't really believe God's word or trust God. So he wanted to come to God in his own way and in his own strength. But Abel trusted God.

Hebrews 11:4 says: "By faith Abel brought God a better offering than Cain did. By faith he was commended as righteous..."

It was faith that set Abel apart from his brother. Abel trusted God to save him, and he lived out his faith by how he approached God. He repented of his sinfulness and brought a blood sacrifice, showing that he realized he himself deserved to die, and trusted God alone to forgive and save him. But apparently Cain did not trust God. He came to God in his own proud way. Instead of repenting of his sinfulness and trusting in God to save him, Cain showed by his actions that he was depending on his own abilities and strengths to be accepted by God. He should have brought a blood sacrifice—showing that he deserved death because of his sin. But instead of bringing a

sheep as God had shown Adam and Eve, Cain brought his own garden produce that he had worked hard for. Even though Cain pretended to be religious, it seems that he was an unbeliever, whereas Abel was righteous in God's eyes because he had faith in God alone—not himself. Satan possibly realized then that Abel was favored by God and might even be the man of promise, so he wanted to make sure to kill him quickly.

1 John 3:12 says that, "...Cain...belonged to the evil one and murdered his brother." (Genesis 4:8) So we see that Satan used Cain as his slave to do his evil work against his believing brother. Satan does the same today. He will use anyone who will listen to him as his slave in order to fight against God and his children. Satan always fights against God's children and everything that God is doing.

Death Is Not A Defeat For A Believer

After Abel was dead, Satan may have thought that he had killed the promised one and won against God. Of course, it is not possible to defeat God, but sometimes it might look like Satan is winning in the battle against God. Keep in mind also that even though Abel died, he is much better off now in heaven with God. Sometimes God allows an early death for his own reasons—just like Abel.

"...by faith Abel still speaks, even though he is dead." (Hebrews 11:4) Satan Is A Murderer

Satan is not all-knowing like God. He doesn't know the future. So he couldn't know when God would send the man God had promised to crush the head of the serpent. So instead he tries to kill and murder anyone he thinks is a threat to him, like Abel.

John 8:44 says: "...the devil... he was a murderer from the beginning..." So from the beginning of time, we see a long history of Satan's work of trying to persecute or kill or destroy all those who believe in God. He has used unbelievers to try to destroy people like Abraham, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, David and others like them, whose stories we can read in the Bible. Although Satan's purpose is always to harm believers, God will actually sometimes use Satan to help believers too. Satan doesn't realize everything that God is doing, but God is all-powerful and all-wise, so he can even use Satan's hate for believers in order to benefit them. In our next story we'll talk about one instance where this happened.

4. Satan Attacks And Strengthens Believers

Chapter 4 Satan Attacks—And Strengthens Believers God Can Use Even His Enemies As His Servants

One of the hardest questions that people often wonder about is: “Why does God let Satan remain on this earth?” We cannot know all of God’s reasons, but in this book you will hopefully find some of those answers. And in this particular chapter we want to look into at least one major reason why God chose to let Satan remain on this earth. Even though Satan has become God’s enemy, God is still vastly more powerful. Therefore Satan is still under God’s ultimate rule, so God can remove Satan at any time if he wants, or limit his efforts. Or if he chooses, God can use Satan to accomplish some of his own goals. Of course, Satan doesn’t like to help God in any way, but since God’s wisdom is far above Satan’s, then when Satan tries to hurt God’s children, God can then turn it around so that it ends up helping people in the end. The Bible is full of stories like this, and we’ll study some of them. But one story stands out in the Old Testament and it can really help us understand this idea. It comes from the book of Job. It’s different than most other stories in the Bible. This story allows us to see things that are not normally seen, and hear things that are not normally heard. It looks into the invisible world of angels and spirits, and it shows how God talks to Satan and how he can use him too.

What Kind Of Man Was Job?

It would be best to read Job chapters 1 & 2 now in order to get the context of our story.

Beginning with Job 1:1-5, we see that Job was an important leader in the town of Uz and a man of exceptional character. The Bible describes Job as:

“blameless, upright, fearing God and turning away from evil.” This doesn’t mean that Job was perfect. He was a sinner just like all of us, but just like other believers in the Bible, he did trust God to save him, so he was considered righteous in God’s eyes. It also shows us that Job loved God so much and turned from evil and followed God so closely that in the eyes of other people he was “blameless.” In other words, people would not be able to easily find fault with him—as was the case with Job’s friends. So Job had an incredibly good testimony for others to see and follow, and only God himself would be able to see any hidden sin in his life.

God had greatly blessed Job in many different ways and he was very wealthy. Job had:

7 sons and 3 daughters

7000 sheep, 300 camels, 1000 cows, 500 donkeys

Many servants—probably at least 100-200 just to care for all the animals that he owned!

Job had many possessions and he was an important man in other people’s eyes. But God was more important to him than all his possessions. He really wanted his family and others to follow God, so he prayed for them all the time.

Angels Come To Report To God In Job 1:6-12 we get a rare view of the spirit world, which includes both angels and demons. Verse 6 says that the angels were gathered together to meet with God. So where were the angels previously that they had to come together? And why were they coming together to talk with God? God had created the angels and assigned them jobs in order to care for people on the earth and do other tasks in the heavens—later we'll look at some of their responsibilities.

All these angels are under God's direction or supervision, so instead of every one of them just doing their own thing, they have specific tasks that God has given them. And apparently they report back to him. It's true that God already knows what each individual angel is doing at all times, but since they are God's creation, he loves to communicate and fellowship with them on a regular basis. And so it looks like sometimes he calls them together and they give a report to him. God is all-powerful over all the angels, so all angels are responsible to him.

God Talks To Satan About Job

Satan is also under God, so when other angels were giving reports, he also was asked by God to give a report of what he was doing. When Satan gave his report about his travels around the earth, God asked him where he had come from. Of course, God already knew, but he had a special purpose for this conversation. Satan said that he had been roaming around the earth. This is normal for him. Satan is always on the move, looking for victims.

1 Peter 5:8 says: "...the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour."

Then God asked Satan about Job. It's interesting to note that Satan wasn't the one to initiate this discussion about Job. It was God himself who brought up Job's name and directed the conversation towards Job!

Job 1:8 says: "...the LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered my servant Job? There is no one on earth like him; he is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil." So what was God thinking here? Notice that God calls Job "my servant," which, in Satan's ears means, "arch enemy." And God knew that Satan had been roaming around looking for victims. So why would God even bring up Job's name? What's even more surprising is that it almost seems like God was boasting about Job to Satan! Why would he bring up the subject of Job to Satan in the first place? And why bring up all of Job's good qualities as if it was a challenge to Satan?

God Initiates Job's Trials By Using Satan

It seems pretty obvious what God is doing here, and it shows us who was the source of Job's trials. It was actually God who initiated this whole thing and Satan took up the challenge. God was using Satan as a servant to accomplish his own goals. God knew Satan wanted to destroy Job. But as we will see, God's plan was to use Satan to help strengthen and mature Job instead.

Satan And The Demons Like To Observe People Like Job When God mentioned Job to Satan, Satan already knew all about him. There were many thousands of people on the earth at that time, but Satan knew this man, Job, very well. He knew about Job's business dealings and his money and his family (Job 1:9-10). It's true that Satan and the demons don't know everything, like God does, but they are smarter than people. And apparently, angels and demons like to learn new things.

1 Peter 1:12 says: "... Even angels long to look into these things."

Demons especially like to learn about people, so they watch us a lot. But they don't know everything about us, and neither does Satan. Only God is omniscient. But even though they know lots of things, they are always learning. They are continual learners. Satan and the demons don't get tired and sleep like we do, and they don't have bodies that will die like ours. So the spirits have been observing and studying us for thousands of years. From the time God made the angels until now, the spirits have been like spectators of the human world, and studying and learning about people and our customs and ways.

It seems that Satan had studied Adam and Eve in the garden in Eden and he knew how best to lie to Eve (Genesis 3:1-6). In the New Testament we see that he is observing the apostles like Judas and Peter in order to tempt them (Luke 22:31). And that's how Satan and the demons know so much about all of us—they have a long history of observing us. The Demons Know A Lot About Us

Satan and his demons knew our ancestors and our parents too. They've watched us since we were born. Although they don't know all that we are thinking, they can figure us out by watching us. They don't have physical eyes like we do, but they can see us. They don't have ears like we have, but they can hear us. They can hear our words and actions, both good and bad. They can watch our eyes and see what we covet, and the things that tempt us to sin. And in this way, they can get to know us well.

Satan himself must have observed or studied Job, or else he designated another demon to follow and watch him. But when God asked Satan about Job, Satan knew all about him.

God Was Like A Wall Of Protection Around Job As God talked to Satan about Job, Satan accused God of being too good to Job. Satan is called the Accuser, because he is always accusing God or man of something. This time he was accusing God of protecting Job and his family too much.

Job 1:10 says: "Have you not put a hedge around him and his household and everything he has?" From this sentence, it looks like Satan had tried to hurt Job before, but God had protected him. His protection was like a wall or hedge of thorn bushes around Job. God had guarded Job to keep Satan out so that he couldn't hurt him.

Proverbs 2:8 says: "...for he guards the course of the just and protects the way of his faithful ones."

Satan wasn't able to hurt Job before, because God had chosen not to allow it before. God is much more powerful than Satan, so Satan was unable to do anything to him up till now. If God doesn't allow Satan, then he cannot test or try us either (1 Corinthians 10:13).

God Can Use The Angels To Keep Satan Away The Bible doesn't say how God had prevented Satan from hurting Job, but we know that God can simply speak and keep Satan away. God's words are powerful, and he can hold off Satan with one word. We also know that God has used angels to protect people too. Here are some examples:

Genesis 19:16 – The angels watched over Lot and his family.

2 Kings 6:15-17 – Armies of angels protected Elisha.

Daniel 6:2 – Angels closed the mouths of lions so they wouldn't harm Daniel.

Daniel 12:1 – The angel Michael watches over Israel.

Matthew 18:10 – Angels watch over children.

Hebrews 1:14 – God uses angels to help believers.

Revelation 12:7-9 – The angel Michael fights with Satan and throws him out of heaven.

Psalms 91:11 – “he will command his angels...to guard you in all your ways.”

Did God Want To Destroy Job?

Satan had complained that God had put a hedge or wall around Job to protect him. But now God was saying that Satan could destroy everything that belonged to Job. So did God change his mind and want to destroy Job now? No. But God wanted to strengthen Job's faith, and he wanted to use Satan to do it. This shows us that God is sovereign and all-powerful, and he can even use his enemy, Satan, to do his work. And so, in a weird sort of way, Satan is God's servant.

God Sets The Boundaries For Satan So did God then allow Satan to do whatever he wanted to Job?

Job 1:12 says: “The Lord said to Satan, “...everything he has is in your power, but on the man himself do not lay a finger.”

God let Satan do many things to Job but he laid down strict boundaries. He allowed Satan to destroy or take away Job's possessions, but he wasn't allowed to touch Job himself. This shows us that when Satan tempts us, God is the one who sets up the boundaries or limitations for him. Satan doesn't have all authority. Only God does. Look at another verse:

1 Corinthians 10:13 : “No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.”

If God allows Satan to tempt or try us, God knows that this trial or temptation will not be stronger than what we can bear. God protects us to a certain point, but he also gives us the ability to defeat Satan by making choices to resist. Job was a strong, mature believer, so God allowed a very powerful test to come to him. God was going to give Job an opportunity to grow even more in his faith The First Trial: Satan Took Away Everything That Belonged To Job In Job 1:13-19 we see that Satan has lots of power if God allows him. Look at these things he did:

v. 15—Satan influenced many Sabeans to come and steal 1000 head of cattle and 500 donkeys, and also killed their watchmen.

v. 16—Satan made fire fall from the sky and kill 7000 sheep and their watchmen.

v. 17—Satan made three raiding parties of Chaldeans come and steal all of Job's 3000 camels and also their watchmen.

v. 18, 19—Satan made a mighty wind come and strike Job's oldest son's house, where all of Job's children were, and it killed all his children and more workers.

Satan's Power

Wow! We can see here just how powerful angels are, or in this case, Satan, if God allows him. Satan had power to influence large groups of people to come and steal huge herds of animals and kill people. Satan was able to cause fire to rain down out of the sky and cause strong hurricane-like winds to destroy homes too. Satan is not a weakling! He has super strength—much more powerful than anything man can try to defend himself with. If God doesn't protect us, we don't stand a chance against Satan. He could totally wipe us all out.

Satan Piled On The Disasters For Job Another thing we can learn here: notice how Satan arranged the tragic reports to come in to Job all at once.

Job 1:18 says: "While he was still speaking, yet another messenger came and said..." This happened four times! In this, we see another of Satan's abilities. Four times Satan killed many of Job's servants, but he allowed one man in each case to live to be able to go and tell Job the bad news. And every one of those four men arrived one after another, exactly at the time that Satan had determined, so that bad news would steadily pile up and be an overwhelming weight of despair for Job as he heard of all his losses.

Satan didn't allow Job to rest between messengers. Job heard about one catastrophe, and then another, and another. Then finally, the last one was the worst of all. Every one of his children died at once! This final powerful blow by Satan was meant to totally destroy Job and his faith in God! That is Satan's style. He wanted to heap sorrow upon sorrow on Job because he knew Job was a strong believer and would be hard to break. Satan would love to do that with us also. He loves to heap sorrow or pain or pressure on us all at once, so that we get discouraged and blame God and turn our backs on him. That's Satan's goal.

Job Worshiped God In Job 1:20-22 we see Job's reaction. He had lost everything he had, including all his children, so he was devastated and grieving and greatly discouraged. But even through that horrible experience he did not curse God. Instead, he worshiped God because he knew that God is good. So we see from Job's reaction that God had actually strengthened his faith in spite of his tremendous loss. The Second Trial: Satan Attacked Job's Body In Job 2:1-8 we see Job's second trial. Satan was giving a report to God a second time. God asked him about Job again and Satan wanted God himself to harm Job. But God wouldn't. He put Job in Satan's hands again. But again, he placed limits on what Satan could do to Job.

God said that Satan could hurt Job's body, but he couldn't kill him. Then Satan left God and he made many big, painful sores come up everywhere on Job's skin. So from this we see that Satan has the power to create diseases or make other changes in people's physical bodies—if God allows him. Satan tortured Job with an overwhelming amount of pain, but in spite of this, he still didn't curse God. God had strengthened his faith even more. The Third Trial: Job's Wife Urges Job To Curse God The third trial came in Job 2:9-10. Job's wife saw the pain and all the troubles that had come to Job, but instead of showing sympathy, in her bitterness she told Job that he should just curse God and die. Where do you think she got those kinds of thoughts? It sounds like the very same types of things Satan would say—like words of an enemy. And so Satan probably put those thoughts in her mind. Even today, Satan does the same thing—he uses other people to put bitter thoughts in our minds. So we need to be careful lest they urge us to turn our backs on God.

The Fourth Trial: Job's Three Friends Accuse Job

Later we see another trial came to Job in Job 2:11-13 when three of his friends came to see him. These friends had heard about all the disasters that had come to Job so they came to comfort him. Their names were Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar. From chapters 3-31 we see the long speeches they made to Job, and his responses. They sympathized with him a bit at first, but then they said that these trials must have come to him because he was hiding some secret sin and God was punishing him for it. They kept trying to get Job to confess his sin, whatever it was. But we know that God wasn't punishing Job. He was trying to strengthen Job's faith so he had allowed Satan to bring these disasters on him.

Satan Is The Accuser

God had said that Job was a righteous man (Job 1:1), but now Job's three friends were accusing him of some unknown sin—something he was not guilty of, but they were accusing him anyway. That's just what Satan loves to do also. We mentioned before that one of Satan's names is the "Accuser" of Believers" (Revelation 12:10). It looks as if these three friends of Job's were just following Satan's ways.

Satan loves to criticize and accuse us. Even at times when we have done no wrong, Satan accuses us and condemns us, so we feel guilty and distant from God and no longer love him or want to follow him. Of course, all of us do sin. But keep in mind that when the Holy Spirit convicts us of sin, it's much different than when Satan accuses us. If we do sin, the Holy Spirit shows us our wrongdoing in a loving way, in order to restore us back to fellowship with God. But even when we don't do wrong, Satan loves to accuse us in order to discourage us and totally separate us from fellowship with God. Job's three friends accused Job in the same way that Satan does and so we see that Satan can sometimes use friends against us.

Job Became Proud At first, when Job saw all these disasters and hardships come along, he didn't blame God. But eventually, after his friends came and stayed with him for several days and gave long speeches and constantly accused him of wrong-doing, Job began to justify himself (Job 32:1-5) and blamed God (34:17). What made him try to justify himself? He probably didn't like his friends accusing him of some vague sin which he had not done, so he just defended himself. He also couldn't believe that he had sinned in such a bad way that he deserved all these horrible disasters, so he felt that God was wrong to bring all these things on him (32:2). Of course, he did not know that Satan was actually the one who did these things to him but he just assumed that it was God. He felt like God was unjustly judging him, so he was angry and blamed God.

Young Elihu Admonishes Job

After all Job's three friends finished speaking, a fourth friend, a younger man named Elihu, spoke with Job starting in Job 32:6. Since he was the youngest one, he was respectful and listened quietly while the older three men gave their long speeches. But even though Elihu was the youngest of these men, God gave him wisdom to speak truth to Job (Ch. 32-37). God can give anyone wisdom if they are willing to listen (Job 32:8-9). Elihu said many things, but basically he rebuked Job for blaming God of wrongdoing. He said:

“Will you condemn the just and mighty One?” (Job 34:17) God Himself Corrected Job And His Three Friends

After Elihu finished talking, God himself spoke to Job out of the storm (38-42). First God corrected Job's thoughts, and then his three friends'. God spoke of many things that he had created which show his power and amazing wisdom. Then he asked Job, Do you have that kind of wisdom? And if you don't, why are you accusing me (Job 40:2)? God wanted Job to understand that if he didn't know why he had allowed those trials to come to him, then he shouldn't accuse God of wrongdoing.

God's wisdom is indeed much higher than ours. Job was a very good man and his pride was well hidden. Even his three friends couldn't point out any wrong in him. But God knew where his weakness was, and he knew it would come out when Job experienced these trials. God has many ways to strengthen our faith, and here we see one of them.

Job Humbled Himself

“The LORD said to Job: “Will the one who contends with the Almighty correct him? Let him who accuses God answer him!” (Job 40:1-2) Job quickly humbled himself and answered:

“I am unworthy—how can I reply to you? I put my hand over my mouth...Surely I spoke of things I did not understand, things too wonderful for me to know. My ears had heard of you but now my eyes have seen you. Therefore I despise myself and repent in dust and ashes” (Job 40:1-2 : Job 42:3-6).

Job admitted that he didn't understand why these trials had come to him, and that he was wrong to accuse God. We too need to understand that God's wisdom is above all and even when we don't understand why certain things are happening to us or what God allows, we need to remember that God is always good and is without sin. We need to trust him and allow him to work in our lives.

God Didn't Tell Job That Satan Had Tempted Him

God could have told Job that it was Satan that was bringing all the hardship on him, but he didn't—at least not right away. Sometimes God doesn't show us why trials come, but we can continue to trust him. God is always good and righteous, and he has all wisdom. He wants to help us and strengthen us spiritually, so we need to trust him. We should never think that we're smarter than God. He knows exactly what He's doing and it's always good.

Why Does Satan Like To Discredit Influential Men Like Job?

Job 42:12 says: “The LORD blessed the latter part of Job's life more than the former part.”

Although God had allowed trials to come into Job's life, he strengthened him through it and made him even stronger spiritually than before. I'm sure he had a powerful testimony to share with people later. Job was an influential leader in the community and well respected by many people, and I'm sure God continued to use him as a great example of godliness and faith. Satan is always looking for an opportunity to discredit someone that people look up to, like Job. He would like to humiliate our present godly leaders too so that many people will see their downfall and change their minds about following God. Satan especially likes to shame church leaders, so we all need to

be on our guard.

God Blessed Job

God restored Job's fortunes. He gave him twice as many sheep and cows, etc., as he had before. And he also gave him children again (the same amount as before—seven sons and three daughters). (Job 42:10-17). But even if God had not done that, he would still be a good God.

Having An Eternal Viewpoint Will Show Us That God Is Very Good The most important thing we need to remember about this story is that God is good! Our physical bodies are just temporary—and so is the pain and suffering we might endure in this life. But our spirits will live on forever, and therefore are much more important than our physical wellbeing right now. Someday in eternity, we will understand and appreciate that much more. For now, we need to accept that God is trying to help us spiritually even if he needs to use physical pain or suffering to do it. If God allows trials to come to us like Job, we can still be confident that God loves us more than we can know and has our best interests in mind. We don't have to fret or be anxious. He allows those things to happen in order to strengthen our faith, just like he strengthened Job's.

Concluding Thoughts About Job Let's consider again what goals God accomplished through Job.

God used these trials to strengthen Job's faith and influence.

God corrected Job's wife's wrong ideas and attitudes.

God corrected Job's three friends' ideas.

God showed his ability to overrule what Satan does and even use him.

God strengthens our belief now too.

God has used this story to strengthen the faith of thousands and thousands of people around the world because Job's life is a good example to us all. God can strengthen your faith through it too. We always need to remember that God loves us and always has our best interests in mind.

God Used Satan During New Testament Times Also

We've heard the story of Job's trials from the Old Testament, but we also know that God used Satan during the New Testament times too. Let's look at two apostles—Paul and Peter—and see how God used Satan to strengthen their faith and the lives of others also. The Apostle Paul Experienced Many Trials Too In 2 Corinthians 11:23-28 the apostle Paul describes the many different trials he experienced in his ministry: hard work, he spent time in prison, he was flogged and exposed to death again and again, 5 times he received forty lashes from the Jews, 3 times he was beaten with rods, once he was pelted with stones, 3 times he was shipwrecked. He was constantly on the move and in danger from rivers, bandits, fellow Jews, Gentiles and false believers. He was in danger everywhere he went. He was often hungry and thirsty or went without sleep or warm clothing and shelter. And besides all that he daily felt the pressure and concern for all the churches.

Often, when we hear things like this, we don't know if those trials are from God or from Satan. But no matter where they come from we know that God can use even Satan's work to strengthen

believers. Satan really wanted to destroy or discourage Paul, but his sufferings actually helped him:

Trials And Pain From Satan Used To Keep Paul Humble

2 Corinthians 12:7-10 "...because of the extraordinary character of the revelations. Therefore, so that I would not become arrogant, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to trouble me —so that I would not become arrogant. I asked the Lord three times about this, that it would depart from me. But he said to me, "My grace is enough for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." So then, I will boast most gladly about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may reside in me. Therefore I am content with weaknesses, with insults, with troubles, with persecutions and difficulties for the sake of Christ, for whenever I am weak, then I am strong." (NET)

Here Paul shows us another purpose for our trials and pain. God sometimes allows trials and pain to keep us from becoming proud, lest we try to do God's work in our own strength. Paul said that the trials and pain that he experienced were like a messenger from Satan to keep him from getting proud or conceited. And so, instead of being weak in his own strength, Paul was strong in God's strength. It's interesting to note that Satan, by trying to weaken us, is actually helping to make us stronger! I'm sure Satan's not too happy about that.

Again, we see that God is sovereign. He can use Satan and his trials to correct us and keep us humble and even strengthen us. So we have to remember that our physical health and well-being are not as important as our spiritual health and character and the long-term eternal benefits. So if God allows some pain or suffering to happen to us, it is because he loves us and wants the best for us. He is probably trying to correct us or strengthen our faith and our spirit which are eternal and are much more important than physical comfort and ease. It's true—we have an amazing God! He can even use our enemy Satan to help and strengthen us!

Apostle Peter Tested By Satan Peter is another example of Satan being used to strengthen believers.

Luke 22:31-32 records Jesus saying this to Peter: "Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift all of you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers."

Here again we see another example of Satan wanting to test believers like Peter and the apostles. But Jesus did not prevent it—instead he allowed it for a purpose. It was a very difficult testing time for the apostles just like Jesus said (Matthew 26:31-35; Matthew 26:56; Mark 14:27-31; Mark 14:50; John 13:36-38). But Jesus allowed Satan to test Peter and the others, and God used that experience to strengthen other people later. When we ourselves are strengthened from Satan's attacks, then we can help others and build their faith also.

Armies Get Toughened Up In Battle

All soldiers go through some kind of difficult physical training and often practice mock battles before they go to war. And every battle makes a soldier even tougher because he learns from his enemy and he is strengthened against him.

Even so, in the spiritual realm, we become more aware of our weaknesses when we do battle against Satan and hopefully learn from it, like Job did. When God allows us to do battle with Satan, it may seem like we are losing sometimes, but God knows what we need to learn, so we grow stronger and stronger through every spiritual battle as we humble ourselves and learn from him.

Summary: Satan Is God's Servant To Strengthen Us

One critical thing we can learn from these three stories is that God is so much smarter and more powerful than Satan. God used Satan to accomplish God's own goals in Job's life as well as Paul's and Peter's. Satan wanted to ruin their lives, but God instead used Satan to strengthen their faith and use them as an example to strengthen the faith of others also. Again, this shows us God's tremendous wisdom and power. We can rejoice and take comfort in that, because God wants to help us too!

5. Satan's Government

Chapter 5 Satan's Government "...the whole world is under the control of the evil one." (1 John 5:19) Angels Fight Over The World's Governments

We all know that politicians fight over who will run the government, but did you know that angels fight for that too? Well, they do, but it's not the same way people do. We're going to look at a story in the book of Daniel that talks about a battle that occurred between certain angels. This true story can help us understand how Satan and his angels also battle over the governments and kingdoms of this earth.

Before the time of Daniel the prophet, Israel had turned their backs on God, so God disciplined them so that they would repent. God allowed some ungodly countries under Satan's rule to come fight against Israel. They took Israel captive and began to rule over them, making them their slaves and servants. This became one of the worst periods in Israel's history. God allowed several countries like Babylon, Persia, Greece and later Rome, to come and rule over them (2 Chronicles 36:17-20).

While Israel was exiled in Babylon and Persia, Daniel lived with them in exile and was a prophet of God. He became an old man there. During the Persian rule, Daniel received a special prophecy from God which is in Daniel 10. For three weeks he agonized in prayer over the hard times that Israel had experienced. God heard his prayers and sent an angel to give him a message concerning events that were going to happen in the future. In verses 2-11 we read that when the angel appeared to Daniel, Daniel fainted and fell to the ground. He didn't have any strength to get up and he could hardly speak. This is because angels are so powerful that just seeing and hearing them could overwhelm us. Let's continue the story and read what the angel said:

Daniel 10:12-21 says: ..."Don't be afraid, Daniel. Since the first day you began to pray for understanding and to humble yourself before your God, your request has been heard in heaven. I have come in answer to your prayer. But for twenty-one days the spirit prince of the kingdom of Persia blocked my way. Then Michael, one of the archangels, came to help me, and I left him there with the spirit prince of the kingdom of Persia. Now I am here to explain what will happen to your people in the future, for this vision concerns a time yet to come." While he was speaking to me, I looked down at the ground, unable to say a word. ..."Don't be afraid," he said, "for you are very precious to God. Peace! Be encouraged! Be strong!" As he spoke these words to me, I suddenly felt stronger and said to him, "Please speak to me, my lord, for you have strengthened me." He replied, "Do you know why I have come? Soon I must return to fight against the spirit prince of the kingdom of Persia, and after that the spirit prince of the kingdom of Greece will come.... (No one helps me against these spirit princes except Michael, your spirit prince.)"(NLT) God Used Demons To Influence The Kingdom Of Persia Against Israel

God sent one of his angels to Daniel. The Bible doesn't tell us his name, but some scholars think this is the angel Gabriel, which is the same angel we see in Daniel 8, 9. So we will call him Gabriel

for the sake of telling the story. Gabriel was sent to give Daniel a message, but the Prince of Persia hindered him for 21 days. Since he was hindering an angel like Gabriel, we realize that this “prince” was not just a human ruler like other princes. This Prince of Persia was a spiritual prince (as in the NLT above). He was an angel with authority over Persia, but he was an evil spirit. This Prince of Persia must have been a demon who was directly influencing the King of Persia—the human king that he also mentioned. Satan and other angels (both good and bad) are sometimes called princes in the Bible because of the authority and power they have to rule or influence human governments.

Ephesians 6:12 says: “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.” So these verses give us a glimpse of the battles that go on in the spirit world in order to rule over human kingdoms. In this case as well as others, we see that God had previously allowed demons to influence human kings (like those of Persia and Greece) to come against Israel. Apparently, these heathen countries who were enemies of Israel had been influenced by some demons to come and take Israel captive and then continue to influence their kings. Although Satan seemed to be in control, God is still sovereign, so he used the demons to do his work. Satan and his demon “princes” want to rule over each country on earth—especially Israel—in order to destroy them, because Satan hates everything God loves. But instead, God used those countries under Satan in order to discipline and teach Israel.

God Used Angels To Prevent Demons From Destroying Israel

Even though God allowed the demons to bring other countries against Israel, he still used Gabriel and other angels to act as guardians to watch over Israel (Daniel 12:1). So it seems that there was a power struggle or spiritual battle going on between the good angels and the demons. God was probably using the good angels to make sure the demons would stay within the limits that God had put over them, and not allow them to totally destroy Israel. As humans we can't see this kind of battle going on between angels and demons, but Gabriel talked about it so that we could know what is actually going on around us in the spiritual realm.

Prince Michael Watches Over Israel As the angel Gabriel appeared to Daniel, Daniel became weak and lost all his strength. He became faint and fell down like a dead man. This shows us that Gabriel and other angels are very powerful compared with humans so Daniel would be just overwhelmed by simply seeing them. Gabriel was a very powerful angel, but the evil angel (demon) that was ruling over the King of Persia was very powerful too. So God had sent another angel named Michael to take Gabriel's place and fight with the evil angel. This allowed Gabriel to be free to go talk to Daniel.

Daniel 12:1 describes Michael as: “the great prince who protects your people...” The Bible also describes Michael as an “archangel” (Jude 1:9) which means a ruling angel that has more power and authority over other angels. Of course God is the one who assigns the amount of authority that each one has and the work that each one does. We also see here that God appointed Michael specifically as the protector of Israel (Daniel 12:1). In Daniel Ch. 10 God sent Michael to take Gabriel's place and fight with the Prince of Persia.

God Alone Determines The Strength And Place Of All The Angels And Demons

God is all-powerful and the source of all power, so he is the one who gave the demons their power while they were still good angels, before they fell in sin. They received their power and position from God and they still have at least some of that power. It was God who allowed the demon to rule over Persia and punish Israel, but later God removed that demon and let another demon "prince" which was ruling Greece come and take the Persians' place. That's when the Greeks began ruling over Israel (Daniel 10:21). This story shows us that good angels and demons alike are concerned with people. The good angels listen to God and do his will. But the demons are rebellious and try to guide the thoughts of kings and leaders and governments away from God's will. But God is able to use them both. Does God Not Have Enough Good Angels? In this story, Gabriel said that he alone was fighting with the demon prince that was ruling over Persia, so it might seem at first that perhaps God didn't have enough angels to help Gabriel. But in fact God has many good angels, so we shouldn't think that God is shorthanded.

It must have been God's will that Gabriel do this job himself. God probably allowed the demons to have the upper hand in Persia in order to rule over Israel at that time because he wanted to punish the proud Israelites. God only needed Gabriel to keep watch and make sure the demons did not destroy Israel altogether. One angel was enough because he had God's authority and he could oppose a whole army of demons and win easily if he needed to. But plenty of good angels do exist. In fact the Bible says they actually number in the millions. There are twice as many angels as there are demons, and God can use them whenever he likes (Revelation 5:11; Revelation 12:4).

God Protects The Prophet Elisha With A Vast Army Of Angels

We can look at another story in the Old Testament about the prophet Elisha which shows us the vast army of good angels that exist in the spiritual realm.

2 Kings 6:8-23 says: "Now the king of Syria was at war with Israel. He consulted his advisers, who said, "Invade at such and such a place." But the prophet sent this message to the king of Israel, "Make sure you don't pass through this place because Syria is invading there." So the king of Israel sent a message to the place the prophet had pointed out, warning it to be on its guard. This happened on several occasions. This made the king of Syria upset. So he summoned his advisers and said to them, "One of us must be helping the king of Israel." One of his advisers said, "No, my master, O king. The prophet Elisha who lives in Israel keeps telling the king of Israel the things you say in your bedroom." The king ordered, "Go, find out where he is, so I can send some men to capture him." The king was told, "He is in Dothan." So he sent horses and chariots there, along with a good-sized army. They arrived during the night and surrounded the city. The prophet's attendant got up early in the morning. When he went outside there was an army surrounding the city, along with horses and chariots. He said to Elisha, "Oh no, my master! What will we do?" He replied, "Don't be afraid, for our side outnumbers them." Then Elisha prayed, "O LORD, open his eyes so he can see." The LORD opened the servant's eyes and he saw that the hill was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha. As they approached him, Elisha prayed to the LORD, "Strike these people with blindness." The LORD struck them with blindness as Elisha requested. Then Elisha said to them, "This is not the right road or city. Follow me, and I will lead you to the man you're looking for." He led them to Samaria. When they had entered Samaria, Elisha said, "O LORD, open their eyes, so they can see." The LORD opened their eyes and they saw that they

were in the middle of Samaria. When the king of Israel saw them, he asked Elisha, "Should I strike them down, my master?" He replied, "Do not strike them down! You did not capture them with your sword or bow, so what gives you the right to strike them down? Give them some food and water, so they can eat and drink and then go back to their master." So he threw a big banquet for them and they ate and drank. Then he sent them back to their master. After that no Syrian raiding parties again invaded the land of Israel." (NET) The King of Syria and his huge army had come to get Elisha. They surrounded the city of Dothan by night, but when Elisha saw it, he wasn't afraid at all. Instead, he trusted in God's power and prayed. But Elisha's servant was very much afraid, because he didn't know about the army of God's angels that also surrounded and protected them. So Elisha prayed and asked God to open his servant's eyes so he could see the huge army of angels that was there to protect them. Then God did open the servant's eyes and he could then see God's army of angels. Israel's enemies were blinded and couldn't fight properly. In the end, they just went back to their own country and left Elisha alone. God was indeed watching over Elisha and all of Israel.

There Is An Army Watching Over Us So why don't we see angels all the time? God used angels to protect Elisha, but no one but Elisha and his servant saw them. God had to open their eyes in order for them to see the angels in the spiritual realm. We are not prophets and we can't see angels, but we don't need to be concerned about seeing them either. As we've seen from this story, God's armies of angels really do exist. He has thousands upon thousands of angels that wait to do his bidding (Revelation 5:11; Hebrews 12:22). They are ready at any time to do his work, and if necessary, they can protect us against Satan's demons. We don't have to be afraid of the demons if we are on God's side. Even though Satan's spirits are very strong, God is much stronger, and they cannot defeat God or his angels. We can praise and thank God for that!

We Are Also In This Spiritual Warfare

What did the two prophets, Daniel and Elisha, do when the demons and the angels fought in the spiritual realm? They both prayed and God helped them. We don't see the spirits, nor do we have the strength and wisdom to fight them. That's not our job. But we can talk to God about our concerns. And he is far above all other powers. In this way we can fight along with the angels on God's side. In a later chapter we'll talk about praying, and about the armor of God. But first let's consider Satan's government and how Satan fights against us.

Satan Has A Government

It's true that Satan has a government in much the same way as people do. But his government is hidden from our eyes. Satan uses many hidden methods to rule over people of this world so that they follow his desires.

Ephesians 6:12 talks about "...rulers, ...authorities, ...powers of this dark world and ...spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms."

These words describe the power and authority of the government or kingdom of Satan. Satan is like a king or boss over other demons. And those other demons rule over parts of his government. We saw this already in the story from Daniel 10. The Prince of Persia and Greece were demons that influenced the kings of Persia and Greece. And from Ezekiel 28 and Isaiah 14 we see how Satan himself was connected with the king of Tyre and Babylon. In 2 Corinthians 4:4 Paul calls

Satan the “god of this world.” This means that Satan has power over this earth and wants to rule all of man’s governments. The world is under Satan’s rule. Where Is This Government Or Kingdom?

Ephesians 2:2 says Satan is “...the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient.” The Bible says that Satan is the “ruler of the kingdom of the air.” Some people think that he lives in the lake of fire (hell) and rules over dead people as his kingdom, and some have even written some false books about this idea. But the Bible doesn’t say that. The Bible says that hell is “prepared” (or made ready) for Satan (Matthew 25:41) and that he will go there later after his judgment in the end times (Revelation 20:10). Then he will remain there forever and will never be able to leave. But for now he lives and works in the “heavenly realms.” We’re not referring to the heaven where good angels live with God. That heaven is far above the sky. Satan and the demons don’t live there. The demons live and roam around in the heavens—the air and sky around this earth (Job 1:7).

Satan’s government doesn’t have a government office or Parliament Building. Instead, Ephesians 2:2 says that Satan works in the hearts and minds of people—“disobedient” people. They are the enemies of God. Satan’s kingdom isn’t just in one country. The “kingdom of the air” (or sky) covers every country around the earth. So Satan’s government rules over all the “children of disobedience” wherever they live (Ephesians 2:2; Ephesians 5:6; Colossians 3:6). They are disobedient to God and submit to Satan’s influence or rule over their life. So those disobedient people which are from every nation, are part of Satan’s kingdom. Satan’s government or kingdom is a worldwide kingdom.

1 John 5:19 says: “We know that we are children of God, and that the whole world is under the control of the evil one.”

How People “Vote” For Satan And His Government

Many countries vote for those who will lead the government of the country, but what about Satan? Who voted for Satan to make him the leader of every place on the earth? As we heard earlier, it all started back in the beginning of time, after God made Adam and Eve and appointed them as the original rulers of the earth.

Genesis 1:26-28 says: “Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule...
...Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over... every living creature that moves on the ground.”

God made Adam and Eve rulers over the earth. But later they listened to Satan and submitted to him (Genesis 3:1-6). By that act of submitting to Satan, Adam and all of his lineage became Satan’s servants.

Romans 6:6 says: “Don’t you know that when you offer yourselves to someone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one you obey...?” When Adam listened to Satan and obeyed him, it was like he voted for Satan to become his ruler. And we know that when parents vote for a government, then that government also rules over their children even though those children did not vote. So, in the same way, now Satan has become the ruler over the descendants of Adam too—people all over the earth. And Satan also wants to control every human government in order that every

person continues to follow him and remains in his kingdom.

Satan Uses Many Powerful Weapons To Govern The Minds Of People

Long ago, kings used to fight wars to capture cities and make them part of their own kingdom. A king had to have a strong army and powerful weapons in order to win a war. Then he used his own governors to keep those people under control of his government. Satan also is fighting a war, but it's not a physical one. He is fighting a spiritual war to keep control of the hearts and minds of humans, so he does not use the same weapons that humans fight with. Satan wants to keep people spiritually blind so they cannot see God's truth and become part of God's kingdom.

2 Corinthians 4:4 says: "The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see..."

Satan wants to keep control over everyone's minds and thoughts. He wants to deceive people and keep them in spiritual darkness so they don't realize he is leading them to eternal destruction. He uses many spiritual weapons or powerful tools that have the power to persuade peoples' minds. In Ephesians 6:12 we saw that Satan has many "powers of this dark world" to deceive people and keep them in spiritual darkness in order to rule this earth. Satan uses his army of demons to govern and keep control of his government and influence people to follow his will. Now let's look at some of the powerful weapons that Satan uses to influence people:

Governments (Matthew 4:8-9)

Riches and pleasures of the earth (Luke 8:12-14; Matthew 6:19)

Books, TV, radio, videos, newspapers, internet, computers (1 John 2:14-17)

Some teachers and schools (Luke 5:17; Luke 5:21)

Some parents and families (Matthew 10:21; Luke 14:26)

Some friends (1 Corinthians 15:33)

Some churches and beliefs (2 Corinthians 11:14-15; Matthew 13:38)

All these things have the power to persuade and influence people's minds, so Satan uses them to his advantage to draw people away from God. Let's look at these things individually.

Governments

Some governments are good and some are bad. God himself invented governments to help keep people from harming each other, but Satan wants to use governments to do the opposite. He wants to use them to lead people astray and ruin them. Sometimes governments will lead their people to fight with other countries to steal their land or for no good reason. Some governments harm innocent people or take away their freedoms. Satan has many ways to change governments and sway the thinking and decisions of the politicians, leaders and even soldiers. And if Satan is directing them, then the government will eventually influence people to become greedy, selfish or lazy and want to take advantage of others. This eventually stirs up frustrations among the people and they get angry and desperate. Many then turn to violence or theft or other kinds of sin. Satan just loves it when men turn against each other.

Business And Possessions

Satan can use things like business and stores and the strong desire to have nice possessions in order to entice people away from God. He tempts people to be completely taken up with collecting nice things, making them believe that their possessions will bring satisfaction and true happiness. So, they keep very busy, thinking only about physical things, instead of thinking about their spiritual lives. This is one of Satan's most powerful tools everywhere in the world. It is like modern idolatry.

Books, TV, Radio, Videos, News, Internet, Computers

Many people find enjoyment in reading books or watching TV and videos or surfing the internet or playing video games. Although these things can be beneficial in some ways, there is also a great risk and danger that can go along with those activities. Satan knows that when we are enjoying ourselves and being entertained, we are much less likely to be on guard against him. So he can slowly and gradually corrupt people's minds with different types of sin without them even knowing it. We can see this in our society today if we look back at the early history of TV for instance. In the beginning, TV shows seemed quite harmless. But over the last 60+ years, shows and videos have steadily become more and more filled with greed, hatred, crime, violence, wars, divorce, cheating and sexual sins of all sorts, to the point now that this is all considered normal. The things that entertain us as stories eventually become our standard way of life in our communities and we are no longer shocked by what we see on TV—we begin to accept it as normal. Satan uses the stories to teach evil—to entice people to covet things and lie and steal and fight and commit adultery and murder and many other sinful things. If we just look around, we'll quickly observe that yesterday's entertainment is today's news. Satan is using these forms of entertainment as a powerful tool to slowly shape the minds of people without them knowing it.

Quite often, even the news producers use the news as an opportunity to teach propaganda or their own opinions to draw people in one direction or another. Satan can use this to stir up anger or strife and even lead people into new directions which are against God's ways. Satan is often behind those ideas, and most people have no idea that he is the one in control. He often works slowly, starting when children are young, changing their ideas little by little so they don't even know what's happening.

Recently, cell phones, computers, the internet and video games have become a powerful influence on people—sometimes a bad influence. When we hear sinful ideas or see inappropriate pictures, these things get stuck in our minds and that affects our spiritual life. It's like a hook in a fish's mouth—Satan tries to hook us and make sin look very inviting. Even many believers and pastors and church leaders have fallen into sin this way and have ruined their ministry, their families and their lives because of these things. We need to be on guard and be careful how we use these things!

School And Teachers (Education)

Children are learners and usually listen to people who they think are smarter than they are—so they believe what most teachers say. Unfortunately, not all teachers are good. Not all of them teach the truth. In many schools today, teachers often mock God and his word and therefore lead students astray. They often tell their students that the Bible is a myth and that faith in God is just

for uneducated people. They teach that God didn't really create the universe and everything in our world, like trees and plants and food and animals and people. They claim that all these extremely complex living things on our earth just randomly came out of nowhere—from a big explosion—that no one can properly explain. They say that science proves evolution of life as a fact. But actually, evolution requires much more faith than creation does. Satan has invented these ridiculous lies and even smart people have fallen for them.

Romans 1:21-22 says: "...their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools..."

Satan loves those kinds of teachers because he uses their teaching to draw students away from God, so they don't believe in his word, the Bible. This started years ago in a few schools and now it has just about taken over all of them. So Satan is using some schools and teachers as a powerful way to turn students away from God.

(If you are a student and your teachers are trying to ridicule God and your faith, you can look up this website for some help: <https://www.icr.org/video>. The website is by Institute for Creation Research and has many videos and written tools to help you in your research. They can connect you to many professors and other knowledgeable scientific people who believe in God and can help you understand the truth—and that science doesn't have to conflict with belief in God. It can confirm your faith even more.) Parents And Family

Even before children go to school, they learn most things from their parents by listening to them and watching what they do. They learn to trust their parents. Some parents are good about teaching their children about God and his Word, but many parents don't know how to teach them about God and how to live godly lives. Satan also knows that children learn most from their families, so he likes to break up families, and then the children often aren't happy and they sometimes start getting into all kinds of trouble. Satan can also use brothers and sisters and other family members to teach sinful ways to the children. Children often grow up to follow in their footsteps and turn away from God.

Friends

Friends are also one of the most common ways young people are led away from God. Satan knows that young people want to be accepted by their friends, so he can use bad friends to lead those young people and even adults astray.

Some Churches And Beliefs This may seem strange to you, but Satan can also use churches to spread error. Some churches and pastors follow God's word very closely and teach their people well. But some have not studied God's word very well, or they believe some false doctrines, so they follow someone else's teaching or their own ideas. Even if a man is a good pastor and wants to follow God, Satan can use one wrong belief to confuse him. He might even start a new religious movement or cult. Then eventually the people who follow him get further and further away from truth about God. There are many false beliefs in churches around the world. Satan is the "father of lies," so he loves that kind of deception, because people think they're learning truth in their church and doing just fine, but actually they are being deceived by Satan's fancy lies. We'll talk more about Satan's tricks within the church later.

Satan wants to blind people's minds so they'll turn their backs on God, so he uses all these things to entice people away from God. These are just some of the ways he exercises control over the earth. They are part of his "government" that he uses to rule over people and it is very powerful. But Satan doesn't have total control over the earth. He can't just do whatever he wants. Satan has an authority that is over him—a boss that he is accountable to. Satan's "boss" is the subject of the next chapter.

6. Satan's Boss

Chapter 6 Satan's Boss God Used Demons To Remove And Install Kings

Imagine during the middle of a war, just walking over to the enemy side and asking them to come over and help you plant your garden or help you build your house or some other work. Silly, isn't it? You wouldn't possibly think of doing that! Your enemy doesn't want to help you at all! They just want to kill you. Now consider this: Satan is God's enemy, but he actually helps God sometimes even though he is not a willing helper. Yes, as strange as it may seem, the Bible shows us that God has used Satan and his demons for certain jobs and will continue to do so until the Last Days. Let's look at two kings in the Old Testament: King Saul and King Ahab. These will show us some ways God has used demons to do his work.

King Saul Turns His Back On God

Long ago, God had appointed a man named Saul to become king and lead Israel. At first the Spirit of God helped him carry out his responsibilities. But after a while Saul turned his back on God, so God said he was going to remove him and make David the new king (1 Samuel 13:14). But David was not the kind of man that people would seek out as king because he was not an influential leader or powerful army general at first. He was just a young shepherd. And besides that, the custom in those days was for the king to choose one of his own sons to become king in his father's place. But God is all-powerful, even over kings. So he can choose anyone to be a king. So the first thing God did was make a way for David to begin working in the king's house so that people began to get to know him and respect him. Then later they would want him to take Saul's place as king. God used an evil spirit to accomplish this.

God Used An Evil Spirit To Remove Saul And Promote David

1 Samuel 16:14-23 says: "Now the Spirit of the LORD had turned away from Saul, and an evil spirit from the LORD tormented him. Then Saul's servants said to him, "Look, an evil spirit from God is tormenting you!" Let our lord instruct his servants who are here before you to look for a man who knows how to play the lyre. Then whenever the evil spirit from God comes upon you, he can play the lyre and you will feel better." So...David came to Saul and stood before him. Saul liked him a great deal...So whenever the spirit from God would come upon Saul, David would take his lyre and play it. This would bring relief to Saul and make him feel better. Then the evil spirit would leave him alone." (NET)

Here we see how God actually allowed an evil spirit (a demon) to come bother Saul and make Saul very upset and distressed. This happened often, so Saul's servants suggested that Saul should hire David to come play music for him to calm him down. In this way God was using the demon to open an opportunity for David to come and help, and he helped Saul whenever he was needed. David played his music for Saul and it would calm him down. The Spirit of God helped David write many songs during his life which we enjoy reading today in the book of Psalms. He may have played some of those very same songs for king Saul. Maybe the demon didn't like

hearing Spirit-filled songs or maybe the Lord just told the demon to leave Saul alone for a while. Whatever the cause, Saul and everyone who worked with him were very happy with David's service. David worked for Saul whenever he was needed but he also helped his father with his sheep. (1 Samuel 17:15).

God Used Goliath To Make David A Hero

Sometime later David was still a young man and not very famous in the eyes of the people, but God allowed their enemies the Philistines to come for battle. Then God helped David kill the Philistine giant, Goliath, so David became a national hero. Now everyone knew about David and loved him because he had saved them from their enemies. Saul's son Jonathan became best friends with David and Saul gave David a high-ranking position in his army, so the people loved him even more. God was working to make the people love David more and more and Saul less and less. But later, when King Saul began to see that the people loved David more than him, he became very jealous and he considered David as his enemy from then on.

God Used An Evil Spirit To Upset Saul In another story we see that God again used an evil spirit to really upset Saul so that Saul became furious with David.

1 Samuel 18:10-11 says: "...an evil spirit from God rushed upon Saul...Now David was playing the lyre that day. There was a spear in Saul's hand, and Saul threw the spear, thinking, "I'll nail David to the wall!" But David escaped from him on two different occasions." (NET)

God himself sent this evil spirit to Saul and when the evil spirit controlled Saul, he threw a spear at David. So, do you think God wanted Saul to kill David? No way! God made sure that David was able to jump out of the way and be safe. But God was using this evil spirit to make the people of Israel dislike Saul. They thought that Saul had gone totally crazy and was angry at David for no reason. The people loved David very much. So later when Saul died, the Israelites wanted David to become their king.

God Is Sovereign And Can Use Many Ways To Change Rulers

God himself had chosen Saul to be the king (1 Samuel 10:24) but since he rebelled and disobeyed God, then God removed Saul and installed David as new king. And unbelievably, he used evil spirits to accomplish some of this change in kings. Of course, he doesn't always use demons to change government leaders. God is all-powerful and has many ways to install new governments and kings. He can choose good kings or bad kings—whatever he desires for the time and depending on his plan. If he wants to help the people, he can install a good king. If he wants to punish proud and rebellious people, he can choose a bad king, so they will suffer under that king and repent. We don't know all of God's thoughts, but we do know that God alone is sovereign over all kings.

Daniel 4:32 says: "...the Most High is sovereign over all kingdoms on earth and gives them to anyone he wishes." (Jeremiah 27:5)

Again, we see that God is head over all governments of people and of angels and all the evil spirits including Satan. He is Lord of all.

Now let's look at a story about another rebellious king and we'll see how God used demons to punish him and remove him as king. The Story Of King Ahab

King Ahab was another king of Israel, but he was a very evil man who didn't want to follow God. Although he was king over God's people Israel, he was like an enemy to God, so God wanted to punish him and remove him as king. One day Ahab decided to take his army to fight with the people of Ramoth Gilead, and he asked Jehoshaphat, the king of Judah, to come and help him. Jehoshaphat said he would help him, but he first wanted to consult the prophets to see if their armies would win or not. So Ahab called his prophets to come so they could both hear what would happen. Ahab only liked to listen to false prophets that said nice things about him and never criticized him. He didn't want to listen to God's true word and he didn't want the prophets to rebuke him. So Ahab had 400 false prophets that just told him things he wanted to hear. But there was one prophet whose name was Micaiah, who told the truth that he received from God. He wasn't afraid of the king and he often rebuked Ahab for his evil ways. So of course Ahab didn't like him. As we'll see, God wanted to punish Ahab so that he would die during this battle. So when all of Ahab's false prophets came, they said that Ahab should go and fight and win the battle. When the kings brought in Micaiah and asked him what God had said, he knew that Ahab didn't really want the truth, even though he said he did. So Micaiah mocked the king by saying the same thing that the false prophets did, because he knew that Ahab only wanted to hear good things. But when King Ahab pressed him to tell the truth, Micaiah told him exactly what God had revealed to him. Let's look at the story:

1 Kings 22:15-35 says: "When he arrived, the king asked him, "Micaiah, shall we go to war against Ramoth Gilead, or not?" "Attack and be victorious," he answered, "for the Lord will give it into the king's hand." The king said to him, "How many times must I make you swear to tell me nothing but the truth in the name of the Lord?" Then Micaiah answered, "I saw all Israel scattered on the hills like sheep without a shepherd, and the Lord said, 'These people have no master. Let each one go home in peace.'" The king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, "Didn't I tell you that he never prophesies anything good about me, but only bad?" Micaiah continued, "Therefore hear the word of the Lord: I saw the Lord sitting on his throne with all the multitudes of heaven standing around him on his right and on his left. And the Lord said, 'Who will entice Ahab into attacking Ramoth Gilead and going to his death there?' "One suggested this, and another that. Finally, a spirit came forward, stood before the Lord and said, 'I will entice him.' "By what means?' the Lord asked. "'I will go out and be a deceiving spirit in the mouths of all his prophets,' he said. "'You will succeed in enticing him,' said the Lord. 'Go and do it.' "So now the Lord has put a deceiving spirit in the mouth of all these prophets of yours. The Lord has decreed disaster for you." ... The king of Israel then ordered, "... Put this fellow in prison and give him nothing but bread and water until I return safely." Micaiah declared, "If you ever return safely, the Lord has not spoken through me."... So the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat king of Judah went up to Ramoth Gilead...and went into battle. ...someone drew his bow at random and hit the king of Israel between the sections of his armor. ...and that evening he died." The Liar Died Because Of His Own Lies

Ahab was a liar. He thought the truth was a lie and lies were the truth. He loved lies, so God let his lying ways destroy him. Micaiah told Ahab the truth, but Ahab didn't want to hear it. So he listened to the lies of the false prophets instead, and went into battle. But he did indeed die just like Micaiah had predicted, and this is how God used this man's lies to punish himself.

Let's consider Micaiah's prophecy. He talked about something that had happened in the spiritual realm. God chose to use a spirit to punish Ahab and have him killed. But he didn't use a good angel to lie to Ahab—He used an evil spirit! God is all-powerful and he rules over the demons too. Of course God wouldn't use a good angel to do this type of work because they don't lie. But the demons love to tell lies and deceive people, so God allowed this evil spirit to go and deceive the false prophets and this evil king, Ahab. Does God Tempt People Or Promote Sin?

Some people are quite surprised when they hear this story because they think that God would be wrong to trick Ahab and make him believe a lie. But think about it. Did God actually make Ahab believe a lie? No, God didn't trick Ahab to believe a lie. Also, he didn't put that thought into the evil spirit's mind. When God talked to the angels and demons, he asked them who would like to lure Ahab into the fight so he would die. And the demons themselves responded with their ideas. It wasn't God's ideas—he just listened to their ideas. When one of the evil spirits suggested using the false prophets' lies to tempt Ahab, God allowed him to go ahead and follow up with his plan. Look at verse 22 again. It says,

“By what means?” the Lord asked. “I will go out and be a deceiving spirit in the mouths of all his prophets,” he said. “You will succeed in enticing him,” said the Lord. “Go and do it.” So here we see that God didn't do any wrong. He didn't sin and he didn't tempt Ahab to sin. The evil spirit had the idea and God allowed him to carry it out, because he knew that Ahab loved to listen to the false prophets and lies, so he knew that Ahab would believe the lies. God had every right to punish Ahab anyway. God is the true judge of right and wrong. But consider this: Does God like demons and false prophets to lie? Does God like sin? No! Look at these verses in James:

James 1:13-15 says: “Let no one say when he is tempted, “I am tempted by God,” for God cannot be tempted by evil, and he himself tempts no one. But each one is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desires. Then when desire conceives, it gives birth to sin, and when sin is full grown, it gives birth to death.” (NET)

God doesn't tempt people to sin. He is holy and hates sin. But God can use people's own sin to punish them. So he allowed that evil spirit to deceive the false prophets of Ahab. God can use people's own lies to punish themselves, and he can use people's own sin to destroy themselves. God is always perfectly truthful, and liars cannot ever deceive or trick him. So we see in this story that God used Ahab's evil and deceitful ways to punish himself.

Galatians 6:7 says: “Do not be deceived. God will not be made a fool. For a person will reap what he sows...” (NET) God Uses Satan To Punish Unbelievers And To Correct Believers

God has the right to punish sin and he can use Satan and demons to punish unbelievers that follow Satan. We also see in the New Testament that apostle Paul asked God to also correct some believers who had become rebellious. So he put them in Satan's hands in order to correct them (1 Corinthians 5:5; 1 Timothy 1:20).

God is amazing. He has all wisdom and power and can even use his enemies like Satan and demons to do his work. We will see much more of this right up to the end times (2 Thessalonians 2:9-12). The Kingdom Of God Is Above All Other Governments

Now that we have looked at all these stories of Saul and David and Ahab, we see that God is above all other kings and governments. Yes, even Satan's kingdom. Here's the order of authority:

God's Kingdom or Government Satan's Kingdom or Government Man's Kingdoms or Governments God Can Use All Governments—Even Ungodly Ones

Romans 13:1; Romans 13:4 says: "...there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God... For the one in authority is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for rulers do not bear the sword for no reason. They are God's servants, agents of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer." Did you notice the word servant in these verses? It says that all those in authority are God's servants. Does that mean all authority is good authority and all leaders are godly people? No. But God can still use human governments or kingdoms—even ungodly men—to bring some order and discipline into a world that would otherwise turn into anarchy and chaos if left by itself. God can use those governments "for your good" or to "bring punishment on the wrongdoers." Otherwise wicked men would soon take over the world under Satan's rule. So since God can even use ungodly men and their corrupt governments for his purposes, what about Satan's government? The verse says "...there is no authority except that which God has established." Although these verses are specifically talking about human governments, we know that Satan's authority and power also came from God originally, and he is still under God's authority so he too can be used by God. Satan rules over a very large government (which he stole from man). He's the "ruler of this world."

God Uses Satan Without Satan Knowing The Plan

Even though Satan is God's enemy and doesn't like to help God or us, sometimes God will use him anyway—without Satan even realizing it, because God is over all authority and knows the future.

Summary: In this chapter we saw that God used Satan's demons to accomplish God's plans for Israel and specifically the kings Saul, David and Ahab. Satan didn't know what God was doing, but God had a plan, and he used Satan and his demons to accomplish it.

God truly is the BOSS! He has all wisdom and power and he can even use his enemy Satan and his demons to enthrone or dethrone kings and governments. And God can use him to punish proud people too. God deserves our praise! He is the true King of kings!

"...Praise the name of God forever and ever, for He has all wisdom and power. He controls the course of world events; He removes kings and sets up other kings."(Daniel 2:20-21) (NLT)

7. The Power Source Behind Sorcery And Mediums

Chapter 7 The Power Source Behind Sorcery And Mediums Satan Uses Displays Of Power To Scare People Into Submission

We've already seen how wise and powerful God is over Satan and how he even uses Satan at times to remove or establish kings or to punish rebellious people so they will repent. We've also seen how God will sometimes use Satan to correct and strengthen believers like Job. God's power is so far above Satan that it's hard to compare them at all. But Satan is not a willing servant—he's still God's enemy and he's a very persuasive liar. So he tries very hard to deceive people into believing that he is actually the most powerful of all. He wants people to think that he and the demons are the most powerful beings around and can't be defeated. So he likes to frighten people with displays of power or use power in numbers in order to impress people or scare them so they submit to him out of fear. But all these things are deceitful lies from Satan himself.

John 8:44 says that: "Satan...is a liar and the father of lies."

Satan Is The Father Of Lies And The Enemy Of Truth

Satan is the "father" or inventor of every kind of lie and trick that we could think of. He became the first liar when he first lied to himself. He told himself that he was so great he could become like God. He said:

"I will ascend...I will make myself like the Most High." (Is. 14:14) And so when Satan had fallen into the sin of pride, he dragged some other angels into the same deceitful rebellion and they became liars too. So he became like a father to all those lying demons. Then he started lying to humans. After Adam and Eve had sinned, Satan's lies also spread among their children and to all people everywhere. In this way, Satan has become the "father of lies" and he keeps trying to invent new ways to lie and deceive people. In the Old Testament we can see a number of the methods that Satan and the demons used to deceive people. They were often used among people who didn't believe in God, but also among believers. Satan doesn't just focus on one method of deceit. He uses many. In fact, the more methods he uses, the better the deception. He doesn't mind if each different culture or people group has a totally different kind of belief system, as long as they are deceived. But one thing he doesn't like is the TRUTH, because the truth brings people closer to God. Truth is like an enemy to Satan, while lies are like his best buddies. Let's look at some of the ways he tried to deceive and draw people away from God's truth.

Satan Uses His Power To Deceive: Magic, Sorcery, Divination And Idolatry Sorcerers And Wise Men Used Magic To Frighten Moses

During the time of Moses, when the Israelites were slaves in Egypt, God wanted to rescue Israel from slavery, so he sent Moses to the King (Pharaoh). But Satan wanted to oppose God's plan by using his power to perform magic in front of the king.

Exodus 7:8-13 says: "The LORD said to Moses and Aaron, "When Pharaoh says to you, 'Do a miracle,' and you say to Aaron, 'Take your staff and throw it down before Pharaoh,' it will become a snake." When Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh, they did so, just as the LORD had commanded them — Aaron threw down his staff before Pharaoh and his servants and it became a snake. Then Pharaoh also summoned wise men and sorcerers, and the magicians of Egypt by their secret arts did the same thing. Each man threw down his staff, and the staffs became snakes. But Aaron's staff swallowed up their staffs. Yet Pharaoh's heart became hard, and he did not listen to them, just as the LORD had predicted." (NET) When Moses and Aaron performed the miracles in front of the king as God had commanded, then the king used his own wise men, sorcerers and magicians to do the same. His magicians worked their magic and made their staffs become snakes too. Even today, Satan has power to do magic and some types of miracles if God allows it. Satan likes to use his power to trick and frighten people so they'll think his power is the greatest. But why would God allow Satan to perform these miracles for the Egyptians? Perhaps God had several reasons, but likely he wanted to show us that even though Satan really does have power, God's power is always stronger than Satan's. This became obvious when Aaron's snake ate the magicians' snakes.

Satan's Power Is Real, But Not Like God's Surpassing Power The Bible doesn't give us all the names of the sorcerers and magicians of Pharaoh, but in 2 Timothy 3:8 we see the names of two of them: Jannes and Jambres. They did lots of other miracles or magic for the king of Egypt (Exodus 7:11; Exodus 7:22; Exodus 8:7). It's true that Satan is powerful and able to do many miraculous things, but he is nowhere near as powerful as God is, and so eventually God showed the king and his advisors that he alone was all-powerful and there was nothing that Satan or his sorcerers could do to stop him.

Exodus 8:18-19 says: "When the magicians attempted... by their secret arts, they could not.... The magicians said to Pharaoh, "It is the finger of God!" (NET) This is another lesson we need to learn. Satan and his magicians and sorcerers may all try to impress us with their miracles, magic, signs and wonders or other displays of power so that we believe their lies. But we should never be impressed or fooled by their power or his deceit. Satan is not God. He does not have supreme power or authority. Only God alone is the true source of all power. He alone should be honored, worshiped and obeyed.

God Punished The Canaanites For Practicing Witchcraft, Sorcery And Divination

God did lead the Israelites out of Egypt and eventually they entered into the land of Canaan. The Canaanite people worshiped false gods just like the ancestors of many nations. They had followed Satan's lies for centuries and Satan had blinded their minds. They practiced witchcraft, sorcery, divination and consulting the dead spirits of their ancestors. So when the Israelites came to Canaan, Moses warned them strongly against following the Canaanites' ungodly customs and beliefs. God hated the Canaanites' ways, so he planned to punish them and give their land to Israel.

Deuteronomy 18:9-14 says: "When you enter the land the Lord your God is giving you, do not learn to imitate the detestable ways of the nations there. Let no one be found among you who sacrifices their son or daughter in the fire, who practices divination or sorcery, interprets omens, engages in witchcraft, or casts spells, or who is a medium or spiritist or who consults the dead. Anyone

who does these things is detestable to the Lord; because of these same detestable practices the Lord your God will drive out those nations before you. You must be blameless before the Lord your God. The nations you will dispossess listen to those who practice sorcery or divination. But as for you, the Lord your God has not permitted you to do so.”

Israelites Gave Offerings To Idols And Worshiped The Spirits

God had warned Israel against following the evil ways of the Canaanites but eventually they too fell into those same sins. They started out by joining the festivals and parties with the Canaanites and then began giving offerings and burning incense to their false gods.

Judges 2:11-12 Then the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the LORD and served the Baals. They forsook the LORD They followed and worshiped various gods of the peoples around them.”

God had warned Israel not to make any kind of religious images or bow down to them.

Exodus 20:3-5 says: “You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself an image... You shall not bow down to them or worship them...” But the Israelites forgot God’s instructions to them...

2 Kings 22:17 says: “...they have forsaken me and burned incense to other gods and aroused my anger by all the idols their hands have made, my anger will burn against this place ...” In God’s eyes, making images or statues and bowing down to them, praying to them, or even giving offerings to them, is the same as worshiping demons—because demons are the ones who are deceiving the people into this kind of false worship. We’ll see other passages about this too.

Israelites Consulted Sorcerers And Mediums

God had also warned Israel about sorcery, witchcraft and using mediums or spiritists to talk with the dead. This was a serious sin, but Israel didn’t listen.

Leviticus 19:31 says: “Do not turn to mediums or seek out spiritists, for you will be defiled by them. I am the Lord your God.”

Leviticus 20:27 says: “A man or woman who is a medium or spiritist among you must be put to death. You are to stone them; their blood will be on their own heads.”

God Forbids Us To Communicate With The Spirits Of The Dead

Why doesn’t God want people to consult witchdoctors, sorcerers, mediums or the spirits of dead people? Simply because they deceive people. Satan uses mediums and those types of people to deceive people into thinking that dead people can talk to us, but they are being deceitful. God doesn’t allow the dead to come back and talk with people that are still living. (Isaiah 8:19 and Luke 16:26; Luke 16:30-31 talk about this.) But demons use many ways to try to deceive people into believing that the spirits of the dead do come back and talk with living people. But actually what people are listening to is Satan’s demons. Because of this, God has forbidden us to try to talk with the spirits of the dead. God doesn’t want us to listen to the lies of Satan and the demons. He doesn’t want us to get in touch with our ancestors or so called religious “saints” or anyone that has died. God has forbidden us to try to contact any of them or pray to them in any way, because we are supposed to pray to God alone.

Isaiah 8:19-20 says: “When someone tells you to consult mediums and spiritists, who whisper and mutter, should not a people inquire of their God? Why consult the dead on behalf of the living? Consult God’s instruction...” This makes it quite clear that God doesn’t want us to consult the dead or use diviners or mediums (or tarot cards, crystal balls, etc.). He has forbidden it because dead people can’t help us or give us understanding about things. Instead, we need to listen to God’s word and pray to God alone for his wisdom.

Demons Are Not True Prophets Of The Future

Some people try to consult spirits of the dead to hear prophecies about the future. But we’ve already seen that it’s not the spirits of the dead that are doing the talking. Satan’s evil angels (demons) will sometimes try to communicate with people and predict the future and give prophecies. But they are still liars. We see an example of this during the apostle Paul’s time. A demon was living inside a young servant girl and he used her mouth to make prophecies, and her bosses used this to make money for themselves. But Paul, by the power of God, commanded the evil spirit to come out of her and then she was well again (Acts 16:16-18).

Demons use all kinds of tricks like this to fool people. They aren’t true prophets and they don’t really know everything that is going to happen in the future. But since they are in many places, and have certain powers, they can tell about things they have seen, or they can sometimes control people’s thinking so they can try to make their own prophecies come true. But only God really knows the future. Satan and the spirits do not (Daniel 2:27).

King Saul Is Punished By God For Using A Medium

1 Samuel 28:6-19 tells another story about King Saul. Saul had turned his back on God and disobeyed him, so God said that Saul would die and David would take his place. King Saul was very upset about that, so when some enemies were coming to fight against him, he was afraid and wanted to hear some sort of prophecy that would encourage him and help him win the battle. But God didn’t want to support Saul anymore and he didn’t have any good news or good prophecies for Saul. So Saul broke his own law—and God’s too—and he went to a medium to call out to the spirits of the dead. Saul himself had outlawed that practice, but now he disguised himself at night and went to find a woman who was a medium and asked her to call out for the spirit of the prophet Samuel who had died. He wanted Samuel to give him some good news. Since Saul was disguised, the woman didn’t recognize that it was Saul who was asking her. She was afraid to help him because Saul had outlawed this practice in Israel, but Saul told her to go ahead anyway. In the past, she had told people that she could call for the spirits of the dead, but she was actually working with demons (evil spirits). But this time the demons didn’t come to her like before. This time was different. The woman saw Samuel’s spirit in a vision, so she was very afraid and screamed. God allowed this event to happen this one time in order to really frighten this woman and other Israelites, and to rebuke and punish Saul for his disobedience. This was a very serious sin. Soon after this, Saul died for his disobedience:

1 Chronicles 10:13-14 says: “Saul died because he was unfaithful to the Lord; he did not keep the word of the Lord and even consulted a medium for guidance, and did not inquire of the Lord. So the Lord put him to death and turned the kingdom over to David ...”

Still today, some witchdoctors and mediums charge people money in order to talk with the dead. Many people do this as a business. But God has shown us that we should not allow Satan to use these people to deceive us. We should not try to contact the spirits of the dead, lest we end up talking with demons. They don't know the future and they can't help us. They are just lying and want to see us destroyed.

Only God Is All-Powerful And Full Of Wisdom And Defeats All These False Prophets

Isaiah 44:24-25 says: "...I am the LORD, who made all things. I alone stretched out the heavens. Who was with Me when I made the earth? I expose the false prophets as liars and make fools of fortune-tellers. I cause the wise to give bad advice, thus proving them to be fools." (NLT) God Was Angry With Israel For Sacrificing To False Gods And Spirits

Deuteronomy 32:15-18 says that Israel: "...abandoned the God who made them and rejected the Rock their Savior. They made him jealous with their foreign gods and angered him with their detestable idols. They sacrificed to false gods, which are not God—gods they had not known, gods that recently appeared, gods your ancestors did not fear. You deserted the Rock, who fathered you; you forgot the God who gave you birth."

God says it is wrong to give offerings to idols or statues, yet many religious people still do. They think this will help them or keep them safe. Some think that they can worship their statues and God at the same time. But those who do that obviously don't understand God's ways. Let's look again at what God says about statues (idols).

People Make Idols And Sacred Stones

Isaiah 44:9-20 says: "All who make idols are nothing... Who shapes a god and casts an idol, which can profit nothing? People who do that will be put to shame; such craftsmen are only human beings.The blacksmith takes a tool and works with it in the coals; he shapes an idol with hammers, he forges it with the might of his arm.... The carpenter measures with a line and makes an outline with a marker; he roughs it out with chisels and marks it with compasses. He shapes it in human form, human form in all its glory, that it may dwell in a shrine. He cut down cedars, or perhaps took a cypress or oak. He let it grow among the trees of the forest, or planted a pine, and the rain made it grow. It is used as fuel for burning; some of it he takes and warms himself, he kindles a fire and bakes bread. But he also fashions a god and worships it; he makes an idol and bows down to it. Half of the wood he burns in the fire; over it he prepares his meal, he roasts his meat and eats his fill. He also warms himself and says, "Ah! I am warm; I see the fire." From the rest he makes a god, his idol; he bows down to it and worships. He prays to it and says, "Save me! You are my god!" They know nothing, they understand nothing; their eyes are plastered over so they cannot see, and their minds closed so they cannot understand. No one stops to think, no one has the knowledge or understanding to say, "Half of it I used for fuel; I even baked bread over its coals, I roasted meat and I ate. Shall I make a detestable thing from what is left? Shall I bow down to a block of wood?" Such a person feeds on ashes; a deluded heart misleads him; he cannot save himself, or say, "Is not this thing in my right hand a lie?"

Idols Aren't Even Able To Help Themselves, But People Worship And Pray To Them

Psalms 115:2-8 says: "Why should the nations say, "Where is their God?" Our God is in heaven! He does whatever he pleases! Their idols are made of silver and gold—they are man-made. They have mouths, but cannot speak, eyes, but cannot see, ears, but cannot hear, noses, but cannot smell, hands, but cannot touch, feet, but cannot walk. They cannot even clear their throats. Those who make them will end up like them, as will everyone who trusts in them."(NET) This says that people who worship statues or carvings become like those carvings, because "They have...eyes, but cannot see. They have ears, but cannot hear." Satan has deceived their minds and stopped their eyes and ears from properly seeing and hearing truth—so they believe lies. We can't allow Satan to deceive us that way (Psalms 135:15-17).

God Forbids Us To Worship Pictures And Carvings

Exodus 20:3-5 says: "You shall have no other gods before me. "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. You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me..." This passage is very clear. We are forbidden to use pictures or carvings or even images of saints in our worship. We should not bow down or pray to them or idolize them in any way. God has forbidden it—it's called idolatry. God's word is very clear on this. But Satan has tried to twist and change God's word and deceive people into idolatry. In many countries people use statues or carvings in their worship. Pagans and even some churches use statues or pictures to worship, or they light candles or incense, and pray and give offerings to the statues. But read God's word again and consider how Satan has twisted this truth in order to deceive us. Has Satan deceived you too? Do you pray to statues and pictures in your home or place of worship? Has Satan mixed idolatry into your worship? Remember, Satan is a liar and deceiver and wants to destroy you. God hates idolatry.

Worshiping Images Is Actually Worshiping Demons

1 Corinthians 10:19-20 : "Do I mean then that food sacrificed to an idol is anything, or that an idol is anything? No, but the sacrifices of pagans are offered to demons, not to God, and I do not want you to be participants with demons."

These verses show us that idols or images don't have power in themselves because they are just wood, metal, or stone. But Paul says that even giving offerings or sacrifices to idols is the same as worshiping the demons who are behind them. Satan and his demons are the ones responsible for instigating these lies. They use physical things to distract people so they are actually worshiping false gods (demons) without knowing it. In that way people are distracted from the truth about God.

Satan And The Demons Are Behind All The Various Kinds Of Lies In Each Culture Everywhere

We've seen that the Canaanites and Egyptians each believed in their own gods and spirits, and idols that they worshiped. They had various names for them. Other people groups have different names for their spirits and idols. But just because they have different names and beliefs doesn't mean there are different types of spirits in each different country or village. The Bible says that all of these things are the lies of the Satan and his demons. The demons can change their ways from place to place and use different names, but they're still the same evil spirits in every place. All the

magic and witchcraft and sorcery and divination and idol worship—it's all from Satan. Satan is the father of all these kinds of lies and he has deceived many people in many countries. He does this to keep people away from God and the truth so they will end up in hell.

Under Old Testament Law Sorcerers In Israel Were To Be Executed

Long ago, pagan nations turned their backs on God and didn't want to acknowledge him. So God told Israel the truth and warned them to stay away from Satan's ways. He was trying to help Israel lest they also end up in hell like the heathen. He explained everything clearly and warned Israel that if they engaged in some of these pagan practices, they would be executed. For instance, God warned them that anyone caught engaging in sorcery would be stoned to death (Leviticus 20:27; Exodus 22:18). God didn't want them to play around with this kind of serious sin so he gave this strict law in order that they would all fear sorcery and stay away from it. He wanted to protect them from Satan's lies and self-destruction. Those strict laws were given to Israel long ago. Today God could also apply them to sorcerers everywhere if he wanted to, but we are no longer told to stone them today. Let's look into this a bit further.

God's Law Condemns All People Not Just Sorcerers In those days, God didn't only tell them to stone sorcerers. Actually many of God's laws required the death penalty when broken. Here are some that might surprise (or even scare) you:

Working on a Saturday, the Sabbath (Exodus 31:15-16).

A stubborn or rebellious son who was a drunkard (Deuteronomy 21:18-20).

Someone who committed adultery (Deuteronomy 22:22, Matthew 5:28).

Taking God's name in vain (Deuteronomy 24:16).

False prophets and those who told false dreams (Deuteronomy 13:1-5).

...and many other laws.

So you can see that God didn't just condemn those involved in sorcery and witchcraft. There were actually many reasons why God demanded the death penalty. In fact, if we consider these verses carefully, we will see that we are all serious sinners in God's eyes. Think about it carefully and ask yourself: Have I ever worked on the Sabbath? Have I ever been rebellious to my parents or used God's name in vain? Have I ever told a lie or coveted things belonging to others? Have I ever committed adultery in my heart (Matthew 5:27)? It's pretty obvious that we all have been rebellious and disobeyed God's law in some way, so we are just as guilty as those who have done sorcery or divination or idolatry.

1 Samuel 15:23 says: "For rebellion is like the sin of divination, and arrogance like the evil of idolatry."

James 2:10 says: "For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it."

If We Commit Just One Sin, We're As Guilty As The Sorcerer

God's word is clear. Just one sin is enough to condemn and punish us, because God is holy and he can't tolerate even one sin in his presence. So we cannot start accusing someone else of doing sorcery and say they deserve stoning and forget that we too are also guilty in God's eyes. Remember this verse:

John 8:7 "...Let any one of you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone..."

We are all sinners and deserve punishment. Someone who tells just one lie is a sinner and just as guilty as someone who does sorcery or murder in God's eyes. Even if we've followed many of God's laws, if we have broken just one, this is enough to make us a sinner in God's eyes (James 2:10).

Romans 3:19-20 says: "For we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world held accountable to God. Therefore no one will be declared righteous in God's sight by the works of the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of our sin." This is important for us to understand: God's Law does not make us righteous before God. Instead, it just makes us aware of our sin and condemns us. God is totally holy, and everyone is a sinner according to God, and unable to follow God's laws perfectly. We are all "Guilty as Charged!" So then if we are all just as guilty before God as the spirit worshipers, sorcerers, and idolaters, then it seems as if Satan has won, and everyone is doomed to hell along with him, doesn't it? Well, if God did not show mercy and send the one who was promised to 'crush the head of the snake,' then we would all have been lost. But praise God—Satan did not defeat God! God has kept his promise and he sent the Promised One to 'crush the head of the snake.' He is the only one able to defeat Satan, because he is both God and man. In the next few chapters we'll look at several ways this Promised One has defeated the various powers of Satan.

8. Jesus Breaks Satan's Spear

Chapter 8 Jesus Breaks Satan's Spear "The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work." (1 John 3:8) God Sends A Baby To Defeat Satan

After hundreds of years, God finally did send the Promised One to defeat Satan—to 'crush the head of the snake' just like he had promised. But this man didn't come the way people thought he would. God didn't send a popular politician or scholar, or a wealthy businessman, or a famous high priest. He didn't even send a powerful army general. God sent a tiny little baby! But could a weak, vulnerable little human baby possibly defeat a powerful angel like Satan? Yes, absolutely! Because God delights to use things that seem to be weak to defeat the strong and powerful.

"...God chose what the world thinks weak to shame the strong." (1 Corinthians 1:27 NET)

God chose to send a baby to defeat his greatest enemy! The baby's name that was sent to defeat Satan was Jesus. But this baby was different than all other babies. Jesus did not have a human father, but only a human mother, because God had chosen to send his very own son to be born of a woman. The woman's name was Mary and she was a virgin. God placed his very own son inside of this virgin woman's womb so that Jesus would be born as a true human being—from a human mother—but he was also God. Mary was engaged to be married to a godly man named Joseph who would raise Jesus as his own son. Joseph and Mary were not rich or influential people in Israel. Joseph was just a regular guy—a carpenter.

God Sent An Angel To Protect The Baby Jesus From Satan

After Mary gave birth to Jesus, King Herod heard that a baby king had been born in the town of Bethlehem in Israel, just like the prophets had foretold. Herod was afraid that this baby might grow up and take his place as king of Israel. Satan also must have heard about this baby and wanted to make sure Herod destroyed the baby quickly. Satan is a Terrorist—he's called The Destroyer and a Murderer. Herod sent soldiers to Bethlehem to kill all the little baby boys there. But Satan could never defeat God's plan. God knew ahead of time what they planned to do, so he sent an angel to warn Joseph and Mary to flee to Egypt (Matthew 2:13-20). Here again we see another example of how God can use angels to protect his people on the earth from Satan.

Satan's power and Herod's army couldn't kill the baby Jesus because God had set him apart for a very special task. God planned to use this little baby to defeat Satan, so he was watching over Jesus from the time he was a baby. Perhaps Satan realized that this new baby might be the one who was prophesied to 'crush the head of the snake,' so he was determined to find and kill him. But his plans were foiled this time, so he would try again later. In the meantime, angels watched over Joseph and Mary and baby Jesus and they fled to Egypt. Later they returned to Israel when it was safe, and the baby Jesus grew up into a grown man. Once he was grown, it was time for him to face Satan in several spiritual battles—battles over the kingdom of the earth, and over mankind. In these next few chapters we will look at some of those battles.

Satan Is The Prince Or Ruler Over All Of Adam's Descendants

First, we need to remember that when God created the earth, he assigned Adam as the ruler of this earth. But we also know that when Adam submitted to Satan and obeyed him, he became Satan's slave. And so Satan became the ruler and king and ruler over all Adam's descendants, who had become sinners with him.

Romans 5:12; Romans 5:17; Romans 5:21 says: "Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man (Adam), and death through sin, and in this way death came to all people, because all sinned...death reigned...sin reigned in death..."

Sin and Death therefore ruled over all mankind so all of Adam's descendants were under Satan their king. That's why the Bible calls Satan the "Prince" or "Ruler" of this world (John 12:31; John 14:30). This kind of prince has more authority than even a president or prime minister of a country because they only rule over one country. But Satan rules over the whole world, so he is more powerful than all the kings and prime ministers and rulers of all countries put together.

1 John 5:19 says: "...the whole world is under the control of the evil one."

Every person in the whole world is born into Adam's family, so all are born into Satan's kingdom--a kingdom of disobedient people.

Ephesians 2:2 says: Satan is "...the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient."

If Any Human Wanted To Defeat Satan, He Would Have To Resist His Temptations First

Those who submit to Satan's rule are "disobedient" to God. From Adam to the time of Jesus, there was not anyone who had defeated Satan. Satan has tempted people everywhere, and everyone has submitted to him in sin and became part of Satan's kingdom. So, then, in God's eyes, if any human wanted to defeat Satan and take over his position as ruler over the earth, then he would have to overcome Satan's temptations first. It would be a crucial test.

Jesus Had To Overcome Satan's Temptations

Adam had failed the test. He had submitted to Satan and lost control of the kingdom of the earth to Satan. So Jesus had to become human like Adam, and he needed to pass the test in order to be qualified as a proper ruler of this earth and thereby save mankind. He had to take the place of the former head (Adam), and overcome Satan's temptations, and in this way he could take both Adam's place and Satan's place as the ruler of mankind. So let's look at the story of Jesus' temptations. The Holy Spirit Led Jesus Into The Desert So Satan Could Tempt Him

Matthew chapter 4 says specifically that the Holy Spirit himself led Jesus into the desert so Satan could tempt him. This shows us that God had planned and allowed for Jesus to be tempted. God himself doesn't tempt people, so he didn't tempt Jesus (James 1:13). But God did use Satan as his servant and allowed him to test Jesus. God wanted to show Satan that a man could overcome Satan's powerful temptations. The Powerful Temptations Of Satan Three Pathways To Temptations 1 John 2:16 talks about three pathways to temptations which Satan uses in this world:

1. Lust of the flesh – desires from within the body, like hunger and thirst and other needs
2. Lust of the eyes – desires that come from seeing things, (possessions, money, houses, etc.)
3. Pride of life – the uncontrolled desire for approval from others and honor or glory for ourselves.

Satan Used These Three Pathways To Tempt Adam And Eve Too Long ago Satan used these three pathways to temptations in order to tempt Adam and Eve.

Genesis 3:6 says that: "...the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was:

good for food and

pleasing to the eye, and also

desirable for gaining wisdom

In this way, Satan tempted Eve with something that appealed to her stomach (the flesh), her eyes, and her ego (pride—the desire for fame and glory). When Adam and Eve gave in to the temptation and ate the fruit that God had forbidden, they became Satan's children and slaves of sin. Satan is an expert at using all these pathways to temptations to seduce people into sin.

Satan Also Used Those Three Pathways To Temptations In Order To Tempt Jesus

Matthew 4:1-11 and Luke 4:1-13 show us how Satan used these same three areas of temptations—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life—to tempt Jesus also. But the temptations of Jesus were much harder than the ones Satan used against Adam and Eve.

Temptation Involving The Lust Of The Flesh: When Satan tempted Adam and Eve, they didn't lack food. They had plenty of wonderful food in the garden, and they were well fed. But they still gave in to the cravings for the food offered by Satan. On the other hand, when Satan tempted Jesus, Jesus hadn't eaten any food for 40 days in the desert (Matthew 4:1-4, Luke 4:1-4). He was very hungry when Satan suggested he turn the stones into bread.

Jesus must have been starving and very weak, perhaps close to death. So his temptation was much more difficult than Adam and Eve's. But even so, Jesus didn't give in to the temptation or follow Satan's suggestions. Even though he was very hungry, he didn't give in to his body's cravings. He wanted to totally follow God alone. We know that being hungry is not sinful—nor is eating. But God had not told Jesus to eat yet, so Jesus didn't obey Satan. He resisted Satan and waited for God, his Father, to tell him when to eat.

Temptation Involving The Lust Of The Eyes: When Adam and Eve saw that the forbidden fruit was "pleasing to the eye," Satan used a single fruit tree to tempt them. But when Satan tempted Jesus, he didn't just show him a little fruit. From the top of a mountain (perhaps in a vision), Satan somehow showed Jesus all the countries and governments and kingdoms of the world and said that he would give them all to Jesus if he worshiped Satan. Imagine what that was like. He was offering Jesus all the power and wealth of all countries everywhere, including all the people and all their lands. This was a huge offer! God had prophesied that Jesus would someday rule over all the countries of the world, but Satan was offering to give them to Jesus before God did—right then and there. But Jesus didn't fall for that temptation either. He resisted Satan and didn't allow his

eyes to lead him into sin. He would not submit to Satan like Adam did and be Satan's servant. He would serve God his Father alone, and he would wait until God gave him everything in his own time.

Temptation Involving The Pride Of Life: In the Garden of Eden, Satan had tempted Adam and Eve with a new kind of knowledge. He said, "When you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil" (Genesis 3:4). Satan used this new kind of knowledge as a lure to tempt them into being like God himself—gaining glory and self-importance through this new kind of knowledge. Satan was tempting them to be great and glorious like God was, so they gave into that temptation of pride in themselves. But what about Jesus? Did Satan tempt Jesus in the same way too?

Satan took Jesus to the very top of the temple, which was the most important place of worship in the whole country of Israel. It was a very tall and prominent building. From where he stood on top of the temple, Jesus could probably see hundreds of people down below him who came to the temple every day to worship. Then Satan told him to jump down and perform a miracle. He said that God would look out for him so that he would not get hurt. He said that the angels would guard Jesus so he wouldn't be harmed in any way. So what kind of temptation was that? If Satan had tempted us like that, we probably wouldn't be tempted at all because we'd be afraid of falling and dying. But this temptation was perfectly suited for Jesus because he wasn't afraid. He was God's Son, so he knew the angels would actually come to help him, just like the Bible said. If God wanted to, he could help him to just float or glide down to the ground without being hurt—and what an amazing miracle that would be! The hundreds of people standing there would be very amazed and impressed by this kind of miraculous power. So this was a real temptation for Jesus, because he actually could do this miracle and just float down and be fine. But God hadn't told Jesus to perform this miracle. Satan just wanted Jesus to be independent of God and proud and show off his own power. Satan tempted Jesus with acting in pride by trying to become famous through performing such a big miracle in front of so many people. Also, it seems that Satan might have been wanting Jesus to fulfill a prophecy ahead of time. Malachi 3:1 says "suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple." Satan probably reasoned that if Jesus would listen to him and hurry and make this prophecy come true ahead of time, then he would actually be submitting to the rule of Satan and become his servant—just like Adam and Eve submitted to Satan's temptations and became his servants. Satan always wants people to submit to him and obey him. But Jesus resisted the desire to be proud and seek honor and glory for himself in this way. He didn't follow Satan's temptation, but instead, he waited for God's timing. So Jesus defeated Satan again. He followed his Father's will and glorified him alone.

Jesus As A Human Was Tempted In Every Way—But Defeated Satan By Resisting The trials of Jesus were much harder than any trials any other human had ever faced, but Jesus didn't give in to sin. He defeated all the temptations. Jesus became a human being, and then as a flesh and blood human being, he defeated all of Satan's temptations that normally come to all humans. In this way he showed Satan and everyone else that he was far superior to Adam who had failed the test. Jesus showed that he alone was qualified to defeat Satan.

There's no other man like Jesus. Satan tempted him with everything he had, but in spite of his strongest temptations, Jesus didn't fall for them. He remained totally perfect and without sin, so he

defeated Satan's temptations.

Hebrews 4:15 says that Jesus is, "...one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin."

Word Picture: Jesus Broke The Spear Of Satan In the old days, people didn't have guns for hunting. They used arrows or spears, and some men were experts in making special kinds of spears. They would make different types of spears for different jobs—smaller spears and arrows for hunting small game, and larger, stronger spears for the larger animals, etc. But when they went into battle with their enemies, they used their very best arrows or strongest spears so they could win the battle and not be killed themselves. They would often dip them in oil and light them on fire just before they would shoot them. In a similar way, when Satan went into spiritual battle with Jesus, he tried to defeat Jesus by using his very best 'spears' or temptations. Ephesians 6:16 refers to his temptations as "...the flaming arrows of the evil one." But even the strongest, most difficult temptations Satan used were no match for Jesus. Jesus was like a mighty warrior who deflected the flaming arrow or spear that was thrown at him and it fell harmlessly to the ground. Then he picked it up and broke it in half, right there in front of his enemy.

Summary:

Jesus showed Satan and the world that he was totally qualified to defeat Satan! In fact Jesus was the only one who qualified, since he had resisted every temptation Satan threw at him.

(Psalms 76:3-5)

"...He broke the flaming arrows, The shield and the sword and the weapons of war. ...none of the warriors could use his hands." (NASB)

9. Jesus Breaks Through Satan's Army

Chapter 9 Jesus Breaks Through Satan's Army "The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work." (1 John 3:8) The Gospels Mention Demons Often

It may sound strange, but Satan has an army. His army is not made of human soldiers. They are an army of evil spirits—or demons (fallen angels)—that are under his control. They are like spiritual soldiers which do battle with God and mankind. In much of the Old and parts of the New Testament, demons are not very visible. They mostly just work in the background—active, but hidden from our view. But in Matthew, Mark and Luke, there are many stories about demon activity while Jesus was on the earth. Apparently, God allowed them to be much more active and visible during that time because God wanted to show the amazing power of Jesus and his ability to fight spiritual warfare against Satan's army. God wanted to show us how much more powerful Jesus was than Satan's army of demons.

Acts 10:38 says: "...God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and...he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him."

Matthew 8:16 says: "When evening came, many who were demon-possessed were brought to him, and he drove out the spirits with a word and healed all the sick."

Jesus Had Authority To Drive Out Demons

Mark 1:22-27 says: "The people there were amazed by his teaching, because he taught them like one who had authority, not like the experts in the law. Just then there was a man in their synagogue with an unclean spirit, and he cried out, "Leave us alone, Jesus the Nazarene! Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God!" But Jesus rebuked him: "Silence! Come out of him!" After throwing him into convulsions, the unclean spirit cried out with a loud voice and came out of him. They were all amazed so that they asked each other, "What is this? A new teaching with authority! He even commands the unclean spirits and they obey him."(NET) The Demons Knew Jesus And Respected His Authority Over Them

Why would demons be so afraid of Jesus? Because they recognized who he was and his authority over them. When he got close to them, they proclaimed that he was the Holy One of God and feared what he would do to them. They respected his authority and ability to send them to hell. But Jesus himself wasn't the least bit afraid of them.

Jesus Told The Demons To Be Quiet

Several times we see the demons proclaiming who Jesus was, but Jesus always told them to be quiet. Why would Jesus do that? Why not just let them give him honor? Jesus allowed the demons to only say enough so that the people listening would realize that the demons recognized who he was and that he has authority over them. Then people could see that the demons were afraid of him. But Jesus didn't want them to speak too much because Satan is the father of lies and the

demons are also liars and deceivers. They can easily deceive people, so Jesus doesn't want people to listen to them. He just told them to be quiet. The Demons Always Had To Listen To Jesus

We know that demons often influenced people's minds and thoughts, but some demons also gained control over their bodies. Their power allowed them to control and even harm the person. Demons may be more powerful than people, but they had no power over Jesus. When Jesus talked, they could not resist or talk back or make excuses—they just had to listen to him and leave immediately.

Jesus Drove Out A Large Army Of Demons In previous examples, we saw that Jesus didn't spend much time talking with demons. He just told them to be quiet, and then drove them out. But in Luke 8:26-39 we read a little different type of story. This time Jesus allowed the demon to speak a little bit more because he wanted to show the disciples (and us) something that is very important. In this story, after the demon-possessed man came and bowed before Jesus, then Jesus asked the evil spirit his name. This was not normal for him to do, but Jesus wanted the disciples to learn something from this name. The spirit said his name was "Legion" because there were many demons in this man, not just one. Legion is the name of an army unit which could have up to 6000 soldiers. Of course, Jesus already knew how many spirits were in this man, but he wanted the disciples to hear for themselves how many demons Jesus was going to remove. Jesus was going to show his power over a WHOLE ARMY of demons. The Spirits Feared Jesus And Requested To Go Into Some Pigs When Jesus talked to this army of demons, they were very afraid of him. They were afraid that Jesus was going to send them to a place called the Abyss. According to verses we see in the Bible, the Abyss is similar to hell. Hell is a fiery place of eternal punishment. But apparently the Abyss is more like temporary prison that God uses to imprison demons for a certain amount of time (Revelation 9:1; Revelation 11:7; Revelation 17:8; Revelation 20:1; Revelation 20:3). This Legion or army of demons was afraid of being locked up in the Abyss and no longer be able to live inside a body. They knew that Jesus wouldn't allow them to go inside another man or woman, so they asked Jesus to let them go into a group of pigs that were nearby. There were about 2000 pigs in that herd (Mark 5:13) and Jesus gave them permission. So the demons left the man and rushed out into the herd of pigs. This army of demons greatly outnumbered the number of pigs. All the demons were rushing around trying to find a new body (pig) to live in, so the pigs were totally overwhelmed by those demons and they went absolutely crazy. They all rushed down the steep bank and drowned in the lake below. The demons thought they would have a safe hiding place inside the pigs, but it didn't work out that way at all. Jesus won again!

Jesus Wanted To Show How Many Spirits Were In The Army Was Jesus helping these evil spirits by granting their wish? Not at all. Actually he was using this opportunity to show people just how big this army of spirits was. It was a huge army or legion with much more than 2000 demons, since they far outnumbered the pigs. Jesus showed us that he is all-powerful and can easily defeat a huge army of spirits just by speaking a command. Ponder that for a minute and visualize what that was like in the spiritual world. Jesus was like an army of one man. He faced a whole LEGION of demons—by himself—and it was just like he walked right through them. Unafraid and unharmed, he just broke through Satan's army. They were so afraid they just ran for the hills.

Jesus Drove Out Many Demons

There are many other examples in the Bible of Jesus driving out many demons while he was on this earth. Every one of these evil spirits had to obey him instantly. There was no hesitation—they could not resist. Here are some more examples:

Matthew 4:24; Matthew 8:16; Matthew 8:28-34; Matthew 9:32-34; Matthew 12:22; Matthew 15:21-28; Matthew 17:14-21

Mark 1:21-28; Mark 1:32-34; Mark 1:39; Mark 3:11; Mark 5:1-20; Mark 7:2-30; Mark 9:14-27; Mark 16:9

Luke 4:33-37; Luke 4:40-41; Luke 6:18-19; Luke 7:21; Luke 8:2; Luke 8:26-39; Luke 9:37-43; Luke 11:14-15; Luke 13:11; Luke 13:32.

When we look at the sheer numbers of all these stories, there is abundant proof—Jesus is God, so he is far superior to Satan and all the spirits everywhere. There is no one as powerful as Jesus!

Jesus Alone Had Power To Authorize The Apostles To Drive Out Demons

Later on, Jesus gave special authority to his apostles so they too could drive out demons, which they also did by the power of Jesus. But there was an occasion when they weren't able to. So they came to Jesus and Jesus himself had to drive the demon out. This again was a lesson for the apostles that the power is from God and not from man. Jesus didn't want the apostles to forget that and become proud and think that they themselves had the power to do cast out demons.

There is no one that can be compared with Jesus. He is above all humans and also above all of Satan's armies. Those evil spirits have no choice but to obey him. Jesus is God and so all of God's power resides in him (Colossians 1:16). Knowing this can truly strengthen our faith. Christ is watching over us and the demons cannot defeat Christ.

10. Jesus Breaks Satan's Chains

Chapter 10 Jesus Breaks Satan's Chains "The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work." (1 John 3:8) Jesus Had To Break Satan's Greatest Power Over Mankind As we've seen in the last two chapters, Jesus showed everyone that he had power to overcome two of Satan's powerful weapons: temptations, and Satan's army of demons. But he still needed to remove Satan's greatest power over man—the power of sin and death. That power keeps mankind in slavery to Satan and allows him to rule and reign over mankind as king.

Word Picture: The Bondage Of Sin And Death

Let's use a word picture here to explain this better: Satan is like a slave master or a prison warden—and the prison is called "death." Sin is like a rope or chain that binds prisoners' hands and feet and drags them all the way to prison (Romans 6:16). Satan doesn't want to lose a single prisoner, so he works very hard to keep people constantly bound or enslaved to all kinds of sin and fear. He keeps people deceived and in fear of witchcraft, sorcery, his demons, and other enemies. But man's greatest fear is death. Satan constantly uses the fear of death to keep people enslaved to him. And so, if Jesus wanted to defeat Satan and free mankind from slavery to sin and the fear of death, he had to become human and have a flesh and blood body like us in order to break that chain of sin and death that binds all humans. Let's look at a verse that talks about this:

Hebrews 2:14-15 says: "Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that ...he might break the power of him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil—and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death." (also Romans 6:17-18; Romans 6:23) Satan Had Tried Many Ways To Defeat Jesus

Jesus and Satan were fierce enemies, so while Jesus was on the earth, Satan had tried many different ways to tempt and defeat him. But no matter what strategy or temptation Satan used, Jesus did not give in to any of the temptations. For 33 years, Jesus lived perfectly and Satan was unsuccessful in defeating him in any way (Hebrews 4:15). Satan could not find one area of weakness. But finally Satan found something that he felt might be a weak spot for Jesus. It was one of Jesus' friends—someone who was with Jesus all the time. His name was Judas. Satan thought he might be able to use Judas to finally defeat Jesus.

Jesus Chose The Apostles, But Judas Was A Child Of Satan When Jesus chose the 12 apostles, Judas was one of them. When Satan saw this, he must have been very happy, because he knew that Judas wasn't a true follower of God. Judas was still a follower of Satan and his ways. Satan might have thought that Jesus didn't really know Judas very well. So he determined to find a way to use Judas some way to defeat Jesus. Judas was the keeper of the money bag for Jesus and the apostles, and sometimes he stole some of the money (John 12:6), so Satan knew that Judas loved money. When Judas gave in to temptations, he had opened the door for Satan to have access into his life. He was allowing Satan to control his thoughts, so Satan hoped that later he could control Judas and use him for his own big plans.

Judas Was Angry About Jesus' Use Of Money, And He Went To The Chief Priests

Judas followed Jesus as a disciple for about three years. But after 3 years, he got very upset about the way Jesus was using money. After Jesus had raised Lazarus from the dead, his sister, Mary, came and wanted to thank Jesus, so she poured some perfume on Jesus' feet and head (Matthew 26:6-13; John 12:1-8). This was very expensive perfume. They could have sold it for 300 pieces of silver, which was equal to a year's wages—a huge sum of money. Judas and some of the disciples were angry at Mary for “wasting” that kind of money. Judas said it would have been better to sell it and give the money to the poor people, but actually, Judas just wanted to steal some of the money, which is why he was so angry. But Jesus supported Mary and praised her for what she did. Matthew 26:14 says that it was at this time Judas went to the chief priests and said he was willing to hand Jesus over to them for pay. It looks like Judas finally realized that Jesus and his kingdom was not going to make him rich, and so he chose to turn his back on Jesus. At least he would get some money out of the deal.

Satan Entered Judas And He Went To The Chief Priests

Luke 22:2-6 says: “The chief priests and the experts in the law were trying to find some way to execute Jesus, for they were afraid of the people. Then Satan entered Judas, the one called Iscariot, who was one of the twelve. He ...discussed with the chief priests and officers of the temple guard how he might betray Jesus, handing him over to them. They were delighted and arranged to give him money.” (NET) (also Matthew 26:14-16) Judas Made His Own Choice To Betray Jesus, But He Was Also Following God's Plan The chief priests were delighted to hear about Judas' plan. And even though he had talked with them in secret, Jesus knew exactly what Judas was thinking and planning, since Jesus is God. Jesus also knew that Satan was behind the idea too. God knows everything, and he knew from the beginning that Judas would choose to betray Jesus. It's true that Judas followed his own desires and Satan's plan, and so God will punish him for it (Matthew 16:14). But God allowed him to do it because it was also part of his plan. He had actually prophesied that this would happen long before it did (Psalms 41:9; John 13:18-26; John 6:70-71). God was allowing these men to fulfill his own plan.

Judas And Satan And The Chief Priests Thought They Could Trick Jesus Do you think Satan knew what God was planning to do at the crucifixion of Jesus? Do you think he knew about the resurrection and all that would happen after Jesus was crucified? No. Satan was only focused on killing Jesus because he thought it was his own idea. Judas had secret talks with the chief priests and they thought Jesus didn't know about their plan. But Jesus knew everything they were doing. The leaders thought they could sneak up on Jesus when he was unprepared, and capture him and nail him to the cross. But they had no idea that this was God's plan all along (Acts 2:23; Acts 4:28). If Satan and the priests had known what Jesus would accomplish on the cross, they wouldn't have done it.

1 Corinthians 2:7-8 says: “...we speak the wisdom of God,hidden in a mystery... None of the rulers of this age understood it. If they had known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.” (NET) Satan Didn't Know What Christ's Death Would Accomplish

These verses in 1 Corinthians 2:7-8 show us that Satan, along with all the other rulers, including the chief priests, didn't know that Jesus would die for the purpose of saving mankind. They thought

that Jesus had just come to start a new kingdom. They had heard John the Baptist and Jesus talk about his kingdom coming soon, so Satan thought Jesus had come to be the king of the world. And that is true—God had prophesied in the Old Testament that he would establish his kingdom on the earth with King David's heir on the throne. Jesus was that king. But God also planned for something else to come first, and that part was hidden from Satan. The part that was hidden was salvation through the cross and the coming church. The Bible calls it a "mystery" because it was a hidden secret.

Satan Didn't Believe Jesus Had The Power To Become A King

Jesus had talked a lot about the kingdom, but it seems that Satan didn't believe Jesus had enough power and influence to actually become a king. Most kings in those days were strong warriors and needed the power of large armies to become kings by force. But Jesus wasn't like that. He didn't gather an army to fight the Romans. Jesus was just a gentle, gracious religious leader in Satan's eyes.

Satan used his influence to convince the leaders of the Jews to hate Jesus. They didn't want Jesus to be their king—they wanted to kill him instead. So it looks like Satan thought he was winning—and that God's plan to set up a new king was failing. Satan probably thought that Jesus didn't have enough political influence or the military power to actually become king and overcome Satan's powerful kingdom. So he decided to get rid of Jesus by using Judas.

Satan Entered Judas Again At The Mealtime

Satan had already used Judas to make an agreement with the chief priests, so then he just had to wait for a convenient time to hand Jesus over to them when no crowds were around. Satan was watching and waiting. And it wasn't long until the opportunity came around. Jesus was celebrating the Passover with his disciples. There were no crowds around—just the apostles now.

They were eating the meal together around the table and were busy talking, but Judas' thoughts were somewhere else. He knew this was a good time to go to the priests, but he needed an excuse to get away. Besides, the conversation was getting really uncomfortable, talking about betrayal. Jesus handed Judas a piece of bread and told him to do something quickly. It really didn't matter what was said, because Judas' mind was probably already made up: he was ready to get out of that room. It was the perfect time to slip away, and Satan came and took control of Judas. It was time to go.

John 13:27-30 says: "...after Judas took the piece of bread, Satan entered into him. Jesus said to him, "What you are about to do, do quickly." (Now none of those present at the table understood why Jesus said this to Judas. Some thought that, because Judas had the money box, Jesus was telling him to buy whatever they needed for the feast, or to give something to the poor.) Judas took the piece of bread and went out immediately. (Now it was night.)" (NET) The apostles didn't know what Judas was going to do, but Jesus knew exactly what Satan and Judas were doing.

Jesus Told The Disciples About The Cross, But He Hid His Plan From Satan In the days leading up to the cross, Jesus told the disciples what was coming and also even showed them from the Scriptures that God had prophesied about the cross. But they didn't understand. Nor did Satan. Even though Jesus talked about his death to the disciples, he was able to somehow hide his plan

from Satan. We don't know if Satan was present when Jesus told the disciples, but Satan isn't omnipresent like God, so he doesn't hear or see everything. And also, God can easily keep him from knowing certain things. Satan is not all-knowing. 1 Corinthians 2:7-8 makes it clear that Satan and the other rulers of the earth didn't know what purpose God had in mind for the cross. It was a mystery until he revealed it later.

Satan Wanted To Control Judas Himself In the examples above (Luke 22:3 and John 13:27) Satan himself entered Judas. But as we have seen in other passages, Satan normally used other demons to do that sort of work for him. So why would Satan enter Judas himself this time rather than use another demon? It looks like he probably wanted full control of the operation and to make sure the job was done right, so he entered Judas himself. In the Bible we only see two examples of Satan entering a person: Judas and probably the antichrist during the last days. So we can see that Satan must have thought that getting Jesus crucified was an extremely important job. Satan didn't want another demon to mess it up, so he did it himself.

Satan And Judas Arranged To Have Jesus Arrested

After Satan entered Judas, he directed him to go straight to the temple rulers, and they ordered soldiers to go immediately and arrest Jesus. Judas led them to where Jesus was and they arrested him and then quickly tried him in a phony court session in the middle of the night. False witnesses were arranged to tell lies about him there, but Jesus didn't bother to answer them. He could have easily disputed their lies and even done a miracle in order to escape. He'd done it before, but this time he didn't. He stood there silently and let them talk. After trying and sentencing him falsely, they took him away and tortured him with beatings, whippings and a crown of thorns on his head. They had no mercy on him.

Satan Was Thrilled To Humiliate Jesus And Have Him Suffer And Die On The Cross When the soldiers beat and whipped and humiliated Jesus, Satan must have been extremely happy to see him bear so much pain. He probably put many of those evil thoughts in the minds of the soldiers as they tortured Jesus. Remember, Satan is a terrorist—the worst one that ever existed. And when they finally nailed Jesus to the cross and hung him up to die in humility, Satan must have been overjoyed. He must have thought that this human being that God had sent to become a king had failed in trying to become king and now he was dying a shameful death—just like an evil criminal. Satan thought he had won. But instead, we see that one of God's ancient prophecies was being fulfilled: The snake would strike the heel of the promised one (Genesis 3:15).

Satan Thought He Had Won, But He Was Actually Helping To Defeat Himself

Satan thought he had defeated Jesus, but it wasn't long before he realized that he himself was the one who was actually defeated. When Jesus rose from the dead, Satan must have wondered what on earth just happened. Then he probably remembered that ancient prophecy God made in the garden of Eden—the prophecy that said that the serpent would attack the heel of the promised one, but that his heel would strike the head of the serpent (Genesis 3:15). The head of the serpent is a picture of Satan's power. And when Jesus rose from the dead, it was a deadly blow to Satan's power. Satan must have been totally surprised. He thought Jesus was finished, but here he was—very much alive again! And he had a new body that would never die again. When Satan planned the death of Jesus, he didn't realize that he was actually planning his own defeat. God

was using Satan to accomplish his own plan and Satan didn't even know it.

Jesus' Death And Resurrection Broke Open The Prison Gates Of Death

After his death on the cross, Jesus didn't remain in the grave. He rose again! It's very important to understand exactly what Jesus did there for mankind. He didn't die and rise again for himself. He died to pay for the sins of the world! Since he was innocent, he could pay the sin debt for others—for all of mankind. And he rose again so that others could also rise again to be free from the power of death. So now sin has lost its ability to rule over us. When we believe in the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ on our behalf we are freed from the enslavement of Satan's chains!! When the giant stone was rolled away from Jesus' grave and Jesus rose up and came out of that tomb, it was like a beautiful picture of the prison door of death being opened wide and the chains of sin and death that had bound mankind being broken. God also gave another good visual picture of what just happened as a result of Jesus' death and resurrection:

Matthew 27:51-53 : "...The earth shook and the rocks were split apart...tombs were opened, and the bodies of many saints who had died were raised. (They came out of the tombs after his resurrection and went into the holy city and appeared to many...)" (NET) Jesus' Triumph In Bible times, when a king or army general conquered another city, he marched into that city and took away all the enemy's weapons, and their conquered king couldn't do anything about it. Then while that conquered king was watching, the new king could also open the prison doors and free all the prisoners that the previous king had made into slaves. Then he would take them all home to their own land. When they arrived they would have a great celebration parade called a Triumph. Their enemies were destroyed and some of the captives could be set free and become citizens of their new country. In a similar way, when Jesus raised these first dead believers from the grave, it was like a triumphant parade in front of Satan. He was showing Satan that he had been conquered, and death would no longer hold mankind forever (Colossians 2:15; Ephesians 4:8).

Jesus Was The First Man To Defeat Death

1 Corinthians 15:20-23 says: "...Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead also came through a man. For just as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive. But each in his own order: Christ, the firstfruits..." (NET)

Jesus is called the "firstfruits" here, which means he is the first of many more people to come. Many more of his people will be resurrected.

Colossians 1:18 also says that Christ was: "...the firstborn from among the dead..."

Jesus Used Satan To Conquer Death

Jesus was the beginning of a new family—those who conquer death by faith in Jesus. He was the one who opened the door of Satan's prison of death and he allowed others to go free (Matthew 27:50-53). And the remarkable thing is that he used Satan to be involved!

Satan thought he had defeated Jesus, but in God's amazing plan, Satan had actually aided in his own defeat by helping conquer death. The nails that Satan meant for Jesus actually became like nails in Satan's own coffin, so to speak. I'm sure this made Satan extremely angry when he

realized it. The Cross Canceled Our Certificate Of Debt And Disarmed Satan's Hold On Us In ancient times when someone was in debt, the creditor often wrote a document or certificate of indebtedness which specified the details of the debt (e.g. Luke 16:5-7). Later, when the debt was paid in full, they would write "It is finished" across the certificate in order to prove the debt was cancelled and no more money was owed. Then it could be nailed up on a post in a public area to show everyone that the debtor was totally free of debt. In a similar way, Jesus allowed our "debt of sin" (death) to be nailed to the cross along with him. In this way he cancelled our debt of sin and publicly displayed to the world that our debt was paid in full by Christ's death, and he had disarmed Satan and his demons of any accusations they could make against us. For those of us who believe in Christ's death for us, Satan can no longer accuse us and say that we are guilty, because our guilt and sin debt was publicly nailed to the cross with Christ. In this way Christ triumphed over Satan for everyone to see. Satan tried to shame Christ publicly on the cross, but instead now Satan is put to open shame by the cross. This death on the cross became a public triumph over Satan.

Colossians 2:13-15 says: "When you were dead in your sins ...God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, having canceled the charge of our legal indebtedness, which stood against us and condemned us; he has taken it away, nailing it to the cross. And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross."

Jesus disarmed Satan's powers and authorities, and made a public spectacle of them—on the cross. He triumphed over sin and death—the power which Satan used to enslave us. It was like Christ broke down the prison doors of sin and death and took away the jailer's weapons, and loosed the chains and now we are free to leave that prison if we want to. All those prisoners of Satan who believe in Christ's death are now free men. The power of sin and death has been conquered and no longer needs to enslave us. And soon, in the end times, Christ will do away with sin and death altogether (Revelation 21:4).

How Weakness Triumphed Over Satan's Strength

Consider for a moment: what did Jesus use to triumph over Satan's power? Jesus is all-powerful and so God could have chosen many powerful things to triumph over Satan. But Jesus didn't form an army to fight Satan. He didn't send strong angels to get rid of Satan. And he didn't choose some amazing powerful miracle to triumph over Satan. What was it that conquered Satan? He used things that Satan sees as weakness: humility, submission and death. Jesus humbled himself, submitted to God, and died. All of these seemed like weaknesses to Satan. When Satan tempted Jesus in the desert, Jesus didn't use power or miracles or angels to beat Satan's temptations. He humbly submitted to God's will and obeyed. That's all. And later, Jesus humbled himself and submitted to God's will and died on the cross, and that is what defeated Satan. Satan is very proud and doesn't like to humble himself. For him, humility is just foolishness and a sign of weakness. But humility is what defeated him! Humility and submission are powerful in God's eyes.

1 Corinthians 1:18 says: "...the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God."

Satan Doesn't Know Everything That People Are Thinking As we mentioned earlier, the story of the cross shows us again that Satan didn't know what Jesus was thinking or planning when he

was dying on the cross (1 Corinthians 2:7-8). Satan and everyone else thought that Jesus had come in order to be king. But God's hidden plan was for Jesus to die on the cross first and then become king later. And since Satan didn't know about God's hidden plans, he really wanted to see Jesus crucified. Some people think that Satan can know everything we are thinking—like God does. But obviously Satan didn't know what Jesus (as a human) was thinking. This shows us that Satan can't know everything we are thinking (1 Corinthians 2:11-12). Yes, Satan and the demons know many things and have the ability to plant thoughts into people's minds, (Acts 5:3) and even control their bodies if allowed. It's possible they might even be able to know some of our thoughts, but they don't know everything like God does, because God has limited them. And Satan is especially limited because he can't be with everyone at the same time.

Satan Didn't Know Nebuchadnezzar's Thoughts

Another example of Satan's limitations from the Old Testament is King Nebuchadnezzar. During the time of Daniel the prophet, King Nebuchadnezzar had a dream and wanted to know the meaning of it, so he called for his magicians and sorcerers—but the king didn't tell them what his dream was. He expected all these wise men to ask the spirits what the dream was and then explain it to him. But they could not do it. These wise men depended on demons and Satan's power to help them, but Satan couldn't help at all. He didn't know the king's thoughts and dreams. But God did reveal it all to Daniel.

Daniel 2:27-28 says: "Daniel replied, "No wise man, enchanter, magician or diviner can explain to the king the mystery he has asked about, but there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries. He has shown King Nebuchadnezzar what will happen in days to come. Your dream and the visions that passed through your mind as you were lying in bed are these..."

Only God knows all people's hidden thoughts, so he could help Daniel know what the king's dream was. It's true that Satan and the demons do know many more things than humans do, but they didn't know what Nebuchadnezzar was thinking or dreaming. They know lots of things about us too, but they don't know everything. Only God is omniscient, and they are not God! The Demons Watch Us 1 Peter 1:12 says: "...Even angels long to look into these things."

We've looked at this verse before. It shows us that the angels don't know everything—so they have a strong desire to learn more new things. So most likely the demons do also. They can observe and study many things to learn more. It seems that if Satan and the demons want to know what we're thinking or planning, they would have to be near us in order to learn about us. They don't know everything like God does. God is everywhere all the time (omnipresent) and he knows everything about us (omniscient), but the demons can only be at one place at a time and so they are much more limited than God.

Satan and the demons have been around for thousands of years so they have learned many things about people. They are much smarter than we are, but they still have much to learn. They can start studying us when we're still children and listen to everything we say and learn so much about us. They can study our ways and customs—our habits, or things we do in secret, when no one else is around to see us. If they follow us, they can notice what we talk about or what types of things we like to look at, and find out what our weaknesses are—or what easily tempts us to sin. Satan probably did that with Judas so Satan saw that Judas liked to secretly steal money. He

knew that Judas was tempted by money, so that's what he used to tempt him (Luke 22:2-6).

Demons Don't Have A Mouth But They Can Talk To Us

Satan and his fallen angels are much different than us humans. They don't have bodies like our bodies. They don't have human eyes, but they can still see us somehow. They don't have human ears, but they can hear us speak. They don't need a human mouth to talk to us—instead they can speak directly into our thoughts (Acts 5:3) and possibly hear some of our thoughts too. However, since Satan and the demons are not omnipresent like God, they cannot talk to us all the time. But God does watch out for us believers all the time. If Satan wants to tempt us, God must first allow it (Luke 22:31). God is like a protective wall that surrounds us believers.

God Did Not Deceive Satan—Satan Deceived Himself

Here's another thing to consider. Just because Satan didn't know what Jesus was planning to do on the cross, we should never think that God deceived or lied to Satan when he hid what Jesus was going to do on the cross. God can not lie. He only tells the truth. But God didn't reveal the purpose of the cross to Satan ahead of time, and what would be accomplished there, so Satan ended up deceiving himself. He didn't know that Jesus' death on the cross would fulfill God's plan and pay for sins. He only wanted to kill Jesus. So that is how God used Satan to defeat himself when Satan went into Judas and put Jesus on the cross. This shows us again that God's wisdom far exceeds Satan's wisdom. Satan doesn't know everything—but God does. He knows everything about Satan and his plans, so he is able to use Satan against himself.

Summary:

God Uses The "Jailer" To Help Free The Prisoners

Jesus used humility to defeat Satan's pride.

Jesus as a human defeated a powerful angel.

Jesus used his enemy to defeat himself.

Satan tried to deceive and trick Jesus but ended up tricking himself.

Satan tried to harm mankind by killing their king, but he ended up helping mankind.

Only God has all wisdom and knowledge, so he is even able to use a powerful spirit like Satan against himself. God even uses this enemy to help us! Satan—"the spiritual jailer"—who imprisoned all mankind, was used by God to help break open the "prison doors" and loosen the chains of sin and death that bound us! God is all-powerful and all-knowing and there is no man or spirit who can triumph over him (Php 2:5-10; 1 Peter 3:22).

Colossians 2:15 says: "...having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross."

Summary Of Last Three Chapters In these last 3 chapters, we have seen 3 ways in which Jesus defeated the powers of Satan:

Chapter 8 - Jesus Breaks Satan's Spear (of temptations)

Chapter 9 - Jesus Breaks Through Satan's Army (of demons)

Chapter 10 - Jesus Breaks Satan's Chains (of sin and death)

In this next chapter we will see another very important way in which Jesus defeated the power of Satan and his rule over mankind:

Chapter 11 - Jesus breaks the family link to Adam (and creates a new human family.)

11. A New Human Family That Is Above Angels

Chapter 11 A New Human Family That Is Above Angels “The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil’s work.” (1 John 3:8) Jesus Created Angels, But Later Humbled Himself And Placed Himself Below Them

We know that the Bible calls Jesus “The Word” (the Voice or Expression of God). It was this same Jesus, as the voice of the Trinity, which spoke the visible and invisible world into existence.

John 1:3 says “Through (Jesus) all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.”

Colossians 1:15-16 says: “The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. 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.”

These verses show us that Jesus was the one in the beginning who created all the invisible angels with all their power and authority. Jesus is the creator. He is God so he has the same authority and glory as God the Father and the Holy Spirit. And since he created angels, he has all glory, power, and authority over them. But one of the most amazing things to consider is that when he became a human being and came to live among us as a human, he actually took on a position that was even lower than the angels.

Php 2:6-8 says Jesus, “...who though he existed in the form of God did not regard equality with God as something to be grasped, but emptied himself by taking on the form of a slave, by looking like other men, and by sharing in human nature. He humbled himself...”(NET)

Hebrews 2:9 says: “...but we see Jesus, who was made lower than the angels for a little while...”(NET) For A Short Time Jesus Set Aside His Glory This is really an amazing truth! The Bible says that for the short time while Jesus was on the earth, he chose to “empty himself”—to set aside his magnificent glory for a while and humble himself by taking on a much lower position—even lower than the angels. When he became human, his glory was hidden and he looked just like an ordinary earthly person. Angels, on the other hand, are more powerful beings than humans. They travel with incredible speed. They have lived for thousands of years. They don’t need food to eat or water to drink. They don’t need to sleep or rest like humans. But when Jesus came and lived on the earth, he lowered himself—even below angels by taking on human limitations and weaknesses just like a man. He walked on two feet—slowly, just like other men. He was hungry and thirsty and even got tired like humans. Even though Jesus had created powerful angels by his own power, the angels actually had to come and help Jesus while his earthly body became very hungry or weak (Matthew 4:11; Luke 22:43). Why would Jesus choose to lower himself like that?

Jesus Became Human In Order To Create A New Spiritual Family For God

We know that whatever happens to a father affects his children and also future generations. And so, when financial hard times or debt or some other trouble comes on a father, then the children suffer along with him. That's what happened to Adam—his descendants suffered with him.

We also know that when things go well for a father, then the children will benefit also. For this reason, Jesus purposely chose to become a real human person—a man with limitations and weaknesses—so he could become part of us. He became united with our weakened human race (or family) so that when he died, he would die as our representative, and his death would also apply to us also. His death would benefit his family. And then when he rose from the dead and received glory and honor, that would also apply to us. And so now, those of us who are in his family benefit from the new life of Jesus and also receive glory and honor along with him!

1 Corinthians 15:21-22 says: “For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive...”

Jesus Created A New Human Family And Broke Our Family Link To Adam

Jesus wanted to save us from our sin debt so that he could create a new spiritual family for God. This new family would be the family of God. Adam's family was “spiritually dead in sin” and under Satan's rule. But Jesus created a new spiritual family that was spiritually “alive in Christ.” And he also wanted those of us who believe in him to have a new exalted position along with him. And that is why Jesus had to become a human being, like one of us, so he could rescue Adam's descendants, create a new “spiritually alive” family and then exalt us with him too. First, let's talk about Adam's headship.

Jesus Became The Head Of This New Spiritual Family To Replace Adam

God used the dust of the earth to create Adam, so Adam was a man from the earth. He was earthly. He was the first man in the human race, so he is the physical ancestor or “father” of all people everywhere. He is also responsible for introducing sin to mankind and so Adam is like a father or head of the sinful human family. On the other hand, Jesus was heavenly—he was not created from the dust like Adam. Jesus already existed and came from heaven to earth. He was placed as a baby inside the body of a virgin woman and was born into the human race, without a human father. His Father was God himself. So even though Jesus was human, he became the head of a new kind of human family in order that he could bring us back to God and we could become part of God's heavenly family.

Jesus is like a bridge from the old family over to the new family. This new family is a spiritual family and a new kind of lineage. So the Bible calls Jesus the “second man” or the “last Adam” because he became the head of this new kind of human family which is not connected to the first Adam's sinful family lineage. The first Adam brought death. The “last (or final) Adam” brought life eternal.

1 Corinthians 15:22; 1 Corinthians 15:45; 1 Corinthians 15:47 says: “For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive...The first man Adam became a living being; the last Adam, a life-giving spirit... The first man was of the dust of the earth; the second man is of heaven.”

Romans 5:10 says: “For just as through the disobedience of the one man (Adam) the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man (Jesus) the many will be made righteous.” The Family Of The “Last Adam” Is Not Under Satan Anymore

Satan has ruled a long time as a king over the family of Adam and they all have died. Jesus became human, just like us, so he could conquer Satan as a human being. Satan wanted to kill and destroy Jesus by going into Judas and putting Jesus on the cross. But his death was not a defeat for Jesus. Rather it became a defeat for Satan instead, because Jesus paid the sin debt and then rose again to break the power of sin and death over mankind (Hebrews 2:14). Those who are still under the first Adam are still under Satan and the demons' rule. But now those who are in the family of the Last Adam (Jesus) are no longer under Satan. Those who believe in this Final Adam are united forever with their new head and king—King Jesus. And those who are in his family will never be lost.

Satan Can Not Take Back The Children Of God. They Are Safe In Jesus' Hands

If someone truly believes in Jesus and becomes part of the family of God, then Satan cannot take him back into his family. Listen to what Jesus said:

John 10:27-29 says: "My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand."

These are the words of the Lord Jesus himself. He said that "my sheep"—those who are truly children of God—are in his hands and no one can snatch us out of his hands or his Father's hands. Satan and his false teachers, along with the evil spirits connected with them, are like wolves and thieves that would like to steal and kill the sheep (John 10:10-12). But Jesus is our Good Shepherd who watches over us, and Satan does not have the power to take us from God's hand (Romans 8:31-35), because we are born again into a new family now. We are "IN CHRIST" and forever in his eternal family. A Human Being Now Has A Position Above Satan And Other Spirits

Before the earth began, Jesus existed along with God the Father and the Holy Spirit (John 1:1-2; John 17:5). As part of the Trinity, he has always had all authority and glory because he is God. But for a little while he placed himself in a position lower than the angels (Hebrews 2:5) in order to become a human being also. He did this so that he could defeat Satan as a HUMAN BEING through his death and his resurrection. That's right! A MAN beat Satan, just like God promised long ago to Adam and Eve. And not only did this man defeat Satan, but now that same MAN is sitting on a throne at the right hand of God, which means that a man now has power over all spirits, both good and evil—even Satan.

1 Peter 3:21-22 says: "...Jesus Christ...has gone into heaven and is at God's right hand—with angels, authorities and powers in submission to him." This is something totally new! A human being is now seated with God in heaven on the most powerful throne of all time. Yes, Jesus is God, and as God he could easily have defeated Satan a long time ago if he had chosen to. But instead he chose to wait and defeat Satan as a man. By defeating Satan as a representative of mankind he made it possible that other humans could escape and not have to be ruled by Satan anymore.

Php 2:6-8 says: "(Jesus) who though he existed in the form of God did not regard equality with God as something to be grasped, but emptied himself by taking on the form of a slave, by looking like other men, and by sharing in human nature. He humbled himself, by becoming obedient to the

point of death-- even death on a cross! As a result God exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow -- in heaven and on earth and under the earth --and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.”(NET)

Yes, Jesus as a human is exalted above every name and he is Lord and King of all. He is seated at the right hand of God waiting for the time of his return to earth when God will reveal him as the final Ruler and King of the earth. He is the head over all of us who believe in him—his church, his body, his family. Consider all that he has done on our behalf and give him the praise he so rightly deserves!

Jesus Promoted His Family Above All Angels Also As a representative of his new human family, Jesus also promoted his family along with himself. And so his new family has a position of authority with Jesus, because his new human family is NO LONGER under Satan. Jesus’ new human family is now positioned above all the angels. That includes Satan too!

Jesus Gave Great Power And Authority To The Church

Ephesians 1:19-22 speaks of “...his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is the same as the mighty strength he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every name that is invoked, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church.”

Consider this amazing thing that God has done here for the church! Jesus has always had all authority as God. But now he is also a man. And it’s this MAN that received a name that is above all other names. God made Christ the head of the church and then put everything under Christ, “FOR THE CHURCH.” And so now, incredible as it may seem, God’s amazing love and grace has made the power and authority given to Christ also available to his church so his church could rule with him! The church is not a building or a certain denomination. It’s people—people from all over the world who believe in Christ as their Savior. The church is the body of Christ—his family. Christ, who is the head of the church, has all power and authority, and since we are united with him as his body, his church, we too have that power available to us—through Christ. God has exalted and empowered us too! Incredibly amazing! In God’s Eyes, We Are Already Seated With Christ At His Right Hand

Ephesians 2:4-6 says: “...because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus...”

Read the verse again and meditate and absorb the full impact of it. It’s true that we still live here on this earth, but God already sees us in our exalted position on the throne with Christ in heaven! Wow! Incredible thought! Once we were dead in sins; but by God’s grace alone, we are now forgiven, saved, united with Christ, part of his family and even promoted with Christ to be “seated with him in the heavenly realms IN CHRIST.” Because God sees us as being “in Christ,” we also share in his honor and power so that we can serve him as his representatives here on earth. We are in Christ, but he is also in us and wants to work through us as his mouth and his hands and feet on this earth. We can serve him and reach out to the children of Satan and rescue them also,

and accomplish Christ's goals on this earth. We should praise him for this power, wisdom, and honor that he has given us. It is a special privilege and gift from God. And what an honor and a joy to be working together with Christ, serving the KING of all kings! Praise his Wonderful Name!!

What Does It Mean To Pray In The Name Of Christ? As God's children, we have been given a huge privilege and honor because of Christ. We also have been granted to share an amazing high position of authority because of our unity with him. But what did he want us to do with such privilege and authority? First Christ told us to pray in a special way—Jesus said, "In that day you will ask in my name..." (John 16:26)

Praying 'in his name' does not mean that we can just use his name as a special magical formula to perform all sorts of miraculous feats by uttering the name "Jesus." (Later we'll talk about some men who tried that, but it did not end well for them.) The phrase: "In my name" means much more than just speaking his name—it means we are acting as his representative, as if he were here in person. So, we speak or pray for other people in the same way Jesus would pray for them. We are to act or speak his words as if he were right here doing the talking—becoming his voice in this dark world.

Praying With Humble Authority As believers in Christ, we can speak and do his work in his name, and pray with the authority that we share with him, but we must never forget that it is HIS authority and in his Name that we do anything. We must be very careful not to speak our own words or our ideas, but rather HIS. We must not become proud—thinking that we've received some honor and authority by our own goodness or strength. Instead, we must humble ourselves as Christ did, and only follow Christ's leading and ask for everything in his name. If we are trying to glorify ourselves in the things we are saying or asking, then we are not "asking in his name!" All our work must honor God, not ourselves.

John 14:13-14 says: "And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it." (cf. John 16:24).

We must remember that even though we share Christ's throne, we are still in submission to him. He is the head of our family and we are accountable to him. In Christ We Have Authority Even To Judge Angels Someday As we have seen already, since Jesus became a man, he shared his honor and authority with us, the children of God. We are seated with Christ in the heavenly realms (Ephesians 2:6), and he has chosen to share his position with us. So in God's eyes we have a higher position than Satan, all his demons, and even the good angels. In fact the Bible says we will even judge some of those angels someday.

1 Corinthians 6:2-3 says: "...do you not know that the Lord's people will judge the world? ...Do you not know that we will judge angels?..." This judgment will probably be during the end times. The Bible doesn't tell us much about how we will judge the angels, so we don't want to guess or speculate too much, but it will likely involve judging the evil angels of Satan, since they are reserved for judgment already.

We may not feel very qualified now to judge this kind of thing, but when Christ returns to earth and changes us to be just like him in new resurrected bodies and renewed minds, then he will enable us to have the wisdom to do this kind of work. For now, we wait on Christ to return.

Christ Is King Already But Will Soon Bring Everything Under His Control

Jesus is truly King of all kings and is seated at the highest place of honor—at the right hand of the throne of God—in heaven. But what about his kingdom on this earth? Has he abandoned his earthly kingdom because Israel rejected him as king? No! Absolutely not! The King of the Jews has delayed his return until the Jews repent. Then he will return and set up his earthly kingdom just as he promised—probably real soon, during these last days.

Acts 3:20-21 says it very clearly: “...Heaven must receive him (Jesus) until the time comes for God to restore everything, as he promised long ago through his holy prophets.”

Jesus is already King, but for now he remains in heaven until his enemies have been removed (Acts 2:34-35). But when he does return to earth as King, then we, his family, will rule and reign together with him as kingly priests (1 Peter 2:5; 1 Peter 2:9) in his new earthly kingdom. We'll discuss this kingdom in the last chapters, but in the meantime, we need to know that Jesus is still King. He is already ruling from heaven—by living in us (his body, the church) and by ruling in us. He is drawing more people into his kingdom through us and the Spirit living in us. But we are still eagerly waiting that glorious time when Christ will come and physically rule on this earth and bring everything under his control when he changes our bodies to become like his.

Php 3:20-21 says: “...our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.”

We Are No Longer Citizens Of Satan's Kingdom This verse tells us another truth quite plainly—that as Christians our citizenship is NO LONGER under Satan, the ruler of this earth. And so we are children of heaven. Our new citizenship belongs to a different King who lives in heaven—the Lord Jesus! He is our new King and ruler.

Colossians 1:13 says “...he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves...”

Now We Have A New Mediator

Since our citizenship is in heaven and “we eagerly await our Savior from there,” we have much to look forward to! In the meantime, we belong to a new king and a new kingdom, so God has work for us to do while we are still on this earth. We don't have the wisdom and strength in ourselves to do his work, but God has provided help for us by giving us both a Mediator and a Helper. Our New Mediator And Priest

Long ago, the Israelites had special priests that were mediators between them and God. But now the Bible says there is one new Mediator—Jesus—between man and God.

1 Timothy 2:5 says: “For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus...”

Jesus is that new high priest, and he is much better than the priests from before because he is both God and man, and as a result, he is the best possible Mediator. He became a man so that he could live among us and identify with us and our struggles. When he became a man, he was faced

with all the temptations, trials, struggles and troubles that we face. And because of this, he can encourage and strengthen us when we're tempted or when we have struggles, pain and sorrow (Hebrews 4:15; 1 John 2:1). He is the best Mediator or priest we could ever want. He is on our side. He is for us, not against us.

Romans 8:34 says: "Who then is the one who condemns? No one. Christ Jesus who died--more than that, who was raised to life--is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us." The Helper The Bible says that Jesus is always praying for us in heaven. But he did not abandon us when he went to heaven. He sent his own Spirit to come live right here within us (John 15:26; John 16:7). He sent his Spirit to give us guidance and strength as we serve him. His Spirit is called "the Helper." The Holy Spirit who lives inside us will never leave us (John 14:13-18; John 14:26) and he is always there to enable us to do his work and share his message.

Romans 8:26 says: "In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans...the Spirit intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God." No Need To Fear Satan Anymore

Since we have trusted in Christ and the Spirit of Christ lives within us now, that means we belong to Christ who has already overcome Satan and his kingdom, so we don't need to fear Satan or his demons or any of his people anymore!

1 John 4:4 says: "You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world."

Praise God! What a wonderful gift the Holy Spirit is to us. He is always there to help us at any time and will never leave us. We may have to fight against Satan's kingdom and his army of demons many times, but we don't need to fear them anymore.

Summary: In summary, we need to remember these important truths: By God's grace,

Christ has paid for our sins on the cross and if we have believed and trusted in him, we know that God has forgiven us and made us clean. He also declared us righteous (Romans 3:28; John 3:16).

Since he paid our sin debt, he has purchased us, so now we belong to him. We no longer belong to Satan. (Colossians 1:13)

Christ has given us the Holy Spirit and placed us into his family. We are IN CHRIST!

We have received honor along with God's own Son, Jesus. In God's eyes, we are seated at his right hand along with Christ, and our position IN CHRIST is so much higher than Satan's will ever be! (Ephesians 2:4-6)

We should not fear Satan; it is Satan who should be afraid of us (James 4:7), because the Spirit of God himself lives within us!!

Thank you God! Thank you Jesus! Thank you Holy Spirit!

----- "...the prince of this world now stands condemned." (John 16:11)
"...The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work." (1 John 3:8)

“...having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.” (Colossians 2:15)

“...who has gone into heaven and is at God’s right hand—with angels, authorities and powers in submission to him.” (1 Peter 3:22) “The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet.” (Romans 16:20)

12. A Power Greater Than Sorcerers And Demons

Chapter 12 A Power Greater Than Sorcerers And Demons Jesus Gave The Apostles Special Power To Drive Out Demons

We have already looked at several stories that show that Jesus had power and authority over all evil spirits, including Satan. While he was on the earth, Jesus drove out many demons simply by speaking. Then later, when Jesus chose his apostles, he gave them authority over demons too. In that way people could see that the apostles were true messengers of Christ (Hebrews 2:3-4). And even though there were several hundred people that followed him, Jesus didn't give all of them that authority. He only chose certain ones like the 12 apostles to have that special authority.

Mark 3:13-15 says: "Now Jesus ...appointed twelve (whom he named apostles), so that they would be with him and he could send them to preach and to have authority to cast out demons." (NET) So Jesus gave 12 disciples the authority over demons when he first chose them as apostles. Later he sent the apostles out by twos to preach God's word, and again he gave them that power to drive out demons.

Mark 6:7 says: "Calling the Twelve to him, he began to send them out two by two and gave them authority over impure spirits."

Even after Jesus left the earth, his apostles still had that authority or power, and it was recognized as evidence or a sign of a true apostle of Jesus (2 Corinthians 12:12). But consider for a moment; what specifically was it that gave the apostles the authority to drive out demons? It was Jesus' words! The disciples themselves didn't have the authority to drive out demons. The thing that gave them that authority and power was Jesus' specific command. But what about other religious leaders? Could they drive out demons just by claiming to be a disciple of Jesus? Let's look at Acts 19 and find out.

Some Religious Leaders Tried To Drive Out Demons

During the time of the apostle Paul, there were some religious leaders who were exorcists and they were the sons of a chief priest. Exorcists would often make money by going around and trying to drive out demons. These men weren't true believers in Jesus, but they had heard about his amazing ability to drive out demons. So they tried to use Jesus' name to drive out some demons.

Acts 19:13-16 says: "A group of Jews was traveling from town to town casting out evil spirits. They tried to use the name of the Lord Jesus in their incantation, saying, "I command you in the name of Jesus, whom Paul preaches, to come out!" Seven sons of Sceva, a leading priest, were doing this. But one time when they tried it, the evil spirit replied, "I know Jesus, and I know Paul, but who are you?" Then the man with the evil spirit leaped on them, overpowered them, and attacked them with such violence that they fled from the house, naked and battered." (NLT) The Religious Leaders Didn't Have Authority To Drive Out Demons This story may seem a bit funny to some people, but it also holds an important lesson for all of us. The father of these seven men was a

chief priest who had a lot of authority and respect in their community. So his seven sons would also have that respect. But just because they had deceived other people into believing they had some spiritual authority, their religious authority and honor among the people meant nothing to God. God was not fooled, and neither were the demons. These men weren't real apostles like Paul was, so they didn't have authority to cast out demons. They were just false apostles, so they were not protected by God, and the demon inside the man was able to quickly overpower them. It would have been better if they had humbled themselves and not tried to deceive the people. They shouldn't have thought that they could just get this authority on their own just by using Jesus' name. Christ alone was the one who decided who would get that special authority and power.

Demons Know Who Is A Believer And Who Is Fake The evil spirit in this Bible passage knew exactly who Jesus was, and recognized Paul and other believers as well, because the Holy Spirit was living inside of those believers. And that is also true today for those of us who have already believed in Christ. The demons know if we are children of God because they recognize the Holy Spirit that is living within us and they are fearful of him. But some people are not true believers in Christ, so they should at least have a healthy fear or respect for the power of demons. Some people still try to drive out demons by yelling and doing all sorts of things. They do it in order to get rich or famous, but it is still a dangerous thing to try as we have seen. Demons are not something to be toyed with. They are powerful. We've just read the story about these seven men and how they nearly got killed because they thought they could drive out a demon. If you are not a believer, you are still in Satan's family and he wants to destroy you. You do not have the protection of the Holy Spirit living in you. But those of us who are children of God have no need to be afraid of demons because God's Holy Spirit lives inside of us and protects us against demons.

Now let's finish the story:

Many Sorcerers Turn To Christ

Acts 19:17-20 says: "When this became known to the Jews and Greeks living in Ephesus, they were all seized with fear, and the name of the Lord Jesus was held in high honor. Many of those who believed now came and openly confessed what they had done. A number who had practiced sorcery brought their scrolls together and burned them publicly. When they calculated the value of the scrolls, the total came to fifty thousand drachmas. In this way the word of the Lord spread widely and grew in power."

God's Word Has The Power To Change Lives In the city of Ephesus where this event happened, many people practiced sorcery through the power of Satan and the demons. Once those sorcerers heard the news about the seven sons of Sceva, they were "seized with fear" because they realized that Christ was much stronger than the evil spirits they worked with. But what was it that took away their fear and changed the lives of these sorcerers to become lovers of God and believers in Christ? It was "the word of the Lord." The Lord's words are much more powerful than any of Satan's magic. Christ's words are the powerful force that changes people's lives, even if they are sorcerers. Those sorcerers heard the word and they were convicted and wanted to repent. They believed in the death and resurrection of Jesus to save them and God began to change their lives. He gave them a new kind of power—the Holy Spirit who came to live inside them and began to change their hearts and minds. They didn't mind letting go of all their demons and the miracles of Satan, even if it meant losing all their business and the money they made doing sorcery. They

wanted the truth instead, and God's word accomplished great changes in their lives.

God's Word Is More Important Than Miracles

Powerful miracles and the ability to drive out demons are wonderful, but they are just a temporary fix to help the body. Jesus wants to help our spirits too, which are eternal. We know that even if an evil spirit leaves a man, and God doesn't help him spiritually, then his life won't really be changed much in the end. If the Holy Spirit doesn't come live inside the man, then the evil spirit could even come back and indwell the man again (Luke 11:24-26). The real change must come from Christ. His word (the Bible) really does change people's lives for the good and gives them a totally new way of living—just like those sorcerers in Ephesus. After believing in the Gospel, they turned their backs on Satan's ways. They brought their sorcery books together and burned them in public for everyone to see. They could have sold them for a fortune, but they didn't want those scrolls (which were filled with Satan's lies) to deceive other people—so they burned them. By doing this in public, it also became a warning to others not to play around with Satan's lies. **The Holy Spirit Lives Inside Us So We Should Not Fear**

These sorcerers were not afraid to turn away from the spirits they once served, so we too don't have to fear the spirits or the power of sorcery or magic. The Holy Spirit lives inside us and is able to watch over us. Satan and the demons cannot overcome the Holy Spirit. Look at this verse again:

1 John 4:4, "You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world." **The Sorcerer Who Could Not Put A Curse On Israel**

Let's look at another story about another sorcerer and how God watched over Israel. In Numbers 22, 23 we see a man named Balaam who claimed to be a prophet, but he practiced sorcery and divination with the power of evil spirits. He was greedy and charged people money for his sorcery (2 Peter 2:15). Later in his life he was killed for his sin (Joshua 13:22). But in Numbers 22-23 we see a king named Balak, who called for Balaam. Balak was an enemy of Israel and wanted to destroy them, so he tried to hire Balaam to curse Israel. King Balak summoned Balaam, but Balaam didn't want to go because God had strongly warned him that he must not curse Israel or practice sorcery on them. But King Balak kept insisting and he promised to pay Balaam really well, so he finally went. But along the way, God warned Balaam again that his life was in danger if he cursed Israel. When he arrived where the Israelites were camped, King Balak asked him again to look over Israel and then put a curse on them, but Balaam told the king he would only be able to say the words that God had told him. And so instead of cursing Israel, Balaam ended up actually blessing them instead! Of course, this made King Balak very angry, but Balaam told him he had no choice. He just simply wasn't able to curse Israel. Here's what he said:

Numbers 23:23 says: "There is no divination against Jacob, no evil omens against Israel." **No Need To Fear The Sorcerers** This story shows us again that God can prevent any plan that Satan has against us. If God doesn't want Satan to do something, Satan won't be able to do it, just like this story of King Balak and Balaam. It proves again that we don't need to fear sorcerers, witchcraft, diviners, and anything connected to idols. Those things are all from Satan, but God is much more powerful than Satan. We can totally trust God and we need not fear the things of

Satan. God is not the least bit afraid of Satan or his sorcerers and other people who want to frighten us, so we shouldn't be frightened either. God the Holy Spirit lives inside of us! All those curses, omens, and magic fetishes, etc. are nothing in God's eyes. God watches over his children and we don't need to be afraid of those things. We can rejoice in the all-powerful God who protects his children! Does The Bible Condemn Sorcerers Now?

It is true we don't need to fear sorcerers, but how should we deal with them? In some countries, sorcerers can be put in prison because it is against the law, and as believers we should abide by the laws of the country and speak out against the practice of sorcery. But what about the laws of the Old Testament that God gave Israel? If we were Israel and followed their laws, then we would stone sorcerers to death! And some people today think we still should. It is true that God gave those laws to the Israelites long ago for their protection, but as we saw earlier in this book when we talked about sorcerers, there were other laws also that called for people to be stoned to death. Here's a reminder of the list again:

Someone who worked on Saturday—the Sabbath (Exodus 31:15-16).

A stubborn or rebellious son who was a drunkard (Deuteronomy 21:18-20).

Someone who committed adultery (Deuteronomy 22:22 : Matthew 5:28).

Taking God's name in vain (Deuteronomy 24:16).

False prophets and those who told false dreams (Deuteronomy 13:1-5).

....and many other laws.

Under the Old Testament law of Israel, there were several reasons why people deserved the death penalty in God's eyes—not just sorcery. In fact, we are all guilty in some way in God's eyes. I'm sure most of us have worked on Saturday (the Old Testament Sabbath day) or been rebellious to parents or used God's name in vain, or committed adultery in our minds (Matthew 5:27). We all have been rebellious and disobeyed God's law in some way, so in his eyes we are just as guilty as those who have done witchcraft or sorcery, divination or idolatry.

“For rebellion is like the sin of divination, and arrogance like the evil of idolatry.” (1 Samuel 15:23)

It might be easy for us to point a finger and condemn the sorcerers and say that they deserve to be stoned to death for their sins, but it's harder for us to admit that we all have broken laws worthy of death in God's eyes (Romans 3:19-20). God's word says it plainly:

“...whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it.” (James 2:10) We Live In A New Age Of Grace

Thankfully, you and I now live in a time of grace (John 5:24; Romans 8:1; Galatians 5:18). We now live in the church age, and the New Testament guides us to a new understanding of the law. As Gentiles and Christians we are no longer under all the religious rules of the Israelites, such as taboos on pork and other meats and foods (Acts 10:9-16; Mark 7:18-19). We are no longer required to give sin offerings, or go to the temple in Jerusalem for special religious feasts or worship on a certain day like the Sabbath (Saturday) and observe the Year of Jubilee. We are also not under all the ritual laws of washings and taboos on many other things like the Israelites were.

The Old Testament is full of laws for the Israelites and it would be hard to count them all. But the New Testament shows us that those laws didn't make people righteous. Instead, their purpose was to show us how sinful we were (Romans 3:20). And also the laws were a temporary shadow or picture of real things to come. They all pointed toward Christ. (Galatians 3:19; Galatians 3:24-25).

Jesus Fulfilled The Law

Colossians 2:14-17 says: "He (Christ) has destroyed what was against us, a certificate of indebtedness expressed in decrees opposed to us. He has taken it away by nailing it to the cross. Disarming the rulers and authorities, he has made a public disgrace of them, triumphing over them by the cross. Therefore do not let anyone judge you with respect to food or drink, or in the matter of a feast, new moon, or Sabbath days --these are only the shadow of the things to come, but the reality is Christ!"(NET)

Praise God! Jesus Christ has fulfilled the law where we have failed. Jesus became our Sabbath (Hebrews 4)—meaning that Jesus himself has become our "rest" so that we don't have to live under the weight of all the Old Testament laws. We can "rest" by faith in the finished work of Christ because Jesus is the fulfillment of all the laws that had previously condemned us, and his Spirit is the power within us to live godly lives in a wicked world.

We Are No Longer Under The Taboos And Laws Of Israel

Jesus fulfilled the laws concerning all the Levitical system—the festivals and sacrifices at the temple and the Sabbath and the taboos and all the other laws. He died on the cross to disarm the power of the law that stood against us. So if we believe in the work Jesus did on the cross to save us, then we are no longer under the Jewish laws of the Old Testament.

Romans 6:14; Romans 7:4 say: "you are not under the law, but under grace..." "you also died to the law through the body of Christ..."

Romans 8:1 says: "Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus."

Galatians 5:1 says: "It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery."

Before, we were all under the law, and just like the sorcerers, we were all guilty. But by the grace of God and Jesus Christ, we are now free. By faith in Christ we are saved and receive new life and a new power—the power of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit can even change sorcerers! Did The Apostles Stone The Sorcerers? In Acts we saw that many sorcerers were in the town of Ephesus. But did the apostles stone them to death like they did in the Old Testament? No! Instead they shared the Gospel with them, and many of them repented. They believed on Christ and left their former way of life and began a new life in Christ, which they proved by burning all their sorcery books. So we see a new pattern here. God doesn't tell us to stone people to death now. Now we live under God's grace and we can show that same grace to others just like God showed grace to us as sinners. We need to spread the Gospel so people everywhere can believe in Christ and leave their evil ways and live under God's grace.

Using Diviners And Accusing People Of Sorcery In some countries people think they still need to have “witch hunts” or hunt down sorcerers and kill them, the way their ancestors did. But they usually don’t have any real proof of witchcraft or sorcery or know who might actually be guilty because they didn’t see it happen, so they just accuse someone they are suspicious of or dislike. Sometimes they just hear a rumor and if lots of people agree, then they condemn the person and kill them—without proof. Sometimes people go to diviners to find out who practiced sorcery. But the diviner can accuse anyone without proof, so he lies about them. Some religious people read the Old Testament and insist that the Bible allows these accused people to be killed, but we’ve already seen in God’s word how the apostles didn’t do that with the Ephesian sorcerers. They didn’t apply that law anymore because of God’s grace. So it is also very important that we should not go around accusing innocent people. If we do, then we could be guilty of worse sin than sorcery in God’s eyes.

It Is God’s Job To Judge The Sorcerers

We know that some sorcerers will never repent. They might continue to do sorcery in secret, but they can’t hide from God. We can be assured that God sees everything they do and he alone will repay this wrong.

Romans 12:19 says: “Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God’s wrath, for it is written: “It is mine to avenge; I will repay,” says the Lord.” This verse shows us that God is the one who will judge and avenge all sin (including sorcery), so we have no right to rush judgment by accusing someone we’re not sure of. It is God’s job to deal with them, sooner or later. God has also put governments in place to judge people under the law of the country in which we live. If someone really is practicing sorcery, then the government is the proper authority to deal with them, and we should not take the law into our own hands. So we need to let God and the government judge and deal with them.

Romans 13:1-4 says: “Let every person be subject to the governing authorities...the authorities that exist have been instituted by God. So the person who resists such authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will incur judgment... if you do wrong, be in fear, for it does not bear the sword in vain. It is God’s servant to administer retribution on the wrongdoer.” (NET)

Some evil people will be judged for their wrongdoings even while they are still here on earth, but all of them will be judged after they die, in God’s final judgment. But no matter where or when, all their sin will come out into the open sooner or later and they won’t be able to hide anymore. So we can rest in the fact that God will take care of it. Remember the verse we read earlier:

“Do not take revenge...leave room for God’s wrath...“I will repay,” says the Lord.” (Romans 12:19)

13. Pastor Satan Promotes A Different Spirit In The Church

Chapter 13 Pastor Satan Promotes A Different Spirit In The Church What Does It Really Mean To Repent

Matthew 3:1-12 says: "In those days John the Baptist came into the wilderness of Judea proclaiming, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near."... Then people from Jerusalem, as well as all Judea and all the region around the Jordan, were going out to him, and he was baptizing them in the Jordan River as they confessed their sins. But when he saw many Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, "You offspring of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? ...Even now the ax is laid at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire. "I baptize you with water, for repentance, but the one coming after me is more powerful than I am — I am not worthy to carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clean out his threshing floor and will gather his wheat into the storehouse, but the chaff he will burn up with inextinguishable fire."(NET)

John the Baptist was preaching and baptizing Israelites in the wilderness. He had a very simple, one-word message: "Repent!" The basic Greek meaning of this word as John used it is: change your mind (in other words—change your rebellious attitude towards God). All people are naturally independent—rebellious towards God from birth—and need to repent. In Romans 1-3, etc. we see some of the common rebellious attitudes towards God:

"God doesn't exist or he has no authority over me."

"God can't see my sin and so he won't judge me for it."

"I don't need God to save me. I'm good enough on my own."

In order to start a relationship with God, we first have to change that rebellious attitude towards God (repent). God chose John the Baptist to "prepare" Israel for the coming Messiah (Matthew 3:3). He prepared them by telling them to repent first. If the Jews would repent first, then they would be ready for the Messiah because repentance is an essential preparation for faith—repentance and faith are connected (Acts 20:21; Acts 19:4; Hebrews 6:1). Repentance is turning away from dependence on ourselves, and faith is dependence on God. Repentance is required by God, lest we perish eternally.

Acts 17:30 says: "... God is now declaring to men that all people everywhere should repent..." (NASB) (also 2 Peter 3:9) Satan's Followers Wanted Baptism Without Repentance

Many people listened to John and were baptized to show they truly repented of their rebellious attitudes. But some Pharisees and Sadducees also went to the Jordan River where John was preaching. These men were the spiritual leaders of Israel. They went along with other Jews who were getting baptized in the river and they wanted to get baptized also. But John did not want to baptize them. Instead he rebuked them and called them 'offspring of vipers.'

“Pastor Satan” Tries To Blend In With John’s Followers

“Offspring of vipers!!” Wow—those are some really strong words! To call these respected religious leaders “children of a poisonous snake” in those days would be basically the same thing today as calling them “Devil’s Disciples” or “Satan’s Pastors.” Was John crazy? No. He was a prophet, and God had shown him that these particular leaders were just fakes. They hadn’t really repented. They were still proud followers of Satan, so John basically called them who they were—children of the devil. These men were religious deceivers and just worshiped God for their own benefit and in order to be respected in the eyes of the public. John realized that it was Satan who was trying to use them to mix in with his group of followers and confuse the people’s beliefs and mislead them.

Consider for a minute: who was it that opposed Jesus most during his ministry? It wasn’t the criminals or prostitutes. It was the religious leaders—the priests, the Pharisees and Sadducees and other temple leaders.

Satan knew the best way to confuse people who want to know God was to use religion and false religious leaders, and that’s why he wanted to get these Pharisees and Sadducees involved at the beginning of John’s ministry and work. As we go on, we’ll see how this still happens all the time today! God wants to use these stories from the Bible to show us an important lesson. Satan is very religious. He doesn’t avoid involvement in the church. He welcomes it. Churches and religious groups are probably his favorite places to work and he has been very effective there. “Pastor Satan” has blended in with the church. He loves to act religious—and he actively seeks to work among the pastors or leaders of churches everywhere so he can deceive religious people and especially aggressive Christians. He is the “father of lies” and deceit. Satan was very effective in deceiving the religious people during the time of John and the apostles, and he continues the same pattern among us today. Satan’s best disguise is a religious robe!

False Beliefs Usually Come Up From Within The Church

Another story can help illustrate Satan’s ways: One time, when the apostle Paul was travelling, he sent word to his friends, the leaders of the church at Ephesus, to come and meet him in Miletus to encourage them and say goodbye because he wouldn’t see them again. But he also gave them a very sobering warning and prophecy. Listen to what Paul said to these church leaders:

Acts 20:28-31 says: “Watch out for yourselves and for all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God that he obtained with the blood of his own Son. I know that after I am gone fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. Even from among your own group men will arise, teaching perversions of the truth to draw the disciples away after them. Therefore be alert...”(NET) Satan Will Use Church Leaders To Bring Error Into The Church

Paul prophesied and told those church leaders from Ephesus that some men from among them would be the ones to bring lies and false doctrines into the church! But how could that possibly happen? We know that the church at Ephesus was a strong church and well-taught during Paul’s day. Paul himself had taught them. So how could false teaching get started? It looks as if Satan later deceived some of the leaders working within the church at Ephesus by corrupting some of their beliefs—so they were “teaching perversions of the truth” of God’s word. They became false teachers and deceived many people. Paul talks about false teachers in the church elsewhere too:

2 Corinthians 11:13-15 says: “For such people are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. Therefore it is not surprising his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness...” (NET) Satan Portrays Himself As An Angel Of Light In The Church This passage brings out a very important strategy that Satan has always used, but especially now in the modern church age. Satan likes to disguise and portray himself as an “angel of light.” In other words, he pretends to be a messenger of truth from God. He’s deceitful, so he usually tries to hide his evil work so people will not recognize it. He loves to hide behind a “mask” and blend into the church family with his lies. He deceives people by disguising his workmen “as servants of righteousness” – he loves to mingle them in with the church leadership. He is the father of lies; a master of disguise. He is so good at deceiving believers that many of them don’t even notice.

Satan knows that if he tries to use some evil-sounding man who promotes idolatry or sorcery or some other heathen practices in the church, then believers won’t listen to him. So instead, Satan would rather use a friendly, loving pastor or famous preacher in a suit and tie or a television evangelist with great music and sweet-sounding Christian words in order to deceive us—so we won’t realize it’s actually Satan that is at work there. He does this by gradually mixing a tiny little bit of error in with a lot of other biblical truth, just like he did with Adam and Eve in the garden (2 Corinthians 11:3). In this way he can sneak his lies quite easily into the church (Romans 16:17-18). This is probably his most effective way to weaken or destroy the church.

Church Leaders Are Deceived Into Thinking They Are Right

Satan loves the idea of using church leaders as his spokesmen because they often think they are safe from his lies. Satan can use well-respected teachers just like he used the Priests and Pharisees during the time Jesus was on earth. They had no idea that they were being used by Satan. Even Saul (Paul) himself was deceived as a Pharisee before he became a Christian. Those leaders thought they were doing God’s will when they killed Jesus and his followers (John 16:2)! That’s how deceived they were. The people respected them too and listened to them. Even so today, Satan can easily confuse many believers by using the deceived minds of their leaders. In this way, Satan—like an ‘Angel of Light’—deceitfully uses many leaders in churches around the world, just like Paul prophesied. People come into church, sing songs and pray and listen to these leaders—but some of them are still Satan’s children and don’t even know it because Satan has twisted the truth and they don’t understand God’s word well enough to be able to discern what is right. So they believe Satan’s lies. This is why Paul warned the leaders of the church that they needed to really know the Word of God well. God’s truth can help protect us when Satan’s lies come into the church.

Deceitful Spirits And Teaching Will Abound In The Church

1 Timothy 4:1 says: “Now the Spirit explicitly says that in the later times some will desert the faith and occupy themselves with deceiving spirits and demonic teachings...” (NET) The Bible tells us here that during the end times Satan and “deceiving spirits” will be very active in confusing people through false religions and “demonic teachings” within the church. It seems like this prophecy is being fulfilled today. There are many doctrines of demons already influencing the church. (2 Peter 2:1) A Different Spirit In The Church

2 Corinthians 11:3-4 says: "...I am afraid that just as the serpent deceived Eve by his treachery, your minds may be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ. For if someone comes and proclaims another Jesus different from the one we proclaimed, or if you receive a different spirit than the one you received, or a different gospel than the one you accepted, you put up with it well enough!" (NET)

Paul warned churches like the Corinthians, that they were already tolerating Satan (the serpent) who was deceiving people into accepting another gospel or a fake Jesus or even a different spirit. Paul warned them to watch out for a different spirit because it was a very real threat. We also need to recognize what a "different spirit" in the church would look like. We need to know God's word well enough so that we can recognize "demonic teachings" lest Satan twist the truth and we start believing his lies. He is very clever and tricky. If we don't know God's word well, we will easily be deceived.

Satan's Strategy: Rob The Church Of Its Power Source

During wartime, a common way to fight against an army is to cut off their supply line. So, consider for a minute: if you were our enemy Satan, and you wanted to weaken the church somehow, where would you focus your attack—where is our "supply line?" We know that the church has no strength of its own, so, where is the source of the church's greatest strength, help and direction? It's the Holy Spirit. And ever since Pentecost, Satan knows that very well! He knows that Jesus sent the Holy Spirit as our Helper and he is the ultimate source of strength and direction for the church (John 14:16; John 14:26; Acts 1:8). So Satan knows that if he wants to weaken the church he must specifically target and fight against the connection of the church to its "supply line" or source of strength—the Holy Spirit. Satan doesn't want the church to become strong and mature in serving God and spreading the gospel.

'Another Spirit' Wants To Replace The Holy Spirit

Satan knows that if we don't have the strength of the Holy Spirit we'll be weak against him. Satan can't defeat the Holy Spirit himself, but he can confuse our doctrines about the Holy Spirit—what we understand and believe about the Holy Spirit. Satan knows that if we don't understand what the Holy Spirit has done for us and how he functions within us, then we won't understand our relationship with him and how to be led and strengthened by him. We may try to defeat Satan in our own strength, which isn't possible! Or we could be confused and end up being led by "another spirit" instead of the Holy Spirit. So let's look at some of those "demonic teachings"—the false doctrines that have crept into the church about the Holy Spirit—and see how Satan can use them to weaken us. First, we want to look at how Satan has tried to change the doctrine of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and also water baptism.

Satan Wants To Confuse Our Understanding Of Baptism When people came to be baptized by John at the Jordan River, some of Satan's children, the Pharisees and Sadducees, also came and attempted to join with John's group of followers and get baptized. They probably thought that baptism would give them special status with the people. But if John had allowed the Pharisees and Sadducees to be baptized without repentance, those leaders would probably have mixed in with John's disciples and they could confuse people about the true meaning of baptism and other important beliefs. Satan would be very happy about that because the people wouldn't understand

what true repentance was and they could get baptized for the wrong reasons—like the Pharisees. Even today, Satan is still trying to confuse people about the meaning of baptism. The baptism by water and the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Let's see what John says about these two kinds of baptism and also look at Satan's lies concerning baptism today and we'll compare them with God's word. **The Meaning Of John's Baptism**

John the Baptist baptized many people in the Jordan River. Today the word baptize is used mostly just in churches, but the original Greek word "baptizo" means "to immerse" and was used in many everyday situations. For example, people would take a new piece of clothing and 'baptize' it into some dye to change its color, or baptize it in the river to wash it. Many people today think that water baptism will make them children of God, or holy before God somehow, but that isn't true. John himself knew that baptism by water doesn't change people. It is simply an external symbol of something that has happened inside a person's heart. Look again at what John said:

Matthew 3:11 says: "I baptize you with water for repentance. But after me comes one who is more powerful than I, ...He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit..."

John knew that water baptism was just an external symbol to show that someone had repented. His baptism did not have the power to change a person on the inside. Baptism only washes the outside of a person, but it could never cleanse the inside of a man from sin. If John had allowed the Pharisees to be baptized, that baptism would not have changed their hearts: they would still be children of Satan. They couldn't fool God. Water could not wash away their sins. But if people really did repent, then baptism was actually a good thing—so others could see that they were serious about repentance and that they were trusting God alone to cleanse them from sin. But again, water baptism was merely an outward symbol of something that had already taken place in their hearts.

Now let's look at the other baptism John talked about.

Baptism Of The Holy Spirit In the verse we just read, John talked about another baptism that was coming which was more powerful than water baptism. It could actually change a person on the inside. That, of course, is the baptism of the Holy Spirit. He said that only one person—the promised Messiah—had the power to baptize with the Holy Spirit. He said that the Messiah was coming after him and he alone would baptize people with the Holy Spirit. And it's true. Only Jesus can save us when we believe in his death on the cross for us. Jesus then sends the Holy Spirit to cleanse us and live inside of us. Even though John was a special prophet from God, he could not do that.

Also, let's compare water baptism from John's time with the water baptism of today, during the church age:

Acts 19:4 says: "...John baptized with a baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in the one who was to come after him, that is, in Jesus." (NET)

The baptism of John was a symbol looking forward to and preparing for the arrival of Jesus the Messiah and the future work of the Holy Spirit.

Water Baptism now in the church age is a symbol that looks back to remember what Jesus has already done and how the Holy Spirit has joined us with Christ.

Now let's look more closely at the work of the Holy Spirit.

Satan Likes To Confuse People About The Difference Between "Filling" And "Baptism" Of The Holy Spirit As we said earlier, Satan loves to confuse doctrines, and that is especially true of doctrines about the Holy Spirit and baptism of the Holy Spirit. Satan does not want us to understand it, and so we see a lot of confusion about it in the church today. So in these chapters we want to look at what the Bible actually says about it and clear up some of the confusion. Much of the confusion is about the difference between "Filling of the Spirit" and "Baptism of the Holy Spirit." Many people think they are the same thing, but what does the Bible say? The Baptism of the Spirit was first announced by John (Matthew 3:11) and then later by Jesus as something brand new. That's because it didn't exist during the time of the Old Testament. The Baptism of the Holy Spirit only first began during the time of the apostles and it marked the beginning of the church. But the Filling of the Holy Spirit was not new, and it was often mentioned during the Old Testament times. During that time, the Holy Spirit filled certain leaders of the people like the prophets, so they could prophecy and write God's word. The Spirit's filling also gave guidance to the judges and the kings, so they could lead God's people, Israel. But the Holy Spirit did not permanently live inside of people and baptize them like he does now. Look at what King David said about the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament:

Psalms 51:11 says: "Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me." In The Old Testament, The Holy Spirit Came And Went

We know from the Old Testament that David loved God and desired to follow his ways. The Spirit of God began to fill David when he was still a young man, and he gave him wisdom and strength to lead the nation of Israel (1 Samuel 16:13). But one time David committed a serious sin. A prophet came to him and pointed out the sin to him, and David felt guilty and confessed it to God. He pleaded with God for forgiveness and wrote this verse above from Psalms 51 because he was afraid the Holy Spirit would leave him. This verse illustrates to us how the Holy Spirit worked within people during the Old Testament. His "filling" would strengthen and guide leaders—like the prophets or kings like David. But the Spirit could also leave them for a while. The Spirit of God came and went whenever he chose. But that pattern has changed now, ever since the Baptism of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

Jesus Told The Disciples That The Holy Spirit Would Function Differently In Them When Jesus was getting ready to leave the disciples to go back to heaven, he told them of this new thing that the Holy Spirit would do.

John 14:16-17 says: "...I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever—the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you."

Jesus Said That The Holy Spirit Would Make His Home INSIDE Of Believers

Jesus said that after he left the believers, the Holy Spirit would be a Helper (Advocate) and friend that would be with them forever—permanently! The Spirit would live inside believers and would not leave them. That was a totally new thing! Before, he was WITH the disciples—but now he would be IN them. We could use an illustration about a house to help us understand the difference. Before, the Holy Spirit was like a friend that might regularly come over and visit with a person on

the porch of his house. But now the Holy Spirit comes and actually moves in and permanently lives inside the house, like a family member that lives and sleeps in the house full time. The house is a picture of the body of a believer (1 Corinthians 6:19). Jesus said that the bodies of the disciples would become like the house (or temple) of the Holy Spirit. This new thing that was going to happen is called the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. But Jesus said he had to first leave and go to heaven and then he would send the gift of the Holy Spirit to them (John 16:7)

After Jesus died and rose from the dead, he stayed on earth with the apostles for 40 days (Acts 1:3). When he was ready to leave them, he prophesied about the Holy Spirit coming to baptize them and told them to wait for that special day.

Acts 1:4-5 says: "On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit." On The Day Of Pentecost, The Holy Spirit Baptized ALL The Believers And The Church Was Born

Ten days after Jesus had left the disciples, the Holy Spirit did come and he lived IN them—just as Jesus had said.

Acts 2:1-4 says: "When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them."

Fire Marked The Place Where The New Temple Of God Was When the Spirit came on the Day of Pentecost, people saw something like fire (or light) from heaven come down and separate into small flames or tongues of fire and they came to rest on all of the believers. This was the sign that indicated where God's new temple was: the new House of God—his new permanent residence! In the Old Testament, God often showed his presence or brilliant glory by using fire. For example with Abraham (in Genesis 15:17), and Moses (in Exodus 3:2; Exodus 19:18) and Ezekiel (in Ezekiel 1:4). This was especially true when the Israelites left Egypt and went into the desert. God led them by a pillar of fire (Exodus 13:21). Then later he showed them how to build the tabernacle as a portable temple; a place to meet with God. And when they had finished building it, God made a cloud and fire to hover over the tabernacle to show them that he was living and dwelling with them.

Exodus 40:33; Exodus 40:38 says: "...And so Moses finished the work. Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle...So the cloud of the Lord was over the tabernacle by day, and fire was in the cloud by night, in the sight of all the Israelites during all their travels."

God used the cloud and fire to mark his glorious presence in the tabernacle during the entire time they wandered in the desert, until they eventually came to Canaan and built a new temple out of stone. Then the same thing happened. God sent a cloud and fire to show that his glory or presence was now dwelling with them in the temple of stone (1 King 8:10-11). But many years later in the New Testament, on the Day of Pentecost, we see that the fiery glory of God's presence didn't go and dwell in the stone temple anymore. Instead, God's fire or light came and separated

into small flames of fire and rested on each of the believers. The Church Of Christ Is The New Temple Of The Holy Spirit This fire or light from God that came and rested on the believers was an amazing picture that God used to visibly show the Israelites where his new temple was. The bodies of believers became God's new temple! Now the Holy Spirit baptizes all believers and unites us all into one family—God's family, God's house. We are God's new "forever" home, the Church of Christ, and he will never leave us. Praise his wonderful name!

1 Corinthians 6:19 says: "Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own..." A House Represents A Family In the Bible, a house was also another name for a person's family. So, a family was sometimes referred to as the house of Pharaoh, or the house of Jacob, or the house of David," etc. That is because a person's house or home is where the family lives. It is a safe place to eat, sleep and relax and enjoy ourselves in fellowship as a family. In the same way, the Holy Spirit has a new home—he lives or dwells in us his new family, the church. Amazing! We are God's new home now because God lives inside us (1 John 4:13). The Church Began With The Baptism Of The Holy Spirit When the Holy Spirit baptized the apostles and other believers, that is when the church of Jesus Christ began. Before that, these believers were known as children of Israel, and they were under God's law, the covenant God made with Israel (Exodus 19:5-6). But now, they became part of new family—the family of God, the church—and they were no longer under God's law. They were under God's grace.

Galatians 3:24-28 says: "So the law was our guardian until Christ came that we might be justified by faith. Now that this faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian. So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus."

We have looked at several verses that showed us how the church began on the Day of Pentecost there in Jerusalem, when the Holy Spirit baptized all the believers into one family. And those of us who are believers today, we are the church, the body or family of Jesus Christ, no matter where we live or whether we are Jew or Gentile. The Holy Spirit baptizes ALL believers INTO CHRIST and now all believers are united with him. We are the temple (or home) of the Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit will never ever leave his new temple. Jesus said that the Holy Spirit would dwell with us forever (John 14:16-17).

Satan Likes To Make Christians Doubt That They Have Received The Holy Spirit As we have studied the truth about the Holy Spirit, we can see that Satan has been promoting many false ideas about baptism and the Holy Spirit. Satan likes to confuse and frighten some believers and make them think they have not received the Holy Spirit yet. And so they think that only some special "strong or committed" Christians receive the Holy Spirit. But God's word is very clear, and we shouldn't doubt it. He says that on the Day of Pentecost, all believers received the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:3). Before that day, the Holy Spirit used to be with the believers, but now the Holy Spirit lives inside all believers, just as Jesus promised, and he will never leave us. We are his home—his family.

All Believers Have Received The Baptism Of The Holy Spirit

1 Corinthians 12:13 says: “For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.”

Here again, the Bible says clearly that the Holy Spirit baptizes all believers. And the purpose of that baptism is to form us into one family, the body of Christ—his church. No matter which church denomination we attend, if we believe in Christ, the Holy Spirit identifies us as his own and we are his family. Our bodies are the house of God. He is at home in us. That is what the Spirit’s baptism did for us. It made us one with him and one with each other. Wow. What a special gift from God! Don’t let Satan make you doubt these truths with his “demonic teachings.” If you have believed in the Lord Jesus and his death, burial, and resurrection for you, then you have already been baptized by the Holy Spirit into his family!

14. Can Satan Steal The Holy Spirit?

Chapter 14 Can Satan Steal The Holy Spirit? The Baptism Of The Holy Spirit Is The Mark (Or Seal) Of Permanent Ownership As we continue to study how Satan attacks the various doctrines about the Holy Spirit, we need to talk about ownership. The Bible says that when we believed in Christ, the Holy Spirit baptized us into Christ's family and marked us as his very own.

Ephesians 1:13-14 says: "And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession..." When Did We Receive The Holy Spirit?

Ok, according to this verse, when exactly did we receive the Holy Spirit? This verse shows us that we received the Holy Spirit immediately when we believed the good news (vs. 13). The good news can be summarized as follows: Even though we are all sinners in God's eyes and would be hopelessly lost, Jesus came to earth as a human being and died on the cross in our place to save us from the penalty of sin that we deserved. He was buried, but he triumphed over sin and death and rose again to give us new life. Verse 13 says that when we believed this good news and trusted in this work that Christ did on the cross on our behalf—right then and there the Holy Spirit placed us INTO CHRIST so that we are permanently joined with him. He includes us in Christ or united us with Christ by placing us into his family. This is called the baptism of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit Can't Be Taken Away—He Seals Us Forever The Holy Spirit does many other things for us, but let's look at one thing brought out in this verse. Verse 13 says that the Holy Spirit is a seal showing that we belong to him permanently. The word 'seal' here is talking about marking something with a promise or deposit. The word has the idea of security and ownership (Matthew 27:66; Ephesians 4:30). Let's think about an example: If someone wants to buy something expensive, he can make a deposit or down payment as his claim to ownership, with a promise to come back later to collect it. This deposit is the mark (or seal) promising that he will return and get it later. In a similar way, Ephesians 1:14 says that the Holy Spirit is like that deposit. He is the seal of ownership, claiming us as his very own. He is the mark of the promise that God has made to us. We know that God doesn't break his promises, so our inheritance is guaranteed, which means we are heirs—God's very own children—forever!

2 Corinthians 1:22 says: (God) "has identified us as His own by placing the Holy Spirit in our hearts as the first installment that guarantees everything He has promised us." (NLT) (2 Corinthians 5:5; Galatians 4:6) The Holy Spirit is God's seal on us—the mark of his guarantee. God's guarantee is trustworthy and permanent—we can't lose this mark. Jesus said that the Holy Spirit will remain in us forever until we go to heaven, so Satan can never steal the Holy Spirit from us. The Holy Spirit is God, and Satan can never remove God. The Spirit is a permanent seal or mark of ownership on us.

Satan Tries To Tell Us That The Holy Spirit Will Leave Us

We can rejoice in this promise God has given us in Ephesians 1! But unfortunately, many Christians don't know about this promise concerning the Holy Spirit. They are afraid that the Holy Spirit will leave them and that they will be lost. But that's not true. It's just another one of Satan's lies, who is the father of lies.

Satan doesn't want us to believe this important promise because he knows that the Spirit is the One who leads and empowers us. Satan wants to confuse the truth with a bunch of lies so we will be afraid of losing the Holy Spirit and feel insecure. So we need to decide whether we want to believe God's promise or Satan's deceitful tricks. If you have heard this kind of false teaching, it's time to believe God's promise! Don't fall for Satan's deceitful tricks. The Holy Spirit Places Us Into Christ (Like Baptism) In the books of Matthew, Mark, and Luke we see how people were baptized with water. Many people went to the Jordan River and other places that had plenty of water (John 3:23) to be baptized by John. When John or someone else baptized people, he stood in the river and people went down into the water next to him (Mark 1:10; Acts 8:39). He then gently placed them down into the water to baptize them.

Water baptism is a good picture of what the Holy Spirit does to us as believers. The Spirit also baptizes us (the moment we believe in Christ)—but not into water. The Spirit puts us into Christ—into his family—so we are totally joined with Christ as part of him. It's like John when he put people down into the water so they were totally surrounded by the water. Even so, now, when we believe, the Spirit baptizes us—placing us into Christ—so we become totally one with Christ. We are IN HIM, like being in water. We are united with him so closely that we become part of him—part of his family. The church is the body of Christ (Ephesians 1:13; 1 Corinthians 12:13).

God Views Us And Accepts Us The Way He Views Christ The Spirit has placed us in Christ, so when God looks at us, he views us in the same way as he looks at Christ—because we are united with him. God the Father accepts us the same as he accepts his own Son (Ephesians 1). He loves us just like he loves his own Son, because in God's eyes, we are IN CHRIST now! We have become one with him.

1 John 4:13 says: "This is how we know that we live in him and he in us: He has given us of his Spirit." The Baptism Of The Holy Spirit Unites Us With Christ's Death And Resurrection

Romans 6:3-6 says: "Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly also be united with him in a resurrection like his. For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body ruled by sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin..."

These verses give us another clear reason for the baptism of the Holy Spirit. When the Holy Spirit baptized us, we were united with Christ's death and resurrection. So, in God's eyes, we were placed IN CHRIST. We were identified with Christ when he died. So, when Christ died, we also died with him. His death became our death. His burial became our burial, and his resurrection also became our resurrection, because the Holy Spirit placed us IN CHRIST and united us with him. He represented us on the cross and in the tomb and when he rose from the dead—to a brand-new life. We ourselves didn't see this happening—we weren't even born yet—but in God's eyes the

Holy Spirit did all this work on our behalf (1 Corinthians 12:13). Even though being baptized into the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ is not something we can see, it is a very important part of what the Holy Spirit does for us. Without the baptism of the Holy Spirit we would not be joined with Christ. We would not be part of his family. Our sins would not be forgiven and we would not have new life in Christ. Without it we would still be lost!

Water Baptism Doesn't Save Us. It Is Just A Symbol

We saw in Romans 6 that baptism is what unites us with Christ's death. But obviously that's not talking about water baptism, because we don't die when we are baptized in water. This verse is talking about something that happened inside of us in the spiritual realm by the Holy Spirit. Only the unseen baptism of the Holy Spirit can unite us with Christ. Water baptism is just a symbol or a visual picture of what the Holy Spirit has already done inside of us.

Satan has deceived some people into thinking that water baptism actually cleanses them from sin and makes them a child of God. But, remember the time the Pharisees came to be baptized by John? If John had baptized them, would that have made them children of God? No way! They would still have been "children of the snake," like John said. They would still be children of Satan. So let's not be confused by Satan's lies. Only the baptism of the Holy Spirit cleanses us on the inside. But we do know that water baptism is actually a good thing too, if used properly, because Jesus commanded it. Baptism is a physical symbol or sign that something has already happened inside a person. After people have believed the good news of Christ, and the Holy Spirit has united them to Christ's death and resurrection, then it is good to be baptized in water. When they go down into the water it represents Christ's death for them. When they are under the water, it represents Christ's burial, and when they are raised up out of the water, it represents Christ's resurrection from the grave for them. That way it is a true symbol showing what has happened to that person in their spirit. So, water baptism is an important thing as a testimony to others, but it's not the most important thing, because it's just a symbol (1 Corinthians 1:17). The critical thing here is that we believe in Christ's death for us, so the Holy Spirit baptizes us into Christ. That's a baptism that God alone can do.

There Is Only One Baptism Of The Holy Spirit Ephesians 4:4-5 says: "There is one body...one Spirit...one Lord, one faith, one baptism;" As we said earlier, there is only one true spiritual baptism:

Only the baptism of the Holy Spirit unites us with Christ—his death, burial and resurrection.

Only the baptism of the Spirit makes us a spiritually new person in Christ (John 3:6).

Only one baptism unites us as one body—the body of Christ—the church (which is his family).

When Christ went to heaven, he asked the Father to send the Holy Spirit (John 14:16-17), and when the Holy Spirit came on the Day of Pentecost, that was the beginning of the church. That was when the Spirit joined all believers everywhere into one body or family. And nowadays too—immediately as we believe the good news of Christ—it is the work of the Holy Spirit that baptizes us into Christ, and unites us with Christ and the church. So, it's quite simple really: there is only one baptism of the Holy Spirit, and if someone doesn't have that one baptism of the Spirit, he's not a Christian. He is not joined to Christ and he is not part of God's family, the church. The

Bible says it very simply:

Romans 8:9 says: "...And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, they do not belong to Christ."

We Are NOT Baptized Several Times By The Holy Spirit

You have read in the Bible what the true Baptism of the Holy Spirit is, but remember, Satan doesn't want you to know that. And so Satan has planted seeds of confusion and fear in the church about this baptism of the Spirit. As a result, many people today are afraid or confused because they think they have to receive a second or third baptism of the Holy Spirit, or even more. Some call it the second blessing. But God's word is clear that there's only one baptism and we received that when we believed in Christ (Ephesians 1:13). So, if somebody doesn't have the Holy Spirit living inside them, then they aren't God's child at all, because all believers have received that special baptism of the Holy Spirit as soon as they believed. They don't need to receive the Spirit again and again because he will never leave them. He lives inside us forever, just as God promised (John 14:16-17; John 10:28-29), because now we are his new permanent home—his body, his family—in oneness with Christ. The Book Of Acts Talks About The Baptism Of The Holy Spirit And Many Other Major Changes

Much of the confusion in the church about the Holy Spirit today comes from reading the book of Acts. So, we need to study that book carefully so that we see what it actually says about the Holy Spirit. Acts is a very important book in God's word, but we need to study it as a whole, and not just little parts of it. And we need to compare Acts with all of God's word and not just use it by itself to teach doctrine, because the book of Acts is a history book and a book of great transitions or changes.

Acts shows some of the most major changes that ever happened in the history of Bible and the world:

A change from emphasis on Israel to Gentiles (and the church);

A change from Law to Grace;

A change from a physical temple to a spiritual one (church);

and many other changes like the Baptism of the Holy Spirit.

We know that Satan is also a serious student of the Bible and he wants to use God's word against us, just like he did with Adam and Eve, and also when he tempted Jesus. So, let's look at Acts carefully to clear up some confusion. The Holy Spirit is the most important person in the Book of Acts, so it is full of stories about his work. These stories raise up a lot of questions about the Holy Spirit, like these:

Do Christians have to pray hard to receive the Holy Spirit?

Do the apostles have to lay their hands on people so they receive the Holy Spirit?

Do people receive the Holy Spirit when baptized in water?

Do Christians receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit once or several times?

Do Christians only receive the Holy Spirit during church services?

Did everyone who received the Holy Spirit speak in tongues?

We'll look at all of those questions. But first we need to realize that there were three types of people that received the baptism of the Holy Spirit in the book of Acts.

Comparison: Three Types Of People That Received The Baptism Of The Holy Spirit In The Book Of Acts When Jesus left the apostles, he told them to wait for the Holy Spirit to come and he also told them this:

Acts 1:8 "...you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." This verse is like a simple outline that shows the work and progress of the Holy Spirit in the book of Acts. Jesus mentions three areas or groups of people that the apostles were to go to in order to tell them the good news. Acts chapters 2, 8, and 10 show us that they actually did just that. The three different types of people that believed the good news and were baptized by the Holy Spirit were: Jews (Ch. 2), Samaritans (Ch. 8), and Gentiles (Ch. 10). The Jews—Acts 2:1-4

The Jews mentioned in chapter 2 lived mostly in Jerusalem and the surrounding district of Judea. These were the first believers in Christ to receive the Holy Spirit. (Note: Later, Acts 19:1-7 also talks about some other Jews who were not in the Jerusalem area. They were some of John the Baptist's disciples but hadn't yet heard or believed in Christ and so had not yet received the Holy Spirit.)

The Samaritans—Acts 8:4-17

Samaria was the home of the Samaritans. These people were a mixed race who came from Israelites that had intermarried with Gentiles. But the Jews in the apostles' time rejected them and did not want to associate with them.

The Gentiles—Acts 10:33-48

The Gentiles: Everyone else in the world who isn't a Jew is called a Gentile. (Ch. 10 talks about the story of Cornelius who was a Gentile. All of us that are not Jews are Gentiles.)

Now we'll look at these three different groups of people and how they received the baptism of the Holy Spirit. The Book Of Acts Uses These Three Groups Of People To Outline The New Changes Happening As we know, the book of Acts documents a time of great transition or change. Big changes began to happen when the Holy Spirit started the church, so these passages show us exactly how those changes happened step by step. These big changes started among the Jews. For centuries God had worked mostly with the Jews (Israel) only. But after Christ left the earth, God began working much more with other groups, like the Samaritans. And then later, as the Jews continued to reject Christ, the Holy Spirit began working more with the Gentiles too. The Holy Spirit was the one making these big changes happen and the book of Acts outlines how these major changes happened progressively:

Jews → Samaritans → Gentiles Some People Think That Acts Chapters 2 Or 8 Is The Pattern Which The Holy Spirit Operates Today

Some Christians think that the Holy Spirit did things in the same way all throughout the book of Acts and still does today. But actually he worked in different ways for each of these three groups of people. Some Christians only read one or two stories at the beginning of Acts and think that is the pattern of how the Holy Spirit operates for us today. They say that Acts Ch. 1 & 2 show us that we too need to wait for God and pray to receive the Holy Spirit like the Jews and Samaritans did in the book of Acts. And some people think we have to lay hands on Christians to receive the Holy Spirit like the apostles did to the Samaritans in Ch. 8. But if we want to see the overall picture of the transformation that God was making happen, we need to compare all the differences of all of these stories in Acts and it will become clear. And also, we can see how God is at work now among us who are Gentiles. The Bible lays this all out very nicely.

Some Questions To Help Compare Differences Of The 3 Groups In Acts:

We are going to look at these three types of people in Acts chapters 2, 8 and 10 and consider some questions that show some similarities, and also the differences between each. These questions will help us understand what God is trying to teach us with the three groups and the changes that happened in Acts: Did These People Receive The Holy Spirit When They Were Baptized In Water?

The Jews: No. The disciples were baptized in water long before they received the Holy Spirit.

The Samaritans: No. They didn't receive the Holy Spirit when they were baptized in water.

The Gentiles: No. They received the Holy Spirit first, then later they were baptized in water.

Explanation: Some people think they will receive the Holy Spirit when they are baptized in water, but this is one of Satan's lies. The Bible is clear about this. We've talked about it before, but here we see it again. People don't receive the Holy Spirit when they are baptized in water. Water doesn't have the power to do that. Water baptism is just a symbol. We shouldn't listen to Satan's lies about it. Did A Strong Wind And Tongues Of Fire Come Upon Those Who Received The Spirit?

The Jews: Yes, this happened to the Jews, but only on the Day of Pentecost. It never happened to Jews again.

The Samaritans: No. This didn't happen when they received the Holy Spirit.

The Gentiles: No. This didn't happen when they received the Holy Spirit.

Explanation: The wind and fire were a sign especially for the Jews. The Jews had the first temple in the Old Testament and God had previously marked his dwelling place in the temple with clouds and fire. So now in the New Testament this sign (of fire) was especially for Jews so they would know that God had chosen a different temple. His home was in people now, not a stone building. So we Gentiles today shouldn't expect that the Holy Spirit will use this sign of wind and fire when the Spirit comes on new Gentile believers. Do Believers Need To Pray And Wait For The Holy Spirit?

The Jews: Jesus told his disciples to wait for the Holy Spirit and that's what they did until the Day of Pentecost.

The Samaritans: The Samaritans didn't pray to receive the Holy Spirit, but the apostles had to go to them first.

The Gentiles: They didn't pray or wait for the Holy Spirit. They received the Holy Spirit as soon as they believed in Christ.

Explanation: The Jews had to wait for the Holy Spirit because Jesus had told them to wait for this special new event (Day of Pentecost) that would mark the beginning of the church age. Later the Samaritans also heard the good news and believed and were baptized, but they didn't receive the Holy Spirit right away. So the apostles from Jerusalem were concerned and sent Peter and John to them and they laid hands on them and prayed for them. Then they received the Holy Spirit. So, why didn't they receive him as soon as they believed? The Samaritans were a mixed ethnic group of Jews intermarried with Gentiles. So most Jews hated them for that. They didn't often talk to them or worship with them (John 4:9). But Jesus wanted to change that. He wanted to join these two groups together in the church age, so he didn't give them the Holy Spirit right away, but waited until the apostles came. He wanted to show them not to avoid each other. He showed the Samaritans they needed to submit to the Jewish apostles and their teaching and not avoid them. And also, God wanted to show the apostles and other Jews that the Holy Spirit loved the Samaritans just as much as the Jews and they shouldn't look down on them or avoid them. They were to worship and pray together as one family. The Holy Spirit was the one who would unite them in one new body, the church. So God waited for the apostles to come to Samaria, and then he gave the Holy Spirit to the Samaritans too, just like he had done to the Jews. Later on, when other Samaritans believed, they didn't have to wait to receive the Holy Spirit. They received him right away. Did The Apostles Have To Lay Their Hands On People To Receive The Holy Spirit?

The Jews: No. No one laid hands on them. The Holy Spirit just came.

The (Jewish) disciples of John (Acts 19:1-7): Yes. Paul laid hands on them first.

The Samaritans: Yes. The first Samaritan believers didn't receive the Holy Spirit right away, so the Jews sent apostles to them.

The Gentiles: No. They received the Holy Spirit when they heard the good news and believed.

Explanation: The Jews in Acts 2 (in Jerusalem) didn't have anyone lay hands on them to receive the Holy Spirit, but in Acts 19 we see that the apostle Paul laid his hands on some Jews and then they received the Holy Spirit. If both groups were Jews, then why was it different for them? Mainly because the Jews in Ch. 19 lived in Ephesus which is a long way from the temple in Jerusalem, and they were disciples of John and not Jesus. They had heard John's teaching earlier, but they had not heard the good news that Jesus died to save them, and they had not heard that the Holy Spirit had come (19:3-4). So, Paul taught them about Jesus and they believed in him. Then Paul laid his hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit. This was a similar situation to the Samaritans who needed to begin to learn from the apostles, and submit to their teaching. God didn't want these disciples of John the Baptist to remain as a separate group. They needed to join the disciples of Jesus now. They were no longer disciples of John. He was dead and now they needed to come under the authority of Jesus and the apostles, and become part of the church of Jesus Christ. Jesus himself had chosen the apostles to be the first group of teachers in the church, to help the new believers when the church was still young. As a result of their new faith, these

disciples of John were then baptized in water under a new name. Their first baptism was from John, but now when Paul came and taught them about Christ, they heard and believed and became disciples of Jesus under the authority of the apostles. And so they received another water baptism—in the name of Christ (19:5)—because Christ was their Savior now. So God waited until an apostle had laid hands on them and then God gave them the Holy Spirit. They were now part of the church under the leadership of the apostles of Christ.

What About Us Gentiles Today?

Now that we have heard about the Jews and the Samaritans, what about the Gentiles in Acts Ch. 10? The Holy Spirit came to the Gentiles differently. No one laid hands on them. Peter just told them the good news, and while he was still talking, the Holy Spirit came to them. They didn't have to wait and they didn't have to pray to receive the Spirit's baptism. They just heard the good news and believed it, and right away the Holy Spirit came inside them. This is how it happens to us now too. We are Gentiles, so this is also how we receive the Holy Spirit—we receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit as soon as we believe in Christ. This happens instantly to all Gentiles who believe in Christ. Re-read Ephesians 1:13 and 1 Corinthians 12:13. They show us clearly that there are not many different ways for Gentiles to receive the Holy Spirit. We Gentiles all receive the Holy Spirit the same way—as soon as we have believed.

Conclusions For Us

Ok, so we've looked at all these questions and have seen how the Holy Spirit worked with the Jews and then the Samaritans and finally the Gentiles. And we have seen from Acts and other scriptures that today we Gentiles don't have to pray to receive the Holy Spirit. We don't have to wait for him or have someone lay hands on us to receive the Holy Spirit. If we have truly believed the good news of Christ, then we can be assured that the Holy Spirit has already baptized us and placed us into the body of Christ, the church (1 Corinthians 12:13). The Spirit has placed all Jewish believers and Samaritan believers and Gentile believers into the church and we have become one family now IN CHRIST. The Holy Spirit also now lives inside our bodies as his new temple. He has been given to us as a seal and guarantee of his promise that we belong to him and we will never be lost (Ephesians 1:13-14). We received the Holy Spirit when we first believed in Christ and Satan can never steal the Spirit away from us! Never! These promises come straight from God's word and so they are totally true, so they should encourage us deeply. We can rejoice that God has given us his very own Spirit. Think about it: If you are a child of God, Christ's own Spirit lives right there inside your body! (Romans 8:9). Take a minute to thank God for this truly wonderful gift!

More Questions

Now we have studied and compared these truths from the book of Acts and elsewhere and it clears up some of our understanding about many things regarding the Holy Spirit. Since the Holy Spirit is the source of our spiritual strength we know that Satan will always try to attack our beliefs and our understanding about the Holy Spirit. So, let's not let Satan confuse us and our doctrines or beliefs about the Holy Spirit.

We need to study other beliefs and questions about the Holy Spirit that come up in the book of Acts also; questions such as:

“Is being filled with the Holy Spirit the same as being baptized with the Holy Spirit?”

“Does everyone that receives the Holy Spirit speak in tongues?”

We'll look at these questions and others as we keep moving along.

15. The Spirit Of Fainting & Barking Like A Dog

Chapter 15 The Spirit Of Fainting & Barking Like A Dog “Toronto Blessing”—1994 In January 1994, something very dramatic happened in a church in Toronto, Canada. A pastor named Randy Clark was visiting the church and gave his testimony about some things that had been happening to him. He said that the Holy Spirit was causing some unusual things to happen to him. As he was talking about it, strange things began happening to the people he was speaking to. Many people fell to the ground and began rolling around and laughing hysterically. Some people started acting like animals by crawling around on their hands and knees and making sounds like barking dogs or roaring lions. Some women rolled around on the ground like they were in the pain of childbirth or making strange noises and words that no one could understand. Others fell to the ground and shook violently like they were having seizures, or became like someone who is unconscious, unable to move. Some of them had to be carried home. All this commotion went on for about two hours. The church service was not focused on preaching or hearing God’s word because they were just totally taken up with all the strange things people were doing, and obviously it was very noisy and chaotic. They called it a “new outpouring of the Holy Spirit”—like a Holy Spirit party—and claimed they were drunk in the Spirit.

These types of meetings continued to happen in this church for months, and the news got out and hundreds of people went to see for themselves. It was called the “Toronto Blessing” because the people thought the Holy Spirit had given that church in Toronto a special blessing and filling from the Holy Spirit. In the years since that time, many people have gone to that church in Toronto hoping that they too could “catch the blessing” or “catch the fire.” People from all around the world went to the Toronto church and then took the experience back to their own churches and started similar movements in many places.

Pensacola Outpouring (Brownsville Revival) The next year (1995) a church in Pensacola, Florida was having revival meetings and similar things began to happen there. Over the next few years, thousands and thousands of people came from all over to receive the same kind of blessing. They built a multimillion-dollar church building to accommodate all the people, but after a while, many people stopped coming, and they were left with a huge debt to pay, without enough people to pay for the new building.

Todd Bentley At Lakeland, Florida A few years later (2008) a preacher named Todd Bentley was preaching at a church in Lakeland, Florida, when all sorts of strange things started happening there also. For months people came by the hundreds to have Todd lay hands on them and pray for them and get the blessing or “fresh fire” as they called it. People were falling on the ground and laughing uncontrollably for hours. Some were making animal noises or clucking like chickens. Some were babbling and making noises that no one could understand, as if they were drunk. Many people would lay on the floor for hours, unconscious. One woman’s legs stopped functioning so she couldn’t move them—she couldn’t walk for three days. She just stayed there at the church and people had to carry her to the bathroom every few hours. On one occasion, one of the staff

members on stage with Todd started yelling and pounding his fists on a small folding table that was on the stage. He was a big man and as he pounded the table with his fists over and over again, the little table broke down and fell flat. Then he took a large pile of papers from the table and threw them all over the stage as if he was a raging madman. He claimed to be filled with the Spirit when he did it. A few years later, in the middle of all these meetings and ministry, suddenly Todd Bentley's wife divorced him because of marriage problems. Todd married one of the young women on his staff and later went back into ministry.

Most of these types of preachers claim to give the Holy Spirit to people just by laying hands on them or pointing at people and shouting. One preacher named Rodney Howard Brown called himself the "Holy Ghost Bartender" who could hand out the Holy Spirit like a bartender hands out liquor at a bar. Many of these men actually acted drunk during the church service—staggering around, slurring their speech, making strange noises and speaking like drunkards. Some of them even compared the Holy Spirit experience to smoking marijuana. Although many of these things seem unbelievable, there are many actual videos of these events and testimonies that can be seen to prove it.

Los Angeles—1906 But the things that happened in Toronto and Pensacola and Lakeland were not totally new. About a hundred years before that, in 1906, something similar also happened in Los Angeles, California. A visiting pastor named William Seymour started some revival meetings there. Later these people formed a church on Azusa Street.

William did not emphasize preaching too much, but rather spoke to people a lot about their need for the baptism of the Holy Spirit and speaking in tongues—which he admitted he had not yet experienced himself. He told people that they needed to pray and fast and wait for the Spirit to come. In the meetings he often just sat behind the pulpit and prayed as people sang. He kept shouting at them to "repent!" They often sang one particular song over and over again: 'The Comforter Has Come.'

They just sang and sang and eventually began to feel they were being filled with abundant joy or ecstasy and they began crying and shouting and "speaking in tongues." Some began making animal noises. Some were jumping up and down and running around, spinning in circles in the church. Some fell down on the floor jerking, kicking or trembling like they were in convulsions, both men and women. Some went unconscious for 2-3 hours. Many people claimed to be healed at these meetings and many lives were changed. The Movement Grows World Wide

These meetings were the beginning of a movement that started to spread and has lasted for many years. Missionaries took the message around the world. One man from this church, named Alfred Garr, took this experience and message from the Azusa Street church to places like India and China. (We'll hear more about him in the next chapter.) Many people claimed that the Holy Spirit was doing an amazing miracle like at Pentecost. Other people claimed it was all fake and just emotions, so there was a dispute over whether or not it was a real blessing of the Holy Spirit. Even today people are divided, and many churches have been split up over this issue. Does The Holy Spirit Like To Expose Women Indecently Or Embarrass Them?

Some churches today continue to follow these practices in their worship services. One of the most common things to see at these meetings is people who are touched on the forehead and then they

fall down unconscious. They often call it being “slain in the Spirit.” When they are “slain in the Spirit,” other people usually stand behind them and catch them, so they won’t bump their heads or get hurt when they fall down. And when the women fall down, they usually have someone there to quickly cover their legs with a blanket, so they don’t expose themselves indecently. But let’s pause and think about this for a minute. Does this really sound like the work of the Holy Spirit? Does the filling of the Holy Spirit cause churches to become a place of confusion and chaos with hundreds of people yelling, howling or laughing all at the same time while they roll around the floor? Does the Spirit make people pound on tables until they break, and throw things around in the air like a raving madman? Does the Holy Spirit want us to act like drunkards or people high on marijuana—to make men fall to the ground and bump their heads and hurt themselves? Does the Holy Spirit want to embarrass women or have men to see them exposed indecently so that they have inappropriate thoughts about them? Is that the way a HOLY Spirit would operate? Think about it carefully!

What Does The Bible Say? Is God still able to do miracles today as he did at Pentecost? Absolutely—he can do anything, whenever he chooses. His power has not changed. But if we study the history of the Bible we see that God doesn’t do miracles all the time—in fact for hundreds of years God did not—but only when he has a specific purpose. So today, just because we see something that looks like a miracle, we shouldn’t quickly assume that it is from God—because we know from scripture that Satan has power to do some miracles too. The Bible warns us about believing everything we see or hear. We should test it first, lest we are deceived and believe “another spirit.”

1 John 4:1 says: “Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, buttest the spiritsto determine if they are from God, becausemanyfalse prophets have gone out into the world.” (NET) The Bible tells us to “test the spirits.” So we know that God wants us to use the patterns in the Bible to test the spirits. Otherwise we wouldn’t know whether it’s really God’s miracle. We can compare these things with what the Holy Spirit did in the past as recorded in the Bible. So you should ask yourself: when Jesus first gave the Holy Spirit to the apostles, were they “slain in the spirit?” NO! Did they fall to the ground or walk around on all fours barking like dogs, roaring like lions and clucking like chickens? NO! In Acts chapter 2, in the first church in Jerusalem, did the Holy Spirit make the Christians faint and fall down and shake in convulsions and go unconscious for 2 or 3 hours? NO! Did they have to be carried to the toilet every few hours because their legs stopped working? NO! When the women in Acts 2 received the Holy Spirit, did someone have to catch them from falling and cover them up? NO! When the Holy Spirit baptized the Samaritans and the Gentiles in Acts 8, 10, did they roll around on the floor and laugh hysterically for 2 or 3 hours like people who had lost control of their minds? NO!

None of those things were done by the Holy Spirit in the book of Acts anywhere! Not once. So we have to ask ourselves, are the churches in Toronto and Los Angeles really better than the apostles’ church in Jerusalem? Do we need to travel to Toronto to get a biggerblessing from the Holy Spirit? Is the Holy Spirit in Toronto different or better there than the Holy Spirit here with us? Are we lacking in some special blessing of the Spirit? Think about it. Instead of just using our eyes and emotions, we really need to judge these events by what the Bible has said is true about the Holy Spirit’s work, and we need to understand what is the true meaning of being “filled with the Spirit.”

What Is This Spirit Of Falling Down And Convulsions And Embarrassment? The Bible says to test the spirits. So, as we have compared the “Toronto Blessing” with the Bible, we saw that God did NOT do those kinds of things to his disciples in the book of Acts when he filled them with the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit never embarrassed the Christian women or made the apostles bark like dogs or roar like lions as they crawled around on all fours or rolled around on the floor and laughed uncontrollably for 2 hours, or kept someone from going to the toilet for 3 days! The Holy Spirit never made the disciples yell and scream like madmen or sleep unconscious for hours. The Holy Spirit didn’t do any of those things. However, we do see something similar to that in the book of Mark, but it wasn’t the Holy Spirit that did it. It was another kind of spirit. In Mark 9:17-27 we see the story of a demon-possessed boy that was brought to Jesus to heal. In this passage we can notice several things that the demon caused the boy to do:

The demon made him fall down

The boy rolled around on the ground

He yelled or cried out

He had convulsions

He became unconscious

But finally, after Jesus gets rid of the demon, we read:

“...Jesus gently took his hand and raised him to his feet, and he stood up.” (NET) This passage says that the boy was thrown to the ground and convulsing and shrieking. But the Holy Spirit didn’t cause him to do any of that—demons did. It was common in those days for demons to take control of people and cause them to yell or shout or fall down in convulsions and lose control. Demons did that to this boy, and also made him faint and go unconscious. In fact, this still happens today in many places around the world where they worship heathen spirits and gods.

Demons don’t care about people’s well-being, so they love to do things like this. But notice that when Jesus helped the boy, the boy stood up and acted and talked NORMALLY (not out of control). That’s the way Jesus and the Holy Spirit work. God wants to help us. He doesn’t want to harm us or shame us or make us act like irrational people who are out of control. God’s word is clear. The Holy Spirit brings order and control into our lives.

Galatians 5:23 states that the “...fruit of the Spirit is ...self-control.” The Holy Spirit Gives Us Self-Control, Not Loss Of Control The Holy Spirit doesn’t cause us to lose control and act silly or drunk or crazy. This verse in Galatians shows us the opposite—the Holy Spirit gives us more self-control. Satan, on the other hand, wants to trick people. He will try to use his power and counterfeit miracles to deceive people, so they think they are under the control of the Holy Spirit, when actually they could be under the influence of a spirit of lies and deceit. So it is quite possible that it was demons who used their power to confuse the people of Toronto and Los Angeles and other places. We can’t know for sure, but one thing we can be sure of is that the Bible doesn’t lie—and the unchanging Word of God says this about the Spirit’s control:

“...God is not a God of confusion...” (1 Corinthians 14:33) (NASB) The NIV Bible says it this way: “...God is not a God of disorder but of peace--as in all the congregations of the Lord’s people.”

These passages make it very clear: God's Spirit does not promote confusion or disorder or disturbances in our churches. Instead he brings peace, clear thinking and orderliness. But Satan, on the other hand, is the father of lies and confusion and chaos. He continually changes his tactics and tricks to deceive people, even in the church. He disguises his ways to appear as an angel of light in the church, and he deceives God's people whenever he can (2 Corinthians 11:13; 1 Timothy 4:1).

If we're not careful and don't compare experiences with God's word, then Satan can trick us too and we could end up listening to other spirits instead of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 11:3-4). The Holy Spirit wants to bring order into our lives and our churches. But Satan wants to confuse people and make them act in a disorderly manner and out of control. Remember, Satan is a master deceiver—the father of lies—but he can't outsmart God or his Word.

1 Corinthians 14:40 says that in church: "...everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way." The Holy Spirit Always Keeps The Focus On Jesus

After the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2) we see that the church experienced many more miracles. But the church didn't get distracted by those miracles or start a miracle crusade. They stayed focused on Jesus and devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching about Jesus (Acts 2:42). The coming of the Holy Spirit did not change God's focus on Jesus. In fact, Jesus himself said that when the Spirit came, he would focus our attention on Jesus and glorify him.

John 15:26 "... the Spirit ...will testify about me..."(NET)

John 16:13-15 "...when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. For he will not speak on his own authority, but will speak whatever he hears, ...He will glorify me, because he will receive from me what is mine and will tell it to you. Everything that the Father has is mine; that is why I said the Spirit will receive from me what is mine and will tell it to you." (NET)

Throughout the rest of the New Testament, we see the Holy Spirit continue to glorify Christ and keep the church focused on him. That's why Satan tries to take our focus away from Jesus. Satan knows that if we can be distracted by other things and not focus on Jesus, eventually we will forget him or deny his importance. That's exactly what has happened with many cults. They confess "another Jesus"—they don't believe that a man (Jesus) is truly one with God and that he is the only Christ—the Savior. The Bible says that is how we can test the spirits and false prophets—they will try to take the focus away from Jesus (1 John 4:1-3; 1 John 2:22-23). Satan is always trying to distract us with something else—something new or better—something that sounds more spiritual. That's exactly what the serpent did in the garden with Eve.

2 Corinthians 11:3-4 says: "...I am afraid that just as the serpent deceived Eve by his treachery, your minds may be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ. For if someone comes and proclaims another Jesus...or ...a different spirit than the one you received, or a different gospel...you put up with it..." (NET)

Remember:

—The Holy Spirit's goal is to encourage and edify (build up) the church by keeping our focus on Christ, the head of the church (1 Corinthians 14:12; Colossians 1:18; Colossians 2:8-10; Colossians 2:18-19).

—Satan’s goal is to hinder that growth by deceitfully blending into the church and distracting us to focus on ourselves or other things rather than on Christ. Don’t be distracted by a different spirit!

16. Doesn't The Holy Spirit Speak In My Language?

Chapter 16 Doesn't The Holy Spirit Speak In My Language?

Alfred Garr Uses Tongues In India In our previous chapter we talked about the Azusa Street revival meetings that happened in Los Angeles. One of the first missionaries from that church was a man named Alfred Garr. Alfred told people that they needed to “speak in tongues” as proof that they had been truly baptized by the Holy Spirit. One time when Alfred “spoke in tongues” at the Azusa Street church someone told him that he was speaking in Bengali—a primary language spoken in India. So later, Alfred decided that since the filling of the Holy Spirit had given him the ability to speak the Bengali language without learning it, then the Spirit was sending him to India as a missionary. Alfred was planning to evangelize the people of India in their own language by using the gift of tongues that he received. So in 1907 Alfred and his wife were sent out from the Azusa Street church as missionaries to Calcutta, India. After he arrived in India he began to “speak in tongues” to the people there—but apparently it was not Bengali because they did not understand him. No matter what he said in “tongues” they did not understand. So Alfred had to give up that idea and use a translator to teach them.

Alfred later wrote this in a report in 1908:

“I supposed God would let us talk to the natives of India in their own tongue, but He did not...I have not seen any one who is able to preach to the natives in their own tongue with the languages given with the Holy Ghost.”(Quoted from Special Supplement to Confidence, May 1908, p. 2.)

Alfred was disappointed that his “gift of tongues” did not give him the ability to talk to the people in their own language, so he changed his doctrine a bit about the meaning and purpose for the gift of tongues. He said that the gift of tongues was a heavenly language instead of an earthly language. He also said that it was the real proof that people had actually received the baptism and filling of the Holy Spirit. He still kept teaching the people in India and also China about their need to “speak in tongues.” This true story about Alfred Garr shows us the confusion about the baptism, the filling and the gifts of the Spirit—and that confusion is still here today. But what does the Bible say about the meaning of these terms? And what does the Bible teach about the gift of tongues?

Confusion About The Terms: Baptism Of The Spirit, Filled With The Spirit & Gifts Of The Spirit In the last chapter we read that “God is not a God of confusion.” But we do know that Satan sure is! He is the father of lies and he loves to create confusion by twisting the truth. Satan hates truth. Remember the tricks and lies he used to deceive Eve in the Garden of Eden? Satan mixed truth with lies and changed the meaning of God’s words—and he still does the same today. So in the last few chapters we have looked at the biblical meaning of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit in order to clear up some of the confusion of Satan’s lies and see the true meaning of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. In this chapter we want to take that a step further and also clarify how the Baptism of the Holy Spirit is different than being FILLED with the Spirit. It is also different than the GIFTS of the Spirit. God used different words in the Bible for good reasons, and even though they are all

connected to the Holy Spirit, they each have different meanings. So we shouldn't confuse them or say that they are the same thing.

Baptism Of The Holy Spirit Is Different Than Being Filled With The Holy Spirit In the book of Acts we sometimes see the filling of the Spirit happening immediately after the Baptism of the Spirit, and since they seem to happen at the same time, some people think that the baptism of the Holy Spirit is the same as being filled with the Holy Spirit, but it's not. They are different, and Satan wants to confuse us about them. The Bible can clarify it for us.

How Is The Baptism Of The Holy Spirit Different Than Being Filled With The Holy Spirit?

The baptism of the Holy Spirit happens just ONCE, when we first believe the good news of Christ and become a child of God (1 Corinthians 12:13; Ephesians 1:13).

The filling of the Holy Spirit can happen MANY TIMES, preferably constantly. The Greek verb "filled" in Ephesians 5:18 means: "Be constantly, moment by moment, guided by the Spirit."

The baptism of the Holy Spirit is something GOD HIMSELF DOES, even if we are unaware of it. This happens when he puts the Holy Spirit inside us and places us into the body of Christ.

The filling of the Holy Spirit is something that God commands US to do (Ephesians 5:18 says "be filled with the Spirit"). In other words, WE HAVE TO ALLOW the Holy Spirit to fill us. We can also prevent the filling from happening by grieving the Holy Spirit (1 Thessalonians 5:19; Acts 7:51).

The baptism of the Holy Spirit places us into Christ—into God's family, the church—and our bodies become the home of the Holy Spirit (John 14:20; 1 John 4:13).

The filling of the Holy Spirit strengthens and guides us daily to do God's work.

Filling Of The Holy Spirit Was In The Old Testament But Not The Baptism Of The Holy Spirit In the Old Testament, there were many leaders, kings, and prophets that were filled with the Holy Spirit, but not one person received the baptism of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament. That's because the first time the baptism of the Spirit occurred was on the Day of Pentecost, when the church began. The baptism of the Holy Spirit was a special sign to mark or identify the church, and that is why it didn't happen until the beginning of the church. So even this fact alone can show us that the baptism of the Holy Spirit is different than the filling of the Holy Spirit.

Baptism Of The Holy Spirit Is Different Than The Gifts Of The Spirit

Some people think that the baptism of the Holy Spirit is basically the same as one of the gifts of the Spirit (tongues). They think that this particular gift of the Holy Spirit is the most important gift and it is the only sign that someone has truly received the Holy Spirit. They believe that if someone hasn't received this gift, they haven't received the Holy Spirit yet. The gift called "tongues" (or speaking in other languages) is one of the gifts of the Spirit that is found in the Bible, but let's first look at how it got started and then consider the purpose of it. We must understand that the gift of tongues is different than the baptism of the Holy Spirit. We've already seen from the Bible that the baptism of the Holy Spirit puts us in God's family when we first believe and that only happens once. But the gifts of the Holy Spirit are given to us to use constantly (daily) to help us do God's work.

What Actually Is The Gift Of Tongues?

People have many different ideas about the gift of tongues these days, but what does the Bible say? Let's look back again to the Day of Pentecost, which was the first time the gift of tongues was given, and let's see how God used this gift.

Acts 2:1-9 says: "When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them. Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard their own language being spoken. Utterly amazed, they asked: "Aren't all these who are speaking Galileans? Then how is it that each of us hears them in our native language? Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia..." On the Day of Pentecost, God sent the Holy Spirit to baptize the apostles and other believers, so they would be united into one body with Christ. In God's eyes they became part of the body of Christ, his family, the church. But since the Holy Spirit is invisible and no one could actually see him, God wanted to show the Jews a visible sign to prove that a brand-new thing had just happened. He wanted to show that the baptism of the Holy Spirit had actually come to pass like Jesus had prophesied it would. So after the Holy Spirit baptized the believers, he also filled them. As we see in other verses, the meaning of 'filled' is that the Holy Spirit strengthened and guided them. The Holy Spirit guided their mouths so they could preach the gospel in other languages. The Holy Spirit gives many different gifts and speaking in tongues was one of them. Tongues was a special sign-gift for the Jewish unbelievers who were there (1 Corinthians 14:22) and showed them that God had started a new thing, called the church. This had never happened before.

The Bible Says Tongues Are Real Human Languages

Let's consider Acts 2:6 from above. There we saw that Jews from other countries who were visiting Jerusalem heard the believers speaking in tongues. They were speaking in the languages from those countries. The meaning of the Greek word "tongues" is just simply 'languages'—human languages that people use every day—but these believers spoke in languages they had never learned. The believers didn't quickly take lessons on how to learn those languages, but the Holy Spirit gave them that gift or ability instantly, so they could tell the good news to others in their own languages.

Tongues Is Not A Secret Holy Language

Some people think that tongues is some sort of special secret heavenly prayer language that only God and the angels can understand. It may be true that some people occasionally prayed or worshiped God using the gift of tongues, but that was not God's main purpose! God doesn't need us to even pray or speak in any language at all in order to understand us! He already knows our every thought before we speak. But as we read Acts 2:6-11 and 1 Corinthians 14:10, etc., it's clear that God intended tongues (languages) to be understood by human ears, because they were spoken in real human languages that had real meaning to those who understood those languages.

Acts 2:11 says: "...we hear them speaking in our own languages about the great deeds God has done!" (NET)

Tongues were not meant to be secret words hidden from people. The whole point was that God wanted people to understand what was being said in tongues! In Acts 2 this is very clear. On the Day of Pentecost true tongues (languages) were spoken and we see that people heard and understood exactly what the meaning of these languages were because it was their own languages they were hearing. This is the real gift of tongues. God knew that Satan would later try to deceive people about the true gift of tongues, so God wrote a long, detailed list of all the tongues or languages that were spoken that day so we could see the truth for ourselves. He wanted us to know they were real human languages. Look at the list of "tongues" in Acts 2:9-11 again. These were not unknown languages—they were real live earthly tongues or languages spoken by many people from many countries:

"... Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome...Cretans and Arabs..."

These were Jews who normally lived in many different countries and spoke their own individual languages. But while they were visiting and worshiping in Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost, they heard the apostles and other believers preach God's word in their own languages! The apostles didn't learn these languages first, nor had they been practicing speaking in tongues. The Holy Spirit just filled them and directed them to be able to speak in all these people's languages. That is what the Bible calls the gift of 'tongues.' The gift of tongues is simply the gift of languages—any language. **The Gift Of Tongues Allowed Believers To Speak Any Language**

So, if Peter was standing near people from Parthia, he was able to speak Parthian. If John was standing close to people from Egypt, he spoke Egyptian. No matter who they were standing near, they were able to speak in their specific language. They were speaking in tongues (other languages) and the people heard and understood them in their own language. So, it is very important to understand that 'tongues' here in the Bible is just a word for languages—regular human languages. The miracle was not some new special secret language, but the fact that these languages were being spoken by people who had never learned them before! God gave them that gift instantly. This gift (or ability) to speak in tongues wasn't something they needed to practice or learn. They could just speak any language they needed to communicate without learning that language. It was a special miracle. **The Holy Spirit Knows All The Languages In The World**

We know that the Day of Pentecost was celebrated in Jerusalem, in Israel, where the disciples normally spoke Aramaic or Greek. But if Pentecost would have happened today—like in a crowded airport with many foreigners crowded around—do you think the disciples would have been able to speak today's languages? Yes! Of course! No matter where the apostles would have been, God would have enabled them to speak in that specific language. Today they would probably be speaking Spanish or German or French or Italian or Japanese or Chinese or some other language. The Holy Spirit knows every language in every country and he wants people to understand his message clearly, so the gift of tongues was given to those believers so they could help the Jews from other countries clearly understand God's message, and not confuse them.

Satan Confuses Us About Tongues. God Does Not 1 Corinthians 14:33 says: "God is not the author of confusion..."(NKJV)

We read this verse before, but it's worth reading again. Paul wrote this verse in a chapter talking about tongues—because he knew that Satan would try to cause confusion in the church about tongues and disrupt things. The Holy Spirit doesn't confuse people. The Holy Spirit is our helper and he wants us to understand God's word clearly—in a language we can understand clearly (1 Corinthians 14:19)—so we can understand the meaning of it and believe it. So on the Day of Pentecost the Holy Spirit gave the Jews and others an opportunity to hear the gospel in their very own languages, no matter what country they came from. The Holy Spirit was showing them that the gospel was going to become a global message for everyone to understand, not just the Jews.

Baptism Of The Holy Spirit Joins All Believers Into One Family

Later in Acts we see that other people too—the Samaritans and Gentiles—were also baptized with the Holy Spirit, and God used this same gift of tongues as a sign to show that something brand new had happened to these other groups of people also. God wanted to show the Jews that the gospel and the Holy Spirit was not just for the Jews, but for everyone who believed in Jesus. And now God was joining believers from all different groups (Jews, Samaritans and Gentiles) into one family—the church, the body of Christ. This is the work of the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 2:14-22), to join them all into one. So he used the sign of tongues, which was something that they could all see and hear, to mark the joining of all these groups—into one group—the church.

Tongues: The Opposite Of The Curse Of The Tower Of Babel In Genesis Ch. 11 we see that before the tower of Babel, everyone spoke one language. But mankind rebelled against God, so God came down to judge them by dividing them into different language groups.

Genesis 11:6-8 says: "...the LORD said, "If as one people all sharing a common language they have begun to do this, then nothing they plan to do will be beyond them. Come, let's go down and confuse their language so they won't be able to understand each other." So the LORD scattered them from there across the face of the entire earth..." (NET) So we see that God was the one who invented all the different languages so that people would be scattered and not continue in their planned rebellion against God. That was hundreds of years before Jesus. But when Jesus died and rose again, he provided a way to be part of God's family again. When he sent the Holy Spirit to earth to live inside his believers, this was the beginning of his church, his family. And his family would not only be Jews, but also Samaritans and Gentiles from all over the world and from EVERY LANGUAGE group in the world. So when the Holy Spirit gave the gift of tongues to the new church, it might have been intended to be a sign showing us that he would unify people from around the world again someday. He had begun the church which would someday have people from every language group. The sin and rebellion of man brought about many languages and separation. Only God could reverse that. He has begun that by creating a new thing called the church—his body, his family—and bring all these languages back together again into one family, the family of God. The gift of tongues itself does not unify the world, but tongues indicated that the Holy Spirit had started the church, the family of Christ, which would someday unify many people into one. This unity will finally be fulfilled when Christ returns. Tongues is also a sign for Israel, which we will read about shortly.

Satan Tried To Divide The Corinthian Church With Tongues The Holy Spirit united all believers into one family or body called the church. But we know that Satan doesn't like unity. He wants us to be divided and separated. So he isn't happy with the work of the Holy Spirit and he wants to divide the church. But he doesn't have power to get rid of the Holy Spirit, so he has to find some other way to divide us. In the Corinthian church, it seems like he found a way to use different things, like the gift of tongues, as a way to make people jealous of each other. The apostle Paul wrote them a letter to try to clear up some of their problems and misunderstandings, and that letter or book can be very helpful to us also.

God And Satan Can Be At Work In The Same Place

We have to remember that there is a constant spiritual battle going on in the spirit world which we cannot see. So wherever God is at work, Satan will try to oppose his work, and vice versa. So we should not be surprised to see Satan at work in a church like Corinth. When the Holy Spirit was changing lives and doing wonderful and miraculous things there, Satan was at work in that church too. From the stories in the Bible we see glimpses of God and Satan at work in the same place. (For example: Satan indwelling Judas in the garden of Gethsemane at the same time Jesus was healing the ear of one of the soldiers. (Luke 22:47-51). Also, the demon-possessed slave girl and Paul both doing miraculous things (Acts 16:16-18). The Church At Corinth Had Many Problems The Holy Spirit was at work in the Corinthian church, but they were not a very strong church. They had many problems with worldliness and were weak in their beliefs (1 Corinthians 3:1-3). So Paul warned them about several things. They were proud and argued over which leader was the best, and this caused divisions among them (1:11). There was sexual immorality among them (5:1), and they were taking each other to court (6:1), and some even struggled with the issue of food sacrificed to idols (8:1). This church was weak and divided. Paul said they were like children (infants) in their faith (3:1; 14:20). They were also very confused about the gift of tongues.

Paul Corrected The Corinthians About The Gift Of Tongues And Other Gifts

Paul said that the Corinthian believers had received many gifts of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 1:7) but they were not using them properly. So Paul spent a lot of time trying to give them corrective teaching in 1 Corinthians chapters 12, 13, & 14. Paul was especially trying to correct them and enlighten them about the Holy Spirit and the gift of tongues. By the correction that Paul gave them, we can see that the Corinthians thought that speaking in tongues was exciting and a superior gift, and some really desired to receive it. Apparently, some of them did have this gift and they were proud about it and perhaps even looked down on others that didn't have the gift. Of course, that could make others jealous and divide them. So Paul wrote a lengthy section about tongues to help them understand the truth. His words can help us understand God's will in this too. So let's take a quick look at these three chapters and what Paul wrote: A Summary Of What Paul Taught About The Gift Of Tongues:

EVERY Christian receives the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and that places us into the body of Christ. We should never think that some believers receive the Holy Spirit, and some don't. The Bible says that EVERY believer receives the Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:13).

God alone is the one who distributes the gifts of the Holy Spirit as he chooses. We don't choose which gift we'll receive (12:11, 18).

When a Christian believes in Jesus, the Holy Spirit puts them in the family of Christ and they each receive one or more gifts of the Holy Spirit at that time. There isn't a Christian who lacks a gift. Everyone has at least one (12:7).

All the gifts are for the purpose of benefiting the church as a whole. The gifts are not to bring glory to ourselves but helping others—building them up (12:7; 14:26-27; 13:4-5).

Some people believe that they have to speak in tongues in order to show that they have received the Holy Spirit. But Paul rejects that thinking. He says that not every Christian receives the same type of gift. So not everyone receives the gift of tongues (12:30)! Everyone receives differing gifts.

Real 'tongues' are real languages and all languages have meaning. If someone speaks in tongues and there's no one there that understands that language, then there must be someone who can interpret. If not, then the speaker should keep quiet and not use tongues (14:28).

The man who has the gift of interpretation is like a coworker to the one speaking in tongues. He can understand all languages and interpret their meaning (12:10, 30). He doesn't learn these languages first, but God gives him that gift or ability so that he can understand any language.

Paul said that if several people speak in tongues at the same time, it would be chaotic and that would give a bad name to the church and to the Lord. An outsider would hear it and think everyone is crazy (14:23).

Paul said that he had the gift of tongues, but he didn't like to use the gift much in the church, because he was afraid people wouldn't understand what he was saying. He said he would much rather speak something they could understand. He said that even 5 words in a language that they all understood would be better than 10,000 words in an unknown language, because if there was no one there able to interpret, then no one would understand what he was saying and they would not be strengthened in their faith (edified) (14:18-19).

Paul said that only 2 or 3 men should speak in tongues at one service, and that they should not speak at the same time. They had to take turns. Those speaking in tongues should have control over their mouth. God is a God of order, so the church should function in an orderly manner. The Holy Spirit only does things that are orderly and proper and he is NOT the author of disorder or chaos and confusion (14:27).

The Bible says that women should not prophesy or speak in tongues during a church meeting (14:34-35).

During Paul's time, they had not received all the revelation of God yet—the New Testament had not all been completely written. The apostles were still prophesying, which means they were still getting new teaching directly from the Holy Spirit for the church, and those things had not been written in the Bible yet (John 16:12-13). So Paul told the Corinthians they should desire those who had the gift of prophecy to do more of the speaking, so they could understand and use that new teaching to strengthen the Corinthians' faith. Paul said that the gift of prophecy was better than the gift of tongues because if someone didn't understand the tongues, they could not learn from it and they would not be edified (built up). But if someone could prophecy (teach God's word), that would edify the whole church (14:4). (We'll talk about prophecy in another chapter).

Prophecy was better than tongues because those who spoke in tongues only edified their own spirits as God was talking with them (14:2-4). They were not helping others, unless someone who had the gift of interpretation was there to interpret.

Paul and the other prophets used the gift of prophecy to give us God's word long ago. Today we have all the words of prophecy that he wanted us to have—they have been written down in the Bible. So those words of God should always be more important to us than speaking in tongues (languages) which we cannot understand.

What About Tongues In The Churches Today?

Many churches are divided about tongues today. God is not honored by divisions, but Satan loves it. God does not want to confuse us, so he gave us these instructions in 1 Corinthians 12-14 to guide us in the use of tongues in church. Whether you believe in the use of tongues today or not, we all must submit to his word and the instructions he gave us. To avoid divisions, we should carefully study these chapters that God has given us about tongues. If we would be willing to follow his simple instructions, it would probably solve most of the problems and issues that churches (like Corinth) have with tongues, and the arguments would go away. So no matter what you believe about tongues today, you should at least study these passages again and see for yourselves what God actually says to us. Not Forever

Some gifts of the Spirit are temporary. For instance, according to Acts 1:21-22 nobody today could qualify to be an apostle. Apostles and prophets were foundational gifts (Ephesians 2:20)—meaning they were specifically given for the beginning stages of the church. God also said that the gift of tongues and the gift of prophecy would cease (1 Corinthians 13:8-10). Their purpose was temporary. So many scholars believe that these temporary gifts have ceased. The apostles and prophets finished writing the New Testament and then died. The apostle John was the last apostle-prophet to live and he wrote the last book of the Bible, Revelation. In the 2000 years since then, we have not received any more books of the Bible from the prophets. So the gift of prophecy at least has apparently ceased as the Bible said it would. We'll talk more about that in a later chapter. A Simple Test

Other people believe the gift of tongues still exists today. If the gift of tongues does still exist, then you can use a simple test to see if someone is using biblical tongues or not. As we have already seen in Acts 2, the true gift of tongues was real human languages that people could understand—they heard the apostles speaking in their very own native languages. About 25 years later, Paul was correcting the Corinthians about tongues and he still confirmed this same idea by saying tongues are languages that all have meaning that can be understood (1 Corinthians 14:7-11). In fact he said that if they didn't have meaning they would not edify (or build up) the church at all! So if someone really has the gift of tongues today they should be able to go anywhere in the world and speak in any language with people wherever they are. Also, if someone claims they have the gift of interpretation of tongues, and tongues are regular, known languages, then they also should be able to understand and interpret anybody speaking in any language around in the world. It's a simple test, but it holds true to principles we see in Acts 2 and also 1 Corinthians 14. Remember, Paul made these very important statements about the gift of tongues:

“...if I come to you and speak in tongues, what good will I be to you... Unless you speak intelligible words with your tongue, how will anyone know what you are saying? You will just be speaking into the air....there are all sorts of languages in the world, yet none of them is without meaning.” (1 Corinthians 14:6-10) Tongues Could Be Like A Noisy Gong Or A Clanging Cymbal

Ok, now we've seen all the warnings Paul gave the Corinthians about using the gift of tongues wrongly. He said tongues were intended to have meaning and build people up in their faith. And if there was no interpreter, Paul said the speakers need to be quiet. Paul said it wouldn't be good if outsiders (unbelievers) would come into a church meeting and hear Christians just making sounds that made no sense. That would be an unloving way to treat people. It would be like someone standing up in church and banging on metal pot, like a “noisy gong or a clanging cymbal” (1 Corinthians 13:1). It would be unloving and distracting, and the outsiders would think Christians were crazy and that would give God a bad name (1 Corinthians 14:23). The Corinthians Thought The Gift Of Tongues Was The Most Important, But Paul Disagreed

It seems that the Corinthians thought the gift of tongues was the most important of all gifts, but when Paul wrote the list of the gifts, he put tongues way down at the bottom of the list because he knew that some people were trying to overemphasize tongues. But Paul said that in the church it was more important to use the gifts that teach God's word, like the gift of apostles, prophets, and teachers (1 Corinthians 12:28; 1 Corinthians 12:31 : 1 Corinthians 4:14, 1 Corinthians 12:12) and other similar gifts, because those gifts build up the church (Ephesians 4:11-16). The Gift Of Tongues Was A Sign

Paul said that the gift of tongues did have some value IF it was used properly and with an interpreter. But speaking in tongues also had another very special purpose. Paul showed us that one of the main purposes of tongues was that it was given as a “SIGN.”

God used the sign gifts (also called signs and wonders), to prove that the apostles were really messengers sent out from Christ (Hebrews 2:3-4) and that God was starting something new—the church (1 Corinthians 12:13). Some of the sign gifts are: miracles, healing, tongues, and interpretation of tongues. But Paul also showed the Corinthians that one of the main reasons God gave tongues was “not for believers but for unbelievers.”

Tongues Was A Sign For Unbelieving Jews

1 Corinthians 14:20-22 says: “Brothers and sisters, stop thinking like children. In regard to evil be infants, but in your thinking be adults. In the Law it is written: “With other tongues and through the lips of foreigners I will speak to this people, but even then they will not listen to me, says the Lord.” Tongues, then, are a sign, not for believers but for unbelievers...”

Paul quoted this passage from the book of Isaiah to correct the Corinthians' wrong understanding. That passage shows us that tongues was mainly a sign not for believers but for “this people”—meaning unbelievers in Israel. Paul quoted this passage from the Old Testament. During the time it was written, Israel was very rebellious and not listening to God. So God said that he would send foreigners—people who spoke other languages—to invade their land so that Israel would wake up and realize how rebellious they were (Deuteronomy 28:49). Maybe then they would learn to listen—at the point of a spear or sword!! Since Israel wouldn't listen to the prophets in their own language, God said they would hear the voice of their enemies speaking to them in

another language.

That's exactly what happened in the Old Testament. They refused to listen to God, so God sent their enemies, Assyrians, to invade their land—enemies who spoke a different language (2 Kings 17:23)—a language (or tongue) they did not understand. But God said they still wouldn't listen or submit to God (Is. 28:11-13).

Years Later Israel Was Still Not Listening To God's Signs

Many years later, in the New Testament, the same thing was happening again. Jesus came, but Israel rejected him too. Jesus said this about Israel:

"In them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah: "You will be ever hearing but never understanding; you will be ever seeing but never perceiving. For this people's heart has become calloused; they hardly hear with their ears..." (Matthew 13:14-15) The Israelites didn't listen to God—they rejected Jesus. They crucified him! And so at Pentecost God gave them another sign, much like the sign of languages that Isaiah gave, but now even more miraculous. God sent them the sign of "tongues." Yes, it was a wonderful sign to the Christians in Jerusalem, because it was a sign that marked the beginning of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the new church age. But it was also a sad sign for unbelieving Israelites. It was sad, because Israel had rejected God again. This time they rejected their own king that they had been waiting for. Was It A Warning Sign?

Some scholars believe tongues was also a warning sign to unbelievers in Israel if they continued to reject Christ. 1 Corinthians 14:22 doesn't say for sure, but we do know that God did say that he would set Israel aside for a while—and he did (Matthew 21:43; Romans 11:25). Israel was set aside while God focused his work on people of other languages (or other tongues)—the Gentiles. As the church began to grow, it began moving away from Jerusalem and Israel into other countries, like Samaria and Asia. And now, people from many different tongues were hearing the gospel for the first time.

Forty years after Pentecost, in the year 70 AD, the Roman army came and tore down the temple in Jerusalem and killed the priests. The Jews could no longer worship in their temple! Even today, there is still no temple in Jerusalem. Some scholars even believe that the gift of tongues ceased when the temple was destroyed because the Israelites didn't heed the warning sign that was given to them (tongues). We may not all agree on when or if they ceased, but we all need to heed the warnings in 1 Corinthians 12-14 as to how they should be used in the church. Those instructions are clear.

Love Is More Important Than All The Gifts In the middle of all the instructions about tongues and the Holy Spirit, Paul wrote something very important in 1 Corinthians 13. He says that love is much more important than tongues and all the other gifts (1 Corinthians 13:1-3). Because no matter what type of gift we have from the Holy Spirit, if we don't love our brothers and sisters, then these gifts won't help the church or edify other believers.

We need to understand that these gifts are not to edify ourselves. God gave the gifts, so we could help (edify) others (1 Corinthians 12:7; 1 Corinthians 14:26-27; 1 Corinthians 14:31; 1 Corinthians 13:4-5). Paul says that if we have love for others, we won't be concerned about glorifying ourselves like the Corinthians were with tongues. If the Holy Spirit is truly leading us, then we will

we have a godly love for others, and we won't be self-seeking or be envious or boastful or proud. Instead, we'll be concerned about helping others (1 Corinthians 13:4-5). We will value others above ourselves (Php 2:3-4).

Paul had to say all these things to the Corinthians about tongues (in Ch. 12-14) because apparently some of them were very proud about having the gift of tongues and were showing off. They probably thought they had a better blessing than others. But God doesn't look at believers that way. God loves all believers the same. All believers have received the same Holy Spirit and we all receive gifts from God to do his work in the church. No matter what type of gift we have, God wants us to love others and use our gifts to encourage and strengthen them. The gifts aren't to glorify ourselves.

Miracles And Tongues Among The Heathen And Kundalini Power The gift of tongues was a true gift that the Holy Spirit gave to the church. But Satan is a deceiver and he has been using a form of counterfeit "tongues" and experiences among the heathen for centuries in order to deceive them. Witchdoctors, mediums, and spiritists in many places like Africa, South America, Haiti, Greenland, Australia, America, and especially in Asia, also seem to be able to speak in "tongues." Other religious groups that call out to the spirits or worship other gods like the Hindus, Buddhists, Shinto priests, and even Moslems also have people that practice a type of "speaking in tongues." This isn't a new thing—it started centuries ago. Some mutter strange words with their mouths. Some have visions and fall to the ground. Some just sit and chant or hum songs. Many of them are looking for what they call the "Kundalini" power, which they call the "coiled snake." They believe that this power or energy is like a spirit snake located in their lower spine, and that through prayer and meditation it will coil its way up to their head. When they get this Kundalini power, they experience feelings of pure joy and happiness. There are many teachers and video coaches on the internet (YouTube) in Asia and America that teach people how to experience this Kundalini power. They meditate, pray, or hum songs to open their hearts and minds, and release themselves into the power of Kundalini. And when this power comes, they experience an emotional or spiritual "high" similar to being drunk or using drugs. They often fall down unconscious when the teacher touches them on the forehead. Or they go into a trance as this "Kundalini power" controls their bodies and thoughts. These people can be seen on the videos, rolling around on the floor totally controlled by the Kundalini spirit power. The Bible confirms that Satan also has the ability to do "all sorts of displays of power through signs and wonders" (2 Thessalonians 2:9). He has used them in order to deceive the heathen and unbelievers, so we should not be surprised if he tries to use these powers to deceive people in the church also. So beware.

Test The Spirits

1 John 4:1 says: "Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world."

We read this verse earlier, but it's a good reminder again here. The Bible says we should not believe every spirit but test them. It also says that Satan tries to disguise himself as an "angel of light" in order to confuse and deceive the Christians in the church (2 Corinthians 11:14). He confused the Corinthians about the gift of tongues, and Paul had to correct them about the purpose and use of tongues. Satan wants to confuse us too, so we need to test everything that we hear by reading the word of God and comparing it carefully. In conclusion, we need to remind

ourselves again to watch out for this slippery 'serpent,' Satan, who has been very effective in confusing many people in the church (2 Corinthians 11:3-4). He is powerful and very clever—much smarter than we are. So if we want to defeat him, we can't depend on our own wisdom. We need to carefully study God's word so we aren't confused by this deceiver who loves to disguise himself as an "angel of light!" This is spiritual battle against a powerful enemy. We need to put on the full armor of God.

17. The Armor Of God

Chapter 17 The Armor Of God Paul Wrote About A Very Real Battle That We Fight Every Day—A Spiritual Battle!

Some of the books that the apostle Paul wrote were written while he was locked up in prison. Soldiers stood guard over him day and night. These soldiers were tough, battle-hardened men dressed in armor, and they guarded prisoners like Paul carefully so they wouldn't escape. But Paul didn't try to escape or fight them. Instead, he did battle in a very different way. He loved to share the gospel with the soldiers because he knew his battle was a spiritual one. When Paul wrote a letter to the Ephesians, he used a word picture about soldiers and their armor to depict this spiritual battle that all of us Christians fight each day. Maybe you are not aware of this battle, but it is very real. Our enemies are not human soldiers. Instead, we are at war with Satan and his army of demons. Let's see what Paul wrote about this:

Ephesians 6:10-12 says: "Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. 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."

Satan Has A Powerful Government And Army Who Want To Destroy Us

These verses in Ephesians 6 paint a sobering picture about our spiritual enemies. This is not a game. We Christians are up against a powerful force. Paul called them:

"...rulers, authorities, powers and spiritual forces of evil" This doesn't sound like child's play. From this verse it looks like Satan and his demons form a very powerful government system with officers of differing ranks, and an army which is much more powerful than any human government or army. We have seen this in previous chapters—Satan is the ruler of this world (1 John 5:19; John 16:11). Powerful demons under Satan are like kings or princes, governors and officers who seem to have their own areas of authority (Daniel 10:13; Daniel 10:20).

Other demons are like soldiers in Satan's army and fight against God's people. They all do battle in order to rule over the human governments of the world so that every person will be subject to their influence or rule. And ultimately, they want to destroy us all.

Satan's Army Uses Other Kinds Of Weapons

Satan and his demons don't use human weapons like spears, swords or guns. Ephesians 6:11 says that he uses all kinds of deceitful schemes to fight against us. Satan is a spirit and he uses spiritual weaponry, so ordinary human weapons are useless against him. God has given us other types of weapons to do battle with Satan and his worldly empire.

2 Corinthians 10:3-4 says: "For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine

power to demolish strongholds.”

Thankfully, God has not left us alone to fight against Satan and his demons. He has provided everything we need to do battle in this spiritual realm.

We Need The Full Armor Of God To Defeat Satan

Ephesians 6:13 says: “Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.”

Satan is a powerful enemy. Without God’s help, we are vulnerable and don’t stand a chance. But God doesn’t want us to be unarmed or vulnerable in the face of our enemy, so he has given us a full set of his complete armor so we don’t have to depend on our own strength or abilities. If we depend on God’s armor and his strength, then we’ll be able to “stand”—we can be strong in the heat of the battle. We will be able to dodge Satan’s “flaming arrows” and everything else he throws at us. So we need to be diligent to use what he has provided.

God Gave Us The Armor, But We Need To Use It!

God himself has provided and given us his armor—the armor of God (Ephesians 6:11; Ephesians 6:13). We don’t have to make it or buy it ourselves. But we have to put it on as the Bible says. If we don’t USE the armor, it certainly won’t help us! The Pieces Of God’s Armor

Ephesians 6:14-18 says: “Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord’s people.”

Now let’s look at each piece.

—BELT OF TRUTH— (Vs. 14)

Long ago, when these verses were written, soldiers dressed a little differently than they do now. One of the first and most important items of clothing for the soldiers was a strong belt. The large belt was fastened at their waist and it kept their tunic in place, as well as the breastplate, their sword and other parts of their armor safely secured to their bodies. Ephesians 6:14 says we need to put on the belt of truth like a soldier puts on his belt.

Without truth, all the other armor begins to fall away. If we listen to Satan’s lies and deceit then we are not believing in God. It’s like letting Satan loosen our belt. The rest of our protection will start to fall away. So we need to carefully guard and follow the truth because our spiritual well-being depends on it.

Jesus Is The Truth In John 14:6, Jesus told the people that, “I am the way, the truth...” And John 1:14 says Jesus is “full of...truth.” This shows us that Jesus himself is the belt we need to put on. His words, his actions, his example, his life lived out through us—is truth. Jesus is the living Word (John 1:1). He is the standard of truth by which all words and actions can be judged. We need to pay close attention to his words of truth and study his life lived in truth, and use them to guide our

own lives. As we are applying his truth to guide our lives, the truth becomes like a critical piece of our spiritual armor that helps protect us in fighting our battle against Satan's lies and deceit. And our greatest source for truth is God's written word.

Jesus Used The Truth Of God's Word To Defeat Satan When Satan was tempting Jesus, Jesus used the word of God to defeat him. Three times we see him use the truth in God's word to resist Satan. And we can too! The truth of God and the words of Jesus have the power to defeat all of Satan's lies. We can't defeat him by ourselves, but Satan doesn't stand a chance against God's truth. The Holy Spirit Reminds Us Of Jesus' Words And Life

Jesus is that belt of truth, but it is the Holy Spirit that brings Christ's truth to our memory in our everyday life. The Holy Spirit is the "Spirit of Truth" and he helps us understand Christ's true words and actions and directs us in what he would say and do in each situation (John 14:17; John 15:26; John 16:12-15; 1 John 4:4).

How Do We Put On The Truth As A Belt?

Pray and ask the Holy Spirit to teach us the truth.

Study the Bible daily and learn about Jesus' ways and words.

Don't rely on our own wisdom and the wisdom of the world.

Trust God and allow him to direct our steps with his truth.

—BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS— (Vs. 14) Ephesians 6:14 says: "Stand firm then..., with the breastplate of righteousness in place"

Soldiers are always careful to guard their chest and stomach area from enemy attacks because an injury there could be very serious. Today soldiers use special bulletproof vests, but long ago they used a breastplate of metal to shield themselves. In verse 14 God refers to the "breastplate of righteousness." But whose righteousness is he referring to? It is definitely not the type of righteousness we produce in our own strength (Titus 3:5). And since all the armor comes from God, we know that this is referring to Christ's righteousness (Romans 3:21-22). When Satan Accuses Us, Christ Is Our Righteousness

Before we believed, we had no righteousness of our own. We were guilty sinners. But when we believed in the death and resurrection of Jesus, we became united with Christ. And so, in God's eyes, Christ's righteousness has become ours too. Therefore Jesus is our breastplate of righteousness. So now when Satan accuses us and says we're unclean sinners, we can be at peace and remember that Christ is our righteousness! Christ is our breastplate that will deflect Satan's spears of accusation. Satan can't accuse Christ of being a sinner. Christ is perfectly holy and righteous. So we can rest assured that Christ's righteousness covers and protects us like the breastplate protects a soldier. We are hidden in Christ.

Colossians 3:3 says: "For you died and your life is now hidden with Christ in God." As we depend on Christ's power within us, his righteousness begins to show itself in our own daily lives. His righteous words come out of our mouths and his righteous actions become ours too. In this way, Christ hides us like a protective breastplate protecting our hearts against Satan's accusations.

Satan cannot rightly accuse Christ of any wrong, and since he is our righteousness, our hearts are safely protected. The Holy Spirit's Conviction Is Different Than Satan's Accusations

Sometimes we do sin and the Holy Spirit convicts us. We can't hide from him, so when that does happen, we just need to admit to God in our hearts that we have sinned (1 John 1:9). Then God will give us peace again, because Jesus has paid for that sin already on the cross. The Holy Spirit convicts us in order to help us so we will be in fellowship with God once again and be strengthened. But Satan is different. When he accuses us, he does it to put us down and discourage us and ruin our lives.

—THE GOSPEL OF PEACE LIKE A SOLDIER'S SHOES— (Vs. 15) Ephesians 6:15 says: "...and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace."

Sandals With Spikes A soldier's feet cannot hold a weapon like a sword or spear, but the feet were extremely important in a battle because they were the foundation of support for each soldier. Those feet needed special shoes. Soldiers' shoes were actually sandals with little spikes on the bottom to help them get traction on slippery ground and keep them from slipping. And so when the enemy attacked, they were on solid footing and could stand their ground and be ready to move with confidence and keep fighting.

Peace With God Is Sure Footing That Helps Us Stand Firm When Satan Attacks When Satan tries to accuse and frighten us, we have the gospel or good news of peace to comfort and protect us. Even though we are at war with Satan, the gospel of peace reminds us that we are at peace with God (Romans 5:1). Since we are at peace with God, we are on his side—the winning side! Yes, being at peace with God is very good news indeed, because it encourages our hearts so we can remain steady and stand firm in our faith, just like a soldier's shoes keep him steady on his feet. The gospel of peace helps us "stand firm" (Ephesians 6:13-14) and hold our ground when Satan attacks.

Jesus Brings Stability Like Soldiers' Shoes When They Fight

Jesus gave his life in order to bring us into a peaceful fellowship with God. So Jesus himself is the Gospel of Peace (Ephesians 2:14); he is the Good News that reminds us that we are no longer at war with God—we are at peace because we are his children now and nothing can change that solid footing. Therefore we can completely trust him when life is a slippery battlefield. He is like those surefooted shoes that give us stability when Satan attacks.

John 16:33 says: "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world." (John 14:27) Readiness Or Preparation Of The Gospel Of Peace

We have heard how a soldier's shoes provide traction for when he needs to hold his ground, but the shoes also allow the soldier to move forward and advance like an army advancing into enemy territory. Soldiers often walked long distances over rugged terrain into foreign lands in those shoes. Ephesians 6:15 mentions that our feet should be: "...fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace." The Gospel prepares us and makes us ready to move forward and advance into Satan's territory. As we realize how much God has done for us through the Gospel of Peace and we think about all those who do not yet know that peace, this challenges us to move

forward into the world. We advance into Satan's territory and share the Gospel of Peace with those who are still under Satan's control, so that they too may be freed from the slavery of sin (Romans 16:20).

Jesus Prepares And Motivates Us

We already know that Jesus himself is the Gospel of Peace. He is the good news that helps us stand steady when Satan attacks. But now we see that Jesus is also like the shoes that protect and prepare our feet as we advance into Satan's world. Jesus is the one who motivates and encourages us to walk into Satan's territory to help those who are still in need of that peace. And when our feet carry us to those who need the gospel, Jesus can bring peace to them also, because he himself is the source of peace for everyone (Ephesians 2:14)!

"How beautiful upon the mountains Are the feet of him who brings good news? Who proclaims peace..." (Isaiah 52:7 NKJV) —FAITH IS LIKE A SHIELD— (Vs. 16)

Ephesians 6:16 says: "In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one."

Soldiers Were Terrified Of Fiery Arrows

Enemy soldiers sometimes dipped their arrows in oil and lit them on fire before they would shoot. These flaming arrows struck fear into any soldier because they could be badly burned as the arrows rained down on them from afar.

Satan's Temptations Are Like Flaming Arrows, But Faith Can Repel Them In verse 16, Paul said that our faith is like a shield which a soldier holds up to repel the flaming arrows of the enemy. Satan and his demons "shoot" many temptations into our hearts and minds, like soldiers shooting flaming arrows. But we need to fend off these temptations or repel them by faith in the truth, rather than listening to Satan's lies. So let's consider what actually this shield of faith is.

Faith In Jesus And His Word Is Like Using Him As Our Shield When Tempted

Again we see that Jesus is like a part of our God-given armor. Remember how Jesus resisted Satan's temptations in the desert (Matthew 4)? Satan was not able to defeat him in any of his temptations. Jesus deflected every one of Satan's temptations like a shield deflects flaming arrows. Jesus used God's word to resist Satan and didn't give in to sin even once. Jesus has proved himself, therefore he can also help us when we're tempted. If our confidence is in ourselves to overcome Satan's temptations, then we will fail. Instead, we need to have our confidence and faith in the Lord Jesus and his word to guide and enable us to defeat Satan's temptations. The Lord Jesus is always faithful and worthy of our trust (Psalms 91:4-5).

Sometimes Satan will deceitfully accuse us and say that God doesn't love us or God has forgotten about us. If Satan ever tempts us to believe that kind of lie, then we need to read God's word and see all the things Jesus did for us, and all his promises. When we believe those things about Christ, then our faith in him is like using Jesus as our shield to deflect Satan's flaming arrows. And this will encourage our faith in Christ even more.

—THE HELMET OF SALVATION — (Vs. 17)

Head injuries are usually very serious to a soldier, so it is very important for them to wear a helmet during a battle because their enemies will try to injure their heads. In a similar way, in our spiritual warfare, Satan and his demons will try to attack our minds because this greatly affects our relationship with God and others. They want to put all sorts of lies into our heads to frighten and discourage us. They say things like, “You’re a sinner! God couldn’t love you and so you are not his child. You are not saved; You will never go to heaven!” When they attack our thoughts and plant doubts in our mind, we need to remember what God’s word says.

Ephesians 6:17 says: “Take the helmet of salvation...”

Jesus’ Work Of Salvation Is Like Our Helmet When We Doubt

Satan will always try to cause us to doubt our salvation, but when we think of Jesus hanging on the cross for you and me, then we are reminded that God does indeed love us very much. He was even willing to give his own son to redeem us with his own blood. That payment for our sin has been completed and God has promised to take us to live with him forever in heaven (John 3:16; John 11:25-26; John 14:1-3 : Romans 8:11). Those of us who have trusted Christ are truly saved! What a wonderful promise! Christ’s promise of salvation is like a helmet to protect our minds from doubt when Satan causes us to doubt our salvation or when he tells us we are unloved or unaccepted. So Jesus himself is like that helmet to protect and guard our thoughts when Satan tries to fill our minds with lies.

Jesus Has Also Saved Us From The Power Of Sin Not only does Jesus save us from the eternal penalty of sin, but he saves us from everyday sinful habits also. Satan does not want us to know that, so he attacks our minds. It might sound like this: “You may be a Christian but you will never conquer your sinful habits or day-to-day sins.” If Satan’s lies attack our minds like that, then we need to remember Jesus on the cross again. Jesus not only saved us from the payment for our sin, but also from the power of sin (Romans 6). So now we can trust Jesus daily to give us the power to resist and overcome temptations and change our sinful habits as we grow in maturity with him. So again we see that Jesus is like our helmet of salvation—to save or protect our minds from Satan’s lies. Jesus alone can overcome sin in our lives and he will too, as we continue to trust him.

—THE SWORD OF THE SPIRIT— (Vs. 17)

After soldiers have put on all their armor, then they need a weapon. Nowadays soldiers use guns, but before guns were invented, a sword was the soldier’s main weapon to fight the enemy. It was made of strong metal and was sharpened on both edges. Soldiers carried these swords at all times, and even slept with them, so they were always ready to fight at a moment’s notice. But a metal sword could never be used to fight Satan and his army of demons. We need a spiritual sword.

Ephesians 6:17 says: “Take the... sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.” The Sword Of The Holy Spirit: The Most Powerful Weapon We Have Against Satan The word of God is the sword the Holy Spirit uses as his main weapon of choice against Satan. So it should be our weapon of choice also. Satan isn’t afraid of people, but he is afraid of the Holy Spirit and God’s word. So if we know God’s word well and use it correctly to resist Satan, he will flee. The word of God is the most important weapon the Spirit can use to fight against Satan and his demons. Can you imagine a soldier who didn’t have a sword or didn’t know how to use it? That’s what it is like if

we don't know how to use God's word correctly.

We Need To Use The Sword Of The Spirit Like Jesus Did

Think back to the time when Satan tempted Jesus in the desert (Matthew 4) and how Jesus dealt with Satan. Three times Satan tempted him and three times Jesus used the same weapon to fight back. He didn't use a sword made of metal, but rather the Sword of the Spirit—God's word. Three times Jesus quoted God's word, and Satan couldn't argue or resist the power of God's word. He had to admit defeat and leave. In the same way, if we ourselves are tempted, we too need to use God's word as a weapon. Our own thoughts, ideas, or words cannot resist or defeat Satan. We need to study the word of God and learn it well—even memorize it—so we can remember it in time of need. The best way to resist Satan when he tests us is to pray and ask God: "What does your word say about this?" He will remind us what it says and then we can believe and follow it. Then Satan will have to flee (James 4:7). He can't fight against the Sword of the Spirit.

Jesus Is God's Word. He Is The Sword Of The Holy Spirit Inside Of Us

We can read God's word in the Bible but if we want to see God's word in real life and know what God is like, we can look at Jesus' life. Jesus is called the "Word of God" (John 1:1; John 1:14), because he is God's spokesman and representative on earth. Colossians 1:15 says that: "The Son is the image of the invisible God..." By studying Jesus, we see a visible human form of what our invisible God looks like, and how we are to speak and act. So as we study the life of Jesus and put his words into practice, then our lives look more and more like Christ's, and Satan's work is defeated. Jesus is the Word—the Sword of the Spirit that overcomes Satan work. When we walk in the strength of the Holy Spirit, Jesus works within us to defeat Satan's work.

We'll talk more about the Sword of the Spirit later.

—STAY ALERT AND PERSISTENT IN PRAYER— (Vs. 18)

We've studied all the armor, but there's one more very important thing listed in verse 18 that a soldier must always remember. If a soldier puts on all of his armor, but then lies down and watches the clouds float by or falls asleep, will all this nice armor help him? Not really. Armor doesn't help a sleeping soldier much. His enemy could sneak up and easily defeat him while he's napping. It's much the same in our spiritual battle.

Ephesians 6:18 says: "Pray in the Spirit at all times...Stay alert and be persistent in your prayers..." (NLT) The Greek word in this verse means to stay awake, watchful, and ready at all times. Soldiers who are in the middle of a battle must always be alert for enemies attacking from the side or from behind them, and especially in the dark. At night, soldiers post guards who need to stay awake, and always remain alert for enemies. Paul was using these types of words as a good picture of our own spiritual battle. We may not be able to see our spiritual enemies, but we can be constantly alert through prayer—prayer in the Spirit. When we constantly pray for the Lord's help and direction, the Holy Spirit makes us alert to the enemy's efforts to defeat us. It is a spiritual awareness that comes from talking to and listening to the voice of the Spirit within us. This topic of prayer is such an important part of our spiritual warfare against Satan that we will take a more detailed look at this in the next chapter.

Concluding Thoughts About The Armor

Now we've looked at all the armor. A soldier's armor protects his body, but God's armor protects our spiritual well-being. The breastplate protects our heart. The helmet protects our thoughts and the shoes give us stability, traction, and surefootedness as we stand against Satan's work and advance into his territory. The Sword of the Spirit, the Word of God, provides a powerful weapon that Satan cannot resist.

God himself has provided everything we need for our spiritual battle and we need to be very thankful to him for all these things—especially the Lord Jesus, since he himself is our armor in every way.

2 Thessalonians 3:3 says: "But the Lord is faithful, and he will strengthen you and protect you from the evil one."

18. Fighting With Your Eyes Shut

Chapter 18 Fighting With Your Eyes Shut

Peter said to (Jesus), "If they all fall away because of you, I will never fall away!" Jesus said to him, "I tell you the truth, on this night, before the rooster crows, you will deny me three times." Peter said to him, "Even if I must die with you, I will never deny you." And all the disciples said the same thing." (Matthew 26:33-35) (NET) What Led Up To Peter's Failure

We know that Peter loved Jesus and had good intentions when he said these words. He really did want to follow Jesus wholly, but we also know that he did fail to keep his word that night. Three times he declared that he didn't know Jesus. So let's look into what led up to Peter's denial and what happened that night when Jesus led Peter and the other disciples into the garden called Gethsemane:

Luke 22:40-44 says: "...he said to them, "Pray that you will not fall into temptation." He went away from them about a stone's throw, knelt down, and prayed, "Father, if you are willing, take this cup away from me. Yet not my will but yours be done."... Then an angel from heaven appeared to him and strengthened him. And in his anguish he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground." (NET)

Mark 14:37-42 : "Then He came and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, "Simon, are you sleeping? Could you not watch one hour? Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." Again He went away and prayed, and spoke the same words. And when He returned, He found them asleep again, for their eyes were heavy; and they did not know what to answer Him. Then He came the third time and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and resting? It is enough! The hour has come; behold, the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise, let us be going. See, My betrayer is at hand." (NKJV)

Jesus had told his disciples repeatedly to watch and pray so they would not fall into temptation. But they still fell asleep. And then when the trials came, they all ran away. Only Jesus stayed alert and prayed diligently and was strengthened through prayer for what was coming. Jesus shows us a good example of how to prepare for spiritual battle. He fought with his eyes closed—in prayer!

Jesus Prepared For Spiritual Battle By Praying, But The Disciples Weren't Ready

Jesus knew well how to fight against evil and Satan. He knew that very difficult times were coming, so he prayed fervently to prepare himself for battle. This kind of fight isn't fought with spears or swords. When Jesus finished praying, the soldiers came to arrest Jesus. Peter tried to fight them with his sword, but Jesus rebuked him (Luke 22:50-51). Fighting a spiritual battle is a different kind of battle. This battle takes place in the hearts and minds of men. Jesus was ready for the tests and trials that were to come because he had prayed and received strength from God. But the disciples weren't ready because they hadn't prayed like Jesus told them to.

Stay Alert And Always Keep On Praying

Jesus had told his disciples to watch and pray. Paul said the same type of thing in Ephesians 6:18 where he talked about spiritual armor and spiritual battle. He says: "...pray in the Spirit on all occasions...be alert and always keep on praying..." These words about prayer remind us of the way soldiers kept watch for enemies. They knew their enemies are coming so they had to stay alert and watch! Even at night they kept their armor on with their sword by their side, and some soldiers were always on watch. They knew their enemies' ways and they prepared their hearts and minds so when the fight began, they were ready. And the same goes for us—when we stay spiritually alert and pray continually for every situation that comes along, God helps and strengthens our spirits, hearts, and minds. And even if we suffer physically too, he can also strengthen our bodies like he helped Jesus while he struggled in prayer.

Satan is not visible like a human soldier that can be seen. He is a very deceptive spirit that disguises himself and works in secret. He uses many things in the world to tempt us and test our faith. So we need to prepare and strengthen ourselves spiritually through prayer. Prayer exercises our spirit so that we become much more alert and aware of the spiritual battle going on around us. Prayer is like spiritual training, similar to soldiers who do training exercises to toughen themselves against the enemy's secret attacks...

"...in order that Satan might not outwit us. For we are not unaware of his schemes." (2 Corinthians 2:11) Prepared And Alert For A Real Battle With A Real Enemy

Think about this verse. Have we ever been fooled by Satan's tricks? Do we really understand his secret ways and schemes? Are we spiritually ready to resist all his temptations? God has many ways to help prepare and alert us to these enemies and be prepared for the trials and temptations that will come. But the most important thing that prepares us is God's Word. If we read God's word and know it well, then when we do pray, God can remind us again of his Word, and we will be alert and prepared for the temptations and trials that come. This will strengthen us in our fight in the spiritual realm. If we want to be able to recognize Satan's attacks and be ready, then we need to pray and watch.

1 Peter 5:8 says: "Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour." This verse is a sober warning. Satan is not a just some mythical cartoon character to laugh at. This spiritual battle is a very real battle, and Satan is a very real and powerful enemy and he is trying to destroy us. Like a lion stalking his prey, he is dangerous. We don't need to be terrified of him, but we need to take him seriously. We need to know God's word and be serious about our prayer time so that we remain alert and not fall prey to Satan's attacks.

Daniel's Spiritual Battle In Prayer In chapter 5 of this book we read the story about the angel that visited Daniel while he was praying (Daniel 10). We're not going to read the whole story again, but think about Daniel's prayer. He was praying for Israel but God didn't send an answer quickly. So Daniel kept praying constantly for three weeks and only ate simple food so he could focus his time on prayer. After three weeks, the angel Gabriel finally arrived to give Daniel the message. Gabriel told Daniel that God had heard his prayer the first day he prayed, but Gabriel wasn't able to come for 21 days because he was fighting with an evil angel called the Prince of Persia. Then God sent the angel Michael to take Gabriel's place in fighting with the demon, so Gabriel could come and give the message.

Why Did God Wait Three Weeks To Answer Daniel's Prayer?

Three weeks of constant prayer is a long time to wait for an answer. If Gabriel was so busy fighting the evil spirit, why couldn't God have sent Michael instead to deliver the message to Daniel? God has many other angels he could have sent to answer Daniel's prayer, but he didn't. God waited for exactly 21 days (3 weeks) and then he allowed Gabriel himself to go to Daniel (Daniel 10:13). This can help us understand what God was trying to show Daniel. While Daniel was praying so fervently, after a while he might have wondered if God even heard his prayer. But when Gabriel told Daniel that God had heard his prayers since the first day, Daniel knew that God had not been ignoring him. He had heard all of Daniel's prayers and he was already working on behalf of Daniel and Israel. And by listing the exact number of days, it looks like God was showing him that his persistent prayers were actually part of this spiritual battle. His prayers made a difference as the angels fought against Satan's demon for those 21 days. Even so, our prayers can be very effective against Satan's forces because we're talking with God who has all power and strength. God wanted to remind Daniel and also us that through prayer we too are part of this spiritual battle with Satan and his evil army of demons:

"...our struggles...against the rulers, ...authorities, ...powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms." (Ephesians 6:12) God Loves For Us To Ask

We know from Daniel's story and others that humans are not as powerful as angels or demons, and we certainly can't fight demons in the same way the angel Gabriel did. But we do have a connection with an even greater power. We have prayer—and prayer connects us with God Almighty, and we can ask him to work on our behalf. In fact, God loves to hear us pray! Look at some of Jesus' own words about prayer:

"Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened for you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened." (Matthew 7:7-8) (NET)

Jesus really does want us to pray. He invites us to pray and ask for help in everything because we are engaging in this spiritual warfare along with God, just like Daniel did. In fact, we are his representatives on this earth and so we should ask, "in his name."

We Ask In Jesus' Name—As His Representatives In John 14:13 Jesus also said: "... I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it." (also John 16:24).

What does it mean to ask in Jesus' name? Some people think that using Jesus' name is like a special magical formula to perform all sorts of miracles and amazing things. Some even try to curse people in Jesus' name or call down judgment from heaven on others who reject God. The apostles James and John thought they should do that, but Jesus rebuked them (Luke 9:54-56). As we discussed in chapter 11, praying 'in his name' is not a special incantation or magic formula. It means we are acting as his representative—as if Jesus were right here with us in person. And so we are acting, speaking, or praying in a way that would honor Jesus and that he would approve of.

Praying With Authority

If we are being led by the Spirit of God to pray in a certain way, then we can know that we are praying in his name which has his authority. The authority DOES NOT come from ourselves, but only from Christ, because we are “IN HIM.”

Colossians 2:9-10 says: “For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form, and in Him you have been made complete, and He is the head over all rule and authority;” (NASB) So if we are praying the way the Spirit of Christ would pray, then our requests have the authority of Christ behind them. When we pray in his name we are already doing battle with Satan and his demons, because the authority we are using is greater than Satan and his demons, and so, just like Daniel, our prayers have power.

It's important to know what that means and what it doesn't mean. Some people think that we can use Jesus' authority and just boss Satan, demons or angels around as if we were God. Remember that Jesus himself was very restrained in how he used authority while on earth, and he submitted himself to the Father's authority, even though they were equals. And we must never forget that our authority is “borrowed” and it is not our own. So we must not become proud, thinking that we've received authority by our own goodness or strength. We must also remember that Jesus never abused authority. He always used his power to help others and glorify the Father. We too must humble ourselves as Christ did, and all our work must honor God, not ourselves.

John 14:13-14 says: “And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son.”

Praying In The Spirit Ephesians 6:18 says: “...pray in the Spirit...”

Praying “in the Spirit” is not some kind of trance or dreamy kind of feeling that we get when we pray. It means that we pray under the guidance and direction of the Spirit of God. We often don't know how to pray for certain things, but if we pray in the Spirit, we can be sure that we are praying “in his name” because the Spirit of God will be directing us to pray for those things that Jesus would want and that would honor God. And even if we don't know what to say or ask, we know that the Spirit knows all of our deepest thoughts and needs, and he also knows the mind of God. So it is always good to start our prayers by asking the Spirit to help guide our thoughts and words.

Romans 8:26-27 says: “...the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God.”

Some people are new believers and are still learning how to pray, and other people have been praying for many years, but sometimes we just don't know how or what to pray for. Are those kinds of prayers still effective? Yes. The verse we just read says that the Spirit helps us in our weakness and prays for us when we don't know what to say. We don't have to worry about making beautiful-sounding prayers or saying special words to make them more effective prayers. God doesn't care about that. This verse says that God understands our inner thoughts and even the groaning of our hearts when we don't know what to say. He has given us the Holy Spirit as a Helper who can pray on our behalf, and God will hear us.

James 1:5 also says: "If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you."

Pray Continually Colossians 4:2 says: "Devote yourselves to prayer..."

1 Thessalonians 5:17 says: "pray continually..."

What does it mean to "devote" ourselves to prayer, or "pray continually"? Does it mean we quit working and stop eating and just pray all the time? That might be necessary for a very short period of time, but normally that would not be possible. The verse in Ephesians 6 that we looked at earlier explains it in a different way.

Ephesians 6:18 says: "...pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests."

We are told to pray in the Spirit "on all occasions." That means that everything that comes up is an opportunity to pray. We could call it an attitude of prayer—always being aware that we need God for direction and help for everything that comes up in life. So in every situation we ask for God's guidance rather than doing things in our own strength and wisdom. Praying continually means that we don't think of prayer as something we only do at church or before mealtimes. Rather, we think of prayer as a constant conversation that we have with God throughout the day—even in the little decisions in life. God never gets tired of hearing our prayers. He loves for us to talk to him. When we get up in the morning or when we walk along the road or when we are busy at work or just sitting in the house—God loves to hear us talk to him about everything and ask for his guidance, whether it's a big or small thing. And his Spirit that lives in us loves to talk to us also. So we should never get tired of praying! Prayer is a lifelong conversation with a loving God.

Prayer Is An Act Of Continual Dependence

Prayer is an act of dependence on God. So when answers to prayers do not come quickly, we have to persevere in prayer—because God wants us to continue to depend on him. Many things require that we "pray continually." For example, our spiritual battle with Satan and his kingdom does not end quickly. It will last a lifetime. But we need to persevere and pray for daily strength in the battle even though we know the ultimate victory belongs to God. Here's a story that gives us a visual example of that kind of prayer. [The Story Of Moses And The Battle With The Amalekites](#)

Exodus 17:8-13 says: "While the people of Israel were still at Rephidim, the warriors of Amalek attacked them. Moses commanded Joshua, "Choose some men to go out and fight the army of Amalek for us. Tomorrow, I will stand at the top of the hill, holding the staff of God in my hand." So Joshua did what Moses had commanded and fought the army of Amalek. ...As long as Moses held up the staff in his hand, the Israelites had the advantage. But whenever he dropped his hand, the Amalekites gained the advantage. Moses' arms soon became so tired he could no longer hold them up. So Aaron and Hur found a stone for him to sit on. Then they stood on each side of Moses, holding up his hands. So his hands held steady until sunset. As a result, Joshua overwhelmed the army of Amalek in battle." (NLT) Did Moses' staff have special magical power that made Israel win the battle? No. It was just a walking stick made of wood. But it was a symbol of God's power and authority which he gave to Moses as his representative in order to lead the Israelites (Exodus 4:1-5). So when Moses lifted up his staff towards God in heaven, he was showing the people that he was trusting in God as he was praying for the soldiers, so that God

would help them win. But after a while, Moses got tired and couldn't hold up the staff anymore, so the Israelites started to lose. Then two men came and helped Moses hold up his hands and the staff, and then Israel won the battle. This showed Israel that God was the one who helped them win through Moses' continual prayers for them.

Supporting One Another In Prayer This story about Moses is also a good illustration about supporting one another in prayer. It's always good to pray for others in their time of need, like Moses did for the soldiers. But sometimes we find ourselves weak or struggling with our own problems, so we struggle to even pray—just like Moses got tired of holding up the staff. At times like these, Satan can find an open door to defeat us, so we need other people to help us in prayer, just like those two men that helped Moses. God loves it when we meet together as a group and pray for one another. This can really strengthen us all and help God's work to progress.

Prayer Is More About Listening Than Talking

“Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says...”(Revelation 2:7; Revelation 2:11; Revelation 2:17; Revelation 2:29; Revelation 3:6; Revelation 3:13; Revelation 3:22; Also Matthew 11:15; Matthew 13:9; Matthew 13:43; Mark 4:9; Mark 4:23; Luke 8:8; Luke 14:35) As you can see by the long list of verses here, the Bible really emphasizes LISTENING to what the Spirit of God is saying to us. So prayer is not just talking to God and giving him our long lists of requests. We know that God does want us to talk to him about our requests—but it is even more important that we learn to listen to what God is saying to us. Prayer is supposed to be a two-way conversation, and in fact, since God has all the wisdom and authority, we should probably spend more time listening than talking! We could learn so much more by listening to his Spirit within us as we meditate on what he is trying to teach us. His Spirit is called the Helper and Comforter—and which one of us doesn't need help and comfort?! But we are often so busy talking or trying to figure out our own problems, that we are NOT LISTENING to the “still small voice” within us. But sometimes, even though we are asking and listening, we are not getting answers, because there are things that can hinder our prayers to God.

Things That Can Hinder Our Prayers Sin Hinders Our Prayers Is. 59:1-2 says: “... your sins have hidden his face from you,so that he will not hear.” This verse is talking about sin breaking fellowship with God so that he does not want to listen. And so if we sin by purposely rebelling against God's word, then it can hinder our prayers from being heard. Here are some other verses that talk about hindrances to prayer:

Covetousness And Wrong Motives

James 4:2-3 says: “...You desire but do not have... Youcovetbut you cannot get what you want, so you quarrel and fight.You do not have because you do not ask God. When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives,that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.”

We know that God wants us to pray for our needs. But when our needs are met and we begin to covet what other people have, our motives have changed to greed and selfishness (1 Timothy 6:8-10). So even if we do pray, then we are no longer praying with the right motives. Greed, selfishness and covetousness hinder our prayers.

Poor Relationships Can Hinder Our Prayers

1 Peter 3:7 says: “Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers.”

God teaches us that husbands need to love their wives and be gentle with them. And wives also need to treat their husbands with respect (Ephesians 5:33). If we don't love and respect our spouses, those poor relationships can hinder our prayers.

Pride Can Hinder Our Prayers

Satan's first sin was pride. And as believers we often follow Satan and we try to glorify ourselves. At times we all like to be noticed by others or seen as important, whether we are in a leadership position or not. But God is opposed to pride, so this can also hinder our prayers.

1 Peter 5:1; 1 Peter 5:3; 1 Peter 5:5 says: “To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder ... Be Shepherds...not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock...In the same way, you who are younger, submit yourselves to your elders. All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, “God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble.”

Sin Hinders Our Prayer And Fellowship But Doesn't Remove Us From God's Family As Christians we've seen several things that hinder our prayers, but does that mean we are then separated or removed from God's family? No! Sin can break our fellowship with God and hinder our prayers, but if we are truly God's children then we are always joined together with Christ. The Bible says over and over that we are “in Christ” or “in him,” which means that we are completely joined or connected to him by new birth—spiritual birth— so we are in his family now. God would never kick out his own Son Jesus, so neither will he remove us out of his family (John 10:27-29; Ephesians 1:13-14). Christ died for our sin and has paid the full price for it and now we who believe in Christ are righteous in God's eyes. And so now, even though our sin can hinder our prayers and fellowship with God, it will not remove us from God himself.

Illustration Of Broken Fellowship In A Family

Here's an illustration: Sometimes parents will be upset with their children. For instance, if the children are disobedient to their father, and then they come and ask their father for a treat or something, he won't be happy about giving it to them. There will probably be a lack of harmony or fellowship between them, and the father may deny them what they like, or even discipline them. But the father won't kick the disobedient children out of the family—they are still his children. In a similar way, God is our Father and when we, his children, disobey him, then our fellowship is broken. We are still his children and he may discipline us, but our prayers will be hindered until we get things right between us.

Satan knows that our prayers are powerful when we are in fellowship with God (James 5:16), so Satan will do everything he can to try to keep us from being in fellowship with God. It is always important to keep in close fellowship with God all the time.

Confessing To Restore Fellowship

We know that if children lie and don't admit to their disobedience, it does not help their relationship with their parents. Even so, our fellowship with God is hindered if we don't confess or admit our sin.

1 John 1:6; 1 John 1:8 says: "If we claim to have fellowship with him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live out the truth. ... If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us." The best way for children to restore fellowship with their parents is confession of their disobedience. And so it is with God. We his children need to confess our sin to renew our fellowship with God and then he will be willing to listen to our prayers again. The very next verse finishes that idea:

1 John 1:9 says: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness." The word 'confess' here in this verse means to say the same thing as someone else—in other words, to admit and agree with what God says. Since God already knows about the sin, confession is basically recognizing and admitting and agreeing with him that something is a sin. When we confess our sin to God, the Bible says we become purified or clean. This means that we are cleansed from the sin that hindered our fellowship and we are again in fellowship with God. But what should we do if we sin against another person?

James 5:16 says: "...confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective." So if we get angry and yell at someone or commit some other sin towards them, we need to go and confess to them and tell them we're sorry and make restitution if possible. Then God will be pleased and will listen to our prayers again. When we confess our sin and walk in fellowship with God, we can humbly ask in Jesus name, and our prayers become powerful weapons in our spiritual warfare against Satan.

Conclusion

We can summarize what we learned in this chapter by putting together our verses about prayer. They can teach us about the powerful weapon of prayer against our enemy Satan:

"Be alert...Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour." (1 Peter 5:8) "Pray that you will not fall into temptation." (Luke 22:40)

"... the arm of the Lord is not too short to save, nor his ear too dull to hear. But... your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear." (Is. 59:1-2)

"...You desire but do not have...You covet but you cannot get what you want ...you quarrel and fight. You do not have because you do not ask God. When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures." (James 4:1-3)

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:9)

"... confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective." (James 5:16)

"...All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, "God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble."... (1 Peter 5:5)

“...the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans.” (Romans 8:26) “And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son.” (John 14:13) “Ask and it will be given to you...” (Matthew 7:7) “...pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests.” (Ephesians 6:18)

These verses are great reminders of the wonderful power of prayer. Just remember—Satan is a powerful being, so he’s not really afraid of us humans. BUT, he is afraid of the God who lives inside us! So if you want to make Satan shake with fear, then get on your knees and start talking to God! Close your eyes and fight!

“Pray continually.” (1 Thessalonians 5:17)

19. Sword Of The Spirit Or Sword Of Satan?

Chapter 19 Sword Of The Spirit Or Sword Of Satan?

Satan Wants To Replace The Sword Of The Holy Spirit In the chapter about the armor of God we introduced The Sword of The Spirit which is the Word of God (Ephesians 6:17). As believers of Christ, we know that the Holy Spirit already lives inside us, so the Spirit will always use God's word in our minds to fight against any of Satan's lies that are hidden there.

Hebrews 4:12 says: "For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart."

Satan knows that word of God is the Sword of the Spirit and it is the Holy Spirit's most powerful weapon to fight against Satan's lies. So Satan will do everything he can to take away that "sword." Without the Sword of the Spirit we are like a soldier without a weapon to fight with. Or if Satan can't take it away from us, then he will try to weaken God's word in our lives. He doesn't want us to know God's word well and he is always trying to replace the word of God with something that is fake—just like he did with Eve in the garden of Eden. Another example of replacing the Sword of the Spirit with something that is fake, would be like an enemy that sneaks into the armory storage at night and replaces all the soldiers' swords with toy swords or sticks. Then later when the soldiers wake up and go out to fight the enemy, they won't have a strong weapon to fight with. They will be useless fakes.

Satan loves to twist God's word or replace it with false doctrines so we won't have the ability to fight spiritual battles. The Bible calls these "doctrines of demons" (1 Timothy 4:1 NASB). Let's look at some ways that Satan is trying to replace the Sword of the Spirit in the church.

What About Prophecies, Visions And Dreams?

Many Christians and even pastors these days spend time in church talking about visions and dreams and try to interpret those dreams for others. Some have even written books about their dreams and make a lot of money selling them because people love to read these kinds of stories. Some people are also claiming to be prophets and making all kinds of new prophecies about the future—new things that are not found in the Bible. But are they true prophets and are their prophecies all true? Is it proper to share these dreams and prophecies in church? How can we discern what is true? Well, one thing we do know for sure is that God alone is the one who can help us discern what is truth, because he is the author of truth and never lies or deceives us. And that is why he has given us his word, the Bible, so we can discern what people say. It can help us separate (or divide) the truth from the lies. We know that Satan is always trying to fill the church with new lies and confuse us, so God has given us his word, the Sword of the Spirit, to battle against any lies that might come up in the church.

God Gave Many Prophecies And Dreams To Prophets In The Old Testament

We know that in the past God did use visions and dreams to communicate with men like Jacob and Joseph and Daniel and other prophets. God also gave special prophecies to leaders like Moses and Joshua, and to kings like David, in order to lead and guide his people Israel. That's how God worked in the Old Testament. But in the New Testament, after Jesus came, things began to change. A Big Change Began To Happen With Jesus (The 'Word')

Hebrews 1:1-3 says: "In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son...The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word."

These verses tell us that God had used many different ways to communicate with man through prophets in the past. And many of those dreams, visions, and prophecies were filled with symbols and mysteries, and the meaning wasn't always very clear to understand. Even the prophets didn't understand everything that God was saying. God seemed distant and somewhat mysterious. But then Jesus came as a man—and he was the "the exact representation" of God. He was God in the flesh so that mankind could see and hear exactly what our invisible God sounded and acted like in person. In fact, Christ is called "the Word." (In Greek it can also mean "The Expression" or "The Message.")

John 1:1; John 1:14 says: "In the beginning was the Word, ...the Word was God...The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us...the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth."

Jesus was always part of the Trinity—he was there in the beginning with the Father and the Holy Spirit. He was God's "Word" —the Communicator. He was the Voice or Mouthpiece of God that spoke, and the world came into being. This same Voice of God also "became flesh!" That's a bit like saying all the visions and dreams and prophecies of the Bible became a human being. God's Spokesman was expressing himself in a way that we could see and hear him directly, and he would no longer be so distant and mysterious to us. God was with us, in person and up close, and we could hear God's thoughts directly. This Spokesman, Jesus, was far greater than all the dreams and visions and prophecies of these other prophets like Abraham, Moses, David, and Elijah, because he spoke directly from God, because he is God. The Apostles Wrote The Final Prophecies Of The Bible

After Jesus died and was resurrected, then he sent his own Spirit, the Holy Spirit, to start the church. He also chose the apostles to be his spokesmen. The Holy Spirit guided these apostles to finish writing all of Jesus' words and deeds in what we call the New Testament. The apostle Paul had said that prophecies would come to an end (1 Corinthians 13:8), and apparently that is what happened after the apostles all died. The apostle John was the last apostle alive and the Lord Jesus gave him the prophecies of the last book of the Bible, called Revelation. Those prophecies are the revelation of God's plan for the end times all the way to eternity. It was the last book of prophecies to be written. It has been almost 2,000 years since the New Testament was finished and God has not given any new prophetic books in that time. God had said that prophecies would stop, so most scholars believe that he has finished all the things he wanted to put in the Bible. So we shouldn't be looking for more prophecies.

Satan Also Has Prophets, And Some Are In The Churches

2 Peter 2:1 says: "But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies..." (NKJV) The apostles gave us the final prophecies of the Bible (1 Corinthians 13:8-10) and God has forbidden us to add more to his words (Deuteronomy 4:2; Deuteronomy 12:32; Revelation 22:18-19). But we know that Satan always likes to add to God's word or exchange God's word for his own. Satan also has his own prophets. We see many examples of that in the Old Testament.

Proverbs 30:6 says: "Do not add to his words, or he will rebuke you and prove you a liar."

Jesus also said there would be many false prophets in the last days (Matthew 24:11) who will follow Satan's lies and wishes. Some of those false prophets will be in churches and even call on God's name (2 Corinthians 11:13). They are very influential people and leaders so they lead many good people astray. Look in Jeremiah:

Jeremiah 14:14-15 says: "Then the Lord said to me, 'The prophets are prophesying lies in my name. I have not sent them or appointed them or spoken to them. They are prophesying to you false visions...and the delusions of their own minds. Therefore this is what the Lord says about the prophets who are prophesying in my name: I did not send them...Those same prophets will perish...'"

These Prophets Mistakenly Think They're Prophesying God's Truth

Satan had deceived those false prophets, making them think they were actually God's true prophets. They told people about their dreams and visions that Satan has planted in their minds, or things they thought up themselves. Many people believed them, thinking they were hearing true words from God himself. But Satan had blinded their eyes, so that the false prophets drew many people away from God. God will judge false prophets for their deceitful lies.

God Rebuked Some Of The Religious Leaders For Their Visions And Dreams

Jeremiah 23:11; Jeremiah 23:16; Jeremiah 23:18; Jeremiah 23:21 says: "Both prophet and priest are godless; even in my temple I find their wickedness," declares the Lord. This is what the Lord Almighty says: "Do not listen to what the prophets are prophesying to you; they fill you with false hopes. They speak visions from their own minds, not from the mouth of the Lord. But which of them has stood in the council of the Lord to see or to hear his word? Who has listened and heard his word? I did not send these prophets, yet they have run with their message; I did not speak to them, yet they have prophesied."

Three Word Pictures Referring To God's Word

Jeremiah 23:28-32 says: "Let these false prophets tell their dreams, but let My true messengers faithfully proclaim My every word. There is a difference between straw and grain! Does not My word burn like fire?" says the LORD. "Is it not like a mighty hammer that smashes a rock to pieces?" "Therefore," says the LORD, "I am against these prophets who steal messages from each other and claim they are from Me. I am against these smooth-tongued prophets who say, 'This prophecy is from the LORD!' I am against these false prophets. Their imaginary dreams are flagrant lies that lead My people into sin. I did not send or appoint them, and they have no

message at all for My people. I, the LORD have spoken!" (NLT) God's Word Has True Power Let's think about the meaning of the word pictures in these verses:

God's word is like grain. It is good for feeding and strengthening our bodies.

(But Satan's word is like the straw—throw it away).

God's word is like a fire that burns rubbish. It has the power to judge bad thoughts.

God's word is like a hammer that breaks stone. It can judge or convict men with hard hearts.

These three word pictures all show us that God's word has real power: to heal and strengthen, to judge evil thoughts, and to break through and convict hard hearts. But the false prophet's words are like rubbish. They are useless.

God Speaks Against People Who Lead People Astray With Their False Dreams

Jeremiah 23:31-32 says: "Yes," declares the LORD, "I am against the prophets who wag their own tongues and yet declare, 'The LORD declares.' Indeed, I am against those who prophesy false dreams," declares the LORD. "They tell them and lead my people astray with their reckless lies, yet I did not send or appoint them. They do not benefit these people in the least," declares the LORD." (cf. Jeremiah 27:9; Jeremiah 29:8) God Told Israel How To Judge False Prophets

Deuteronomy 18:20 says: "But if any prophet presumes to speak anything in my name that I have not authorized him to speak...that prophet must die."

Verses 21-22 go on to say that the Israelites could test the prophets by seeing if their words came true or not. If not, then they were false prophets and they should die. Wow! Why would God give such a harsh judgment to those men who prophesied falsely? God wanted to give a strong warning to the prophets and to Israel, saying that it was a very serious offense to pretend to be a prophet or to prophesy falsely! God didn't want Israel to be playing around with fake prophets. He knew that if someone gave false prophecies, it would confuse people and lead them astray. We are not Israelites so we are not commanded to put false prophets to death, but this law still helps us realize how much God hates false prophecies in his name. God detests them and does not want us to follow false prophecies or the people who pretend to be prophets now.

Even If Some Of Their Prophecies Come True, We Are Not To Follow False Prophets In Deuteronomy 13:1-3 God says that even if the false prophets do miracles and even if some of their prophecies come true, Israel should not follow them. We know that Satan can do some miracles and he is very clever at making people turn away from God's truth. Because of this we need to study God's word so we know it well enough so we can use it as a sword of the Spirit to fight against Satan's lies.

Satan Also Knows How To Use God's Word

You will probably remember that long ago, when Satan was in the Garden of Eden, he used God's own words as he was deceiving Eve. And later when he tempted Jesus, he used God's word again. Satan loves to use God's word and mix it with some of his lies so people will think it is all truth. But what about now? Does he still do that in modern churches? Absolutely! He does it all the time! Many churches and false religions have been started because of using God's word mixed

with false visions and dreams. Here is an example: An Example Of A False Prophet's Dreams Today

Mary Baxter, an American woman, has written a lot of her dreams and visions in books that she sells around the world. She has taken verses from the Bible and mixed them with false teaching of her own, so many Christians think that it is all true. Many people have been deceived by the false teaching that she has written. She is like the false prophets we just read about in Jeremiah 23:31-32 who used dreams to entice people to listen to their false doctrines about God. Mary Baxter claims that Jesus himself gave her those dreams so people should listen to her or else they will go to the lake of fire. In her first book, she talks a lot about her dreams and visions about hell. Hell is indeed a real place talked about in the Bible. But if we compare her dreams with the Bible we'll see that her dreams aren't really from God. They are full of lies from Satan. Satan is very smart and can easily confuse people if they don't know the Bible well. Some people who really do study God's word have seen the deceit and shown others from the Bible where she is wrong. But instead of admitting that she has written things that go against the Bible, Mary Baxter just quietly changed some things she wrote in her books in order to hide the falsehoods better. In the second edition of her original book, she even made changes to some of the things she claimed that Jesus said. If she really was a true prophet of God, she would never want to change God's word or anything that Jesus supposedly said. But this shows us that she is a false prophet. False prophets are always changing and twisting God's words, just like Satan does. So Mary's books are not recommended for reading because they have confused so many people. Here is a sample of a few of the lies she has written in her books:

In her dream she says she saw Satan and the demons ruling over hell even now. She said they were dragging people into hell and then celebrating and laughing as they caused pain to those people there. But the Bible doesn't say that at all. In fact, the Bible says that Satan isn't in hell yet. Now he is roaming the earth (Job 1:7; Job 2:2; 1 Peter 5:8) and will go to the lake of fire later during the end times—at a time when God has determined (Revelation 20:10). We'll talk about this in another chapter. But Satan will never rule over hell. That is God's job. Hell is a place of judgment, and God alone judges people and determines who goes to the lake of fire, so he is the only one who rules over it—not Satan! Satan can't just drag people to hell whenever he likes. And we know for sure that Satan and the demons won't be partying and enjoying themselves in hell! Hell is a terrible place of punishment. When God does send Satan and the demons there, they will experience terrible pain and they will not be celebrating or laughing (Revelation 20:10). Matthew 25:41 talks about hell and says it is the fire that God has already prepared for Satan and his demons. So if the Bible says that God has prepared hell for Satan, it means that hell is ready for Satan, but he's not there yet.

Mary Baxter said that in her dream she saw people in hell and they had already received new bodies. But the Bible doesn't say that either. In Revelation 20:10-15 we can see what will happen to unbelievers. They will not receive new bodies right away (20:5). They will only be resurrected at the very end when God also judges Satan and sends him to hell. Then the unbelievers will go down into this lake of fire with their resurrected bodies along with Satan and his demons. Again, we see that Mary Baxter's dreams are false prophecies and lies of the devil.

Mary Baxter also talked about some believers being in hell. She said that they had been children of God, but God later removed the Holy Spirit from them and sent them to hell. But is that what the Bible teaches? We have already read in previous chapters that when God saves us, the Spirit of God comes and lives inside us forever (John 14:16-17; Ephesians 1:13-14)! We are sealed and protected by the Spirit and he will never leave us or forsake us. Satan is a liar and he wants to use this woman's false dreams to confuse and frighten us and make Jesus look like someone who has a cold and unloving heart. But God's Word is clear and it can strengthen our faith too. Look at these verses:

Romans 8:33-39 says: "Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who then is the one who condemns? No one. Christ Jesus who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written: "For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered." No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

We could also read John 10:28-29 and Romans 8:1 and many other verses that will strengthen our faith in these matters. Don't let Satan and false prophets confuse you with holy sounding words.

There are many false prophets around the world like Mary Baxter and they have all kinds of false prophecies, visions, dreams and new ideas that they try to mix with God's word. They have so many spiritual sounding words that sometimes it is easy to be fooled by them. Satan fights with words and ideas.

How will we be able to discern people's words, and fight against Satan's false prophecies, dreams, or visions? We need to hold firmly to the Sword of the Spirit—we do battle with God's word, the double-edged sword. [The Sword Of The Holy Spirit Can Overcome Satan And The Lying Spirits](#)

1 John 2:14 says: "...you are strong, and the word of God lives in you, and you have overcome the evil one."

Satan's prophets are very deceitful and constantly changing, but God's word never changes, so we can use the word to constantly test what others are saying. Satan can never win against God's word. If we want to overcome Satan and his lies, we must learn the word of God well. It is the Sword of the Spirit so it is our best weapon to defeat the lies of Satan and doctrines of demons. Don't let the lies and dreams of false prophets fool you. They are Satan's weapons that he uses to confuse us. But God's word is true and never lies.

Summary Verse

"...we were not making up clever stories ... you must realize that no prophecy in Scripture ever came from the prophet's own understanding, or from human initiative. No, those prophets were moved by the Holy Spirit, and they spoke from God. But there were also false prophets in Israel, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will cleverly teach destructive heresies... Many will follow their evil teaching ... And because of these teachers, the way of truth will be

slandered. In their greed they will make up clever lies to get hold of your money. But God condemned them long ago, and their destruction will not be delayed. (2 Peter 1:16 to 2 Peter 2:3) (NLT) Have you thanked God lately for the Word of God? The word of truth is a powerful weapon that we have graciously received in order to do battle against false prophets Satan's lies. God's word is "sharper than any double-edged sword."

20. Satan's Buddy (The Enemy Within)

Chapter 20 Satan's Buddy (The Enemy Within) God Warned Israel About Becoming Friends With The Enemy

Think back to the time of Moses and Joshua and the Judges of Israel. God used Moses to help the Israelites escape from slavery in Egypt, and then he led them up to Canaan. God intended to give that land to the Israelites but he planned to judge the Canaanites first and remove them from the land, because they were very evil and rebellious against him. The Canaanites worshiped idols and committed sexual immorality in the temples of these false gods. They did many other detestable things, even sacrificing their babies on the altars to their false gods. So Moses warned Israel to avoid becoming friends with their enemies or following their ways.

Deuteronomy 12:29-31 says: "The Lord your God will cut off before you the nations you are about to invade and dispossess. But when you have driven them out and settled in their land, and after they have been destroyed before you, be careful not to be ensnared by inquiring about their gods, saying, "How do these nations serve their gods? We will do the same." You must not worship the Lord your God in their way, because in worshiping their gods, they do all kinds of detestable things the Lord hates. They even burn their sons and daughters in the fire as sacrifices to their gods." (also Leviticus 18:21)

These verses confirm that the Canaanites were very wicked people, so God wanted to destroy them and give their land to the Israelites.

God appointed Joshua as Israel's new leader to take them into Canaan and God helped them defeat the Canaanites. After God gave them the land they began to settle in it.

Unfortunately, the Israelites later began to forget God's warnings and they started to befriend and intermarry with the Canaanites that were still left in the land. They also took on many of their customs and heathen ways (2 Kings 17:16-17; Psalms 106:35-39; Ezekiel 16:20-21). So God did not remove all of their enemies. Instead, he left some of them remaining in the land to test and to teach the Israelites to fight. Yes, that's right. God was teaching them to fight.

Judges 3:1-7 says: "Now these are the nations which the LORD left, to test Israel...(that is, all who had not experienced any of the wars of Canaan; only in order that the generations of the sons of Israel might be taught war, those who had not experienced it formerly). These nations are: the five lords of the Philistines and all the Canaanites...Sidonians...Hivites ... They were for testing Israel, to find out if they would obey the commandments of the LORD...The sons of Israel lived among the Canaanites...and they took their daughters for themselves as wives, and gave their own daughters to their sons, and served their gods. The sons of Israel did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, and forgot the LORD their God and served the Baals and the Asheroth." (NASB)
Today, Who Is An Ally With The Enemy Instead Of Fighting?

God wants to use this story to teach us something also. But what? Does he want us to go out and fight with godless people like the Canaanites, and take their land like God told Israel to do? Absolutely not! God has not promised us the land of Canaan. That promise is only for Israel! But today we ourselves have another kind of battle—a battle in the spiritual realm with our enemy Satan and his demons (Ephesians 6:12). God can use this story to teach us how to fight also—so we Christians can learn to defeat our spiritual enemies in God’s power. In the story that we just read, we saw that instead of learning to fight their enemies, the Israelites eventually befriended their enemies—they became their allies even after God had warned them not to. But applying that to our day and age, who today would be so foolish and become allies with Satan the enemy? Actually we do! We are a lot like Israel in that way! We would never like to admit being friendly with Satan, but actually it is our very own sin nature that loves to listen to Satan and willingly follow him. So we could say that in some ways, instead of fighting Satan, our own sin nature is like a natural ally—a good buddy to Satan—the enemy within!

What Is Our Sin Nature? Our sin nature is our rebellious nature which has the natural tendency towards sinning against God. It’s like an inner rebellious voice or urge to do what is sinful. Ever since Adam sinned, we were all born with this nature, so even babies have it. The sin nature quickly shows itself as babies grow older. They don’t have to be taught how to be selfish or disobedient—they just are naturally.

Psalms 51:5 says: “Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.” The term “sin nature” used in some English translations comes from the Greek word “sarx” which is also often translated “the flesh” in many cases. The word “flesh” in the New Testament usually refers to the part of our human nature that is in opposition to the Spirit of God. It is almost like saying the “anti-spiritual” part of man. The same Greek word is sometimes used to refer to the human body or animals or meat. The writers of the New Testament chose this particular word to focus our attention on how closely connected our sin nature was to the physical body. The “flesh” or sin nature is something we all receive from birth, like our bodies. The body is not sinful in itself, but it has needs, desires, and weaknesses which can lead to sin if we are not guided by the Spirit of God. Like a ship or airplane, it needs a pilot. The body was meant to be guided by the Spirit of God. But without the Spirit, our “flesh” reacts much in the same way as an animal would—out of survival instinct, with no spiritual guidance (2 Peter 2:10 a, 12a). But God created humans to be different than animals, by making us in his image—as spiritual beings—that live inside a body, having the ability to be guided by his Spirit. Humans without that Spirit’s guidance often act almost like animals—bodies driven by natural instincts alone, without Spiritual influence. Perhaps that is partly why the sin nature is called “flesh.” The sin nature or flesh is naturally selfish and self-centered and always opposed to the leading of the Spirit of God.

Christians Have The Flesh Also

Galatians 5:17 says: “For the flesh has desires that are opposed to the Spirit, and the Spirit has desires that are opposed to the flesh, for these are in opposition to each other...” (NET) This verse reminds us that we Christians have a sin nature too. Our sin nature (or flesh) is what makes us want to sin even if we know we should do good. The flesh never wants to follow God and it never will. It’s good to remind ourselves that every one of us has a sinful nature and we do battle with it all the time. Even the apostle Paul talked about the battle he always had with the flesh inside him.

In Romans 7:18 he says: “For I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my flesh. For I want to do the good, but I cannot do it.”(NET) Satan’s Rebellious Buddy: Our Sin Nature (The Flesh)

God’s word here shows us that the flesh is not some outside force against me. It’s in me, so it is very much a part of me. It also says that there is nothing good in the flesh (sin nature), and the sinful nature will never be capable of producing anything pure and good. Satan knows that very well and he is always trying to tempt us by using our flesh to pursue evil. The flesh is always willing to find ways to rebel against God. So we could use a word picture here to describe this relationship: Satan and our sin nature are like good buddies—like two troublemakers who always like to hang out together, always helping each other get into trouble. Satan loves the sin nature of mankind because it is always hostile toward God.

Romans 8:7-9 says: “The mind governed by the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God’s law, nor can it do so. Those who are in the realm of the flesh cannot please God. You, however, are not in the realm of the flesh but are in the realm of the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you...”

God Provided The Holy Spirit For Us To Battle The Flesh And Satan

Jesus provided the only way to become God’s children by paying for our sin on the cross. All of us who have believed in Christ’s work for us on the cross, have been brought into a relationship with God and we no longer belong to Satan. God now calls us righteous (Romans 3) and forgiven. We are no longer children of Satan—but as long as we remain in these bodies we still have our sin nature dwelling within us. It can never be reformed or improved or changed. It will always be rebellious until we go to heaven. While we’re still on this earth, our sin nature always wants to befriend the enemy and follow Satan, but God sent us help to conquer it. When we believed in Christ, he put his Spirit inside us as our new Boss—our Pilot—so now we can listen to and follow him. He is called our Helper because he is always able to help us in our battle against the flesh. So there’s a war going on inside us—our sin nature and the Holy Spirit are always fighting inside us.

Galatians 5:17 says: “... the flesh... and the Spirit... are in conflict with each other”

God has given us the Holy Spirit to live inside us to direct our minds and give us the strength to fight against the sin nature. Yes, our sin nature will always resist the Spirit and wants us to follow our enemy, Satan. But we should not be like Israel who befriended their enemies and became like them. God had warned them to be careful of their enemies and fight them, not join them in their sinful ways. In the same way today, God has given us the Holy Spirit to help us resist the ways of our sin nature and to help us fight against Satan. We should never listen to our sin nature when Satan tempts us to become his friend.

Satan Is Not Our Worst Enemy So what if God imprisoned Satan right now? Would that be the end of sin on earth? Unfortunately, no. Because our sin nature is the main thing that tempts us to sin. Romans Ch. 6-8 and Galatians 5:16-26 and many other verses tell us a lot more about the sin nature. And so we know that even if God were to imprison Satan right now, sin would not end. In fact, during the end times, God will lock up Satan for 1000 years (Revelation 20:1-10), but sin will still exist on the earth. During that time, some people will still rebel against God. That is because the sin nature is always rebellious and wants to sin. Satan knows that, so he is constantly “befriending” and tempting our sin nature to follow him in order to ruin us.

So, who is our worst enemy? It is not Satan. No. He's the second. Our worst enemy is living right here inside us—our very own sin nature is always drawing us away from God, just like Israelites became their own worst enemy by allowing themselves to be lured into sin by their enemies, and as a result, they defeated themselves. Our own sin nature is our worst enemy. So when we sin, we can't really blame God or Satan or anyone else (James 1:13-14). It's our own sin nature that has opened the door for Satan and allowed him to come and do his work in us. We are the ones who allow him to influence us. It's our own fault. We open the door for Satan by listening to our flesh.

Ephesians 6:27 says: "...do not give the devil a foothold."

We Can't Join The Enemy. We Need To Be On Guard And Resist

Nowadays, God commands us to love our enemies and to be kind to them. But long ago, God knew what the Canaanites were like and he warned the Israelites what would happen if they became friendly with them, because he knew that the Israelites were spiritually weak. God's warnings came true. After the Israelites got settled and comfortable in Canaan, they let down their guard and they gradually quit fighting their enemies and began to make friends with the Canaanites instead. They let their enemies deceive them into becoming their close friends. They started talking to them more and more and eventually the Canaanite women tempted the Israelite men into marrying them. And once they intermarried, it wasn't long before the Israelites were worshiping their false gods and following their heathen ways too. God had warned them that this would happen.

So, as we saw earlier, God decided not to get rid of all of their enemies. He left some of them remain in the land to teach the Israelites a lesson and teach them how to resist and fight (Judges 3:1-2). The Israelites thought it was okay to befriend their enemies and become like them, but God wanted them to realize that the Canaanites were only deceiving them and would not help them in any way. They would only ruin them. God wanted the Israelites to learn to resist and fight, not give in to their enemies.

Why Did God Not Get Rid Of Satan And The Flesh?

We are often very much like Israel. Instead of fighting against our enemies—Satan and our sinful nature—we allow ourselves to become friendly with them. We allow them to tempt us. So God did something unusual. Instead of getting rid of Satan and our flesh quickly, God allowed them to remain with us for now, so that we learn to resist and fight them. God wants us to learn how to fight and conquer our spiritual enemies—Satan and the flesh. Here again, we learn of God's amazing sovereignty. He is able to use our enemies as his servants to teach us to fight and overcome.

God Rewards Those Who Overcome And Conquer Revelation 21:7 says: "He who overcomes will inherit these things..." (NASB)

Many times in the book of Revelation, God gives his approval and rewards to "him who overcomes"(conquers). This shows us that God highly values "overcomers"—those who learn to fight against our spiritual enemies—especially our own sinful nature. So we can't allow Satan to use our flesh, the sin nature, to tempt us. We need to resist and learn to fight and overcome—just like Israel needed to learn to fight and overcome their enemies.

Overcoming The Flesh And Satan Only Through The Spirit

Joshua and the Israelites learned that the Canaanites would only be overcome or conquered through faith in God. We also will only conquer our spiritual enemies as we rely on the Holy Spirit that lives in us. We don't have the power to conquer Satan and the flesh on our own. But by trusting the Holy Spirit to direct our lives, we will be overcoming them, and this brings great honor to God. We will learn more about walking in the Spirit's power in chapter 22. But first we need to talk about overcoming another enemy that Satan uses against us—the world system.

“For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith.”

1 John 5:4 (NASB)

21. The Resistance

Chapter 21 The Resistance Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee..(James 4:7)
Resisting Satan's World System

During many wars, evil kings or governments would invade other countries and conquer them. The local people usually just submitted to them. But some people formed "underground armies" which they called The Resistance. They fought the invaders in order to win back their own country. In a similar way, we Christians are also a Resistance army. Satan has invaded the world and gained control over many of its people. We can choose to submit to him and his world system or we can learn to resist Satan's world. In the last chapter, we saw that Satan eagerly desires to work with our sin nature and use it in such a way as to tempt us. In this chapter we want to look at how Satan uses the world system to tempt us and how we can resist. But what is the "world system?" The Bible usually just calls it "the world," but in simple terms, it's like a kingdom or world government that is unseen, but very powerful. It's a spiritual government led by evil spirits. The Bible tells us that Satan is the ruler of this world (John 16:11; John 12:31) and we have also seen from chapter 5 how his government or kingdom rules over the lives of human beings by influencing us through various ways. We know that Satan is only one person, and he cannot be everywhere all the time and tempt everybody. But he uses his control over his government (the world system) to influence and tempt people everywhere. He can use many things in the media like TV, videos and advertisements or businesses and education, bad teachers and politicians, poverty or money, and even churches and religion to influence people through his world system.

Loving Satan's World System Is Like Fighting God

1 John 2:15-16 says: "Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in them. For everything in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—comes not from the Father but from the world." When we love the world or the things in the world, we are falling into Satan's trap, and we are actually fighting against God (James 4:4). That's because the world system is Satan's kingdom and we are being influenced by Satan's wrong way of thinking. But Romans 12:2 says that if our minds are renewed by God then we are not being conformed to this world. Satan uses his world system in many different ways to influence our thinking. But in this chapter, we want to focus on the "3 main pathways to temptation" that he uses in order to tempt our sin nature.

Three Pathways Satan Uses To Tempt Us Using The World System

We introduced these 3 different pathways to temptation when we talked about the temptations of Adam and Eve and also the temptations of Jesus. Let's look at them in more detail from 1 John 2:16 above:

Lust of the flesh – desires from within the body, like hunger and thirst and other needs
Lust of the eyes – desires that come from seeing things, like money, houses and other possessions
Pride of life – the uncontrolled desire for approval from others and honor and glory for ourselves.

#1: LUST OF THE FLESH The first one is talking about “the flesh.” As we learned in chapter 20, this word “flesh” in the Bible comes from the Greek word "sarx" which literally means the soft tissue of a body, of both humans and animals. Sometimes it is translated literally as body, meat or flesh. It’s also translated figuratively as sin nature. The human body was created by God and so it is NOT sinful by itself. But our bodies have vulnerabilities, needs, and desires that can lead to sin IF they are not kept under control of the Spirit. They are called lusts and cravings. In Galatians 5:24, uncontrolled desires are called“...the flesh and its passions and desires.” Verse 15 of that same passage talks about people “biting and devouring each other.” They weren’t actually eating each other, but they were acting similar to animals—fleshly. So, the words “Spiritual” and “fleshly” (1 Corinthians 3:1) are often used to contrast the difference between a Spirit-controlled human—acting as God would act—vs. an unspiritual sinful human, acting instinctively, similar to an animal—only thinking about the physical desires of the body without Spirit control. Adam and Eve were created as perfect humans in God’s image—they acted like God, being spiritually-minded and Spirit-controlled. But when they chose to rebel against God, they separated themselves from God’s Spirit and lost that Spirit control. They became merely flesh or “fleshly.” So then, “the lust of the flesh” is talking about uncontrolled desires of the body.

What Are God-Given Needs And Desires?

It is important to understand that our bodies naturally have many needs and desires. These are “built-in” to our physical bodies as babies when we are born, and not something we learn. We hunger for food. We thirst for water. We need rest and sleep. We need to be held and loved. We need to socialize and express ourselves through words, etc. These needs or desires are good and natural and they are NOT evil in themselves. God himself created those desires in us so we would care for our bodies’ needs. But all these needs were designed to be controlled by God’s Spirit within us. If we don’t allow God to control these desires, then they become evil desires and lead us into sin—and Satan knows that very well. Which Sins Result From Desires If God Is Not In Control?

The need for food can become gluttony.

The need to drink can lead to drunkenness.

The need for rest and sleep can lead to laziness.

The need for socialization and friendship can lead us to the wrong kinds of friends or bad relationships.

The need for love and sex can lead to fornication or adultery.

The need to talk and express ourselves can lead to boasting, lies or dirty talk.....etc., etc.

God has given us these desires and needs for our own good. But he himself needs to be the one who helps keep these desires in balance and under control by his Spirit. On the other hand, Satan wants to use his world system to influence and tempt those needs and desires within people, in order to ruin our lives.

Satan Uses Fleshly Cravings To Control The World

Ephesians 2:1-3 says: "As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts..." When we were children of Satan, he used the world system to constantly tempt us to be controlled by our desires and be "gratifying the cravings of our flesh." But now, we are children of God and the Spirit of God lives within us to give us balance and control over those human needs and desires. So now, we no longer need to be driven by the uncontrolled, evil desires or lusts which lead to sin.

Romans 6:12-13 says: "...do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. Do not offer any part of yourself to sin as an instrument of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer every part of yourself to him as an instrument of righteousness." As you can see, we need to constantly offer our physical bodies to God by making good choices, so that under his Spirit's control we will not be giving in to "lusts of the flesh"—the uncontrolled cravings of the body. We do this by "walking by the Spirit." That means listening to and obeying the Spirit's directions as we "walk" through life together. (We'll talk more about this in the next chapter.)

Galatians 5:16-17 says "...walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other..."

Romans 12:1-2 says "...I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God...Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind..."

Here again we see that as we continue to offer our physical bodies in obedience to the Holy Spirit, then we are not conforming to the world system which is being run by Satan himself. We know that Satan uses many things in this world to lure us into being under his control and listen to his way of thinking—a worldly mindset. He wants us to forget God's way of thinking.

Spiritual Armor For Our Body

Satan knows very well that our bodies have weaknesses and needs, so he tries to use those weaknesses against us. He wants to rule over our physical bodies, but we must remember that we are primarily spiritual beings that live inside those physical bodies, so our battle is more spiritual than physical. We can't fight Satan with physical weapons as we would a human, because he is a spirit. So we need to use spiritual weapons and spiritual armor to protect us. And that's exactly what God has given us! He gave us spiritual armor! Remember all the armor that we read about in Ephesians 6?

Ephesians 6:10-13 says: "...be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm." (NASB) The Armor Of God Helps Us Resist Satan The armor that is mentioned in Ephesians 6 can help us in our fight against Satan and the flesh. Verse 11 says

the armor will help us 'stand firm against the schemes of the devil,' and 'resist' him. Satan is always deceiving and lying to us and trying to use our body to entice us to sin. But the armor of truth, righteousness, love, faith, God's word and prayer, etc. (from Ephesians 6) all work together to protect us and help us overcome Satan's lies when he tempts us. So when Satan tries to deceive us and use the desires of our human nature (the "lusts of the flesh") to entice us into sinning against God, we can use God's word and his promises to defeat Satan's lies. This is how we use the armor of God to protect our body and spirit and to resist Satan and his world system. And remember that Jesus himself is our armor and he can strengthen and protect us when we are tempted to not give in to our wrong desires.

Romans 13:14 says: "Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the flesh."

2 Peter 1:4-5 "...he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature, having escaped the corruption in the world caused by evil desires. For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness...knowledge and ... self-control..."

Self-Control

We see here that the Holy Spirit helps us escape those evil desires that come from the world system by giving us his precious promises in his word. This leads to a changed life through faith, goodness, knowledge and self-control, which allow us to reflect his 'divine nature.' The self-control mentioned in this verse means to control our bodies in such a way that its desires do not rule over us. But we know that true "self-control" only comes from Spirit control. The Bible says that "self-control" is actually a Fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:23). Satan loves to use the world to tempt our natural desires so that we lose control of our desires. But they don't need to rule over us! When Satan tempts our bodies to eat too much or drink too much or commit adultery, or any other sin, we just need to say "NO!" The Holy Spirit helps us to deny those evil desires within us (Titus 2:12).

#2: LUST OF THE EYES The lust of the eyes is the second thing Satan uses to tempt us to sin and it overcomes many, many people. Satan's sinful world system constantly lures our eyes and tempts us to covet things in the world that we don't need or things we shouldn't have. If we don't allow God to control our eyes and thoughts, then the lust (desires) of the eyes will tempt us to covet things that don't belong to us. Satan uses many things on the earth to tempt us, and our sin nature will crave these things if we are not controlled by the Spirit.

Covetousness

James 4:1-8 says: "What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? You desire but do not have, so you kill. You covet but you cannot get what you want, so you quarrel and fight. You do not have because you do not ask God. When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures. You adulterous people, don't you know that friendship with the world means enmity against God? Therefore, anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God. ...Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded."

Unthankful And Always Unsatisfied

God gives us the basic things of this earth, like food and shelter, so that we can live in health and enjoy his goodness. But our sin nature is never satisfied. It always wants more and more. It seems that no matter how much some people get, they are not even thankful for what they do have. These people are “lovers of themselves, lovers of money, ...ungrateful...”(2 Timothy 3:2). If we are unthankful and forget the good things God has already done for us, then Satan will try to use the world system and the lust of the eyes to lure us into coveting what others have, and we become unfruitful for God.

Mark 4:19 says “... the worries of this life, the deceitfulness of wealth and the desires for other things come in and choke the word, making it unfruitful.”

Resist Satan By Coming Near To God In James 4:7 above, we also saw that if we resist Satan he will run away. So when Satan tries to use our eyes to tempt us to covet, we need to resist him by saying no. But if we don't resist, and allow ourselves to get really friendly with Satan's world system and the ways of the world, then we're acting like God's enemies! Instead, verse 8 tells us to come near to God and he will come near to us. This is a very powerful way to resist Satan and covetousness, because when we come near to God we won't be craving the things of the earth. God will become our highest desire and the things of the earth will become less important to us. We know that God has promised to take care of our basic needs and that we don't need to worry about those things (Matthew 6:28-34; Hebrews 13:5). But we need to also remember that we won't live on this earth forever. We need to set our minds on heavenly things first (Colossians 3:1-2; Matthew 6:19-34).

1 Timothy 6:6-10 says: “...godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. Those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.”

#3: PRIDE OF LIFE When our children are young, they can often be heard saying, “Look at me Daddy! Watch me!” Children are born with a desire to seek the approval of their parents and others. This is natural and it is good for us to encourage them in their growth and progress in life's skills, etc. God actually created us that way. We were made in his image to be reflectors of his excellence and his honor and glory, so that we should seek his approval and godly honor. We should also seek to encourage and approve of others who are godly to reflect God's image too.

1 Thessalonians 5:11 says: “Therefore encourage one another and build up one another, just as you also are doing.” (1 Thessalonians 5:14; Hebrews 3:13)

It is a good thing to imitate God and seek his approval and to show approval of others as they reflect God's image and glory. But since humans are naturally prone to seek approval, Satan likes to use that in the wrong way. Rather than seeking God's approval and giving the glory to him for all he has done for us, Satan tempts us to be selfish and seek praise for ourselves rather than God our creator.

John 12:43 says: "...they loved the approval of men rather than the approval of God." The word "approval" here is the same Greek word for glory and praise. God is worthy of all praise and glory because he is the giver of all good things (James 1:17). If we forget that he is the source of everything good that we have, then we will try to take the glory from those things ourselves. This is called the pride of life. The pride of life is the uncontrolled desire for approval from others, and honor and glory for us. We are all guilty of this sin. Satan's first sin was to try to rob God of his glory through his own arrogance and pride, and now he is working hard to make us fall in the same way. Satan uses many things in the world system to get us to fall into pride. Sometimes he uses education, or money, or business, or politics, or even church work to make us proud. If you look around and study all the advertisements in today's world, you will soon see that Satan's world system is full of ways to make people proud of what they have accomplished or what possessions they have accumulated. It is all centered around self!

1 Timothy 6:17 says: "Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment." (also James 4:13-16)

We so quickly forget that all good things come from God, and that we owe him everything. Our life, our health, our food, and even the very breath we breathe every minute of the day, is from him. So we can't boast and become arrogant in something that was actually given to us. Rather, we should seek to give him glory for everything we do and say and own. Is it just rich and famous people that become proud? No! The sin nature dwells in every single person. Even children and poor people can be proud because that's the way the sin nature works. And Christians too! In fact, there is often a lot of arrogance in the church. Many leaders think very highly of themselves and they fall into sin because of their pride. So God gives a strong warning to church leaders:

1 Peter 5:1-9 says: "To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder...Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, watching over them—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not pursuing dishonest gain, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away. In the same way, you who are younger, submit yourselves to your elders. All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, "God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble." Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you. Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith..."

Resisting The Devil By Humbling Yourself

Satan is like a roaring lion looking to kill. He knows that God hates our pride, so he's ready to pounce if we will just feed our pride. Pride is a weak spot for us. But God says that we can resist Satan by humbling ourselves under God's mighty hand. So, no matter what position or status we achieve in life, God is higher still and we need to humble ourselves under him—like Jesus did (Php 2:3-11). By humbling ourselves, we are resisting Satan.

God Can Use Satan To Humble Us

If Christian leaders don't resist Satan and don't humble themselves, God has a way of helping them. Remember apostle Paul—God gave him a lot of knowledge and wisdom, but God didn't want him to become proud about it. So God let Satan give him a "thorn in the flesh," much like he did with Job (2 Corinthians 12:7-10). God knew that this would help Paul avoid becoming proud. So here we see that God even used Satan to help Paul overcome his pride! Imagine that. Our God really does know everything and can even use our enemy, Satan, to help us and strengthen us—just like he did for Job and Paul. Praise God for his amazing wisdom.

Recap: Three Pathways Satan Uses To Tempt Us Using The World System
Lust of the flesh – uncontrolled cravings of the body
Lust of the eyes – uncontrolled cravings (coveting) for possessions (things we see)
Pride of life – uncontrolled desire for the approval from others, honor and glory for ourselves.

Notice that in each case, we've seen God tell us to: "RESIST!" The Holy Spirit can strengthen us to say no and resist Satan.

Conclusion: We Don't Need To Be Afraid Of Satan

It's true—Satan is a strong enemy and will try to turn us against ourselves. But as children of God we don't need to fear him—because Satan himself is afraid when we resist him. Satan is afraid of God's strength that dwells inside us Christians, and that enables us to resist him in these three areas. So the Bible tells us to resist him by putting on the armor of God and humbling ourselves under God and going near to him. When we do that, Satan will flee (James 4:7). We don't need to fear him. But we need to watch ourselves because our sin nature likes to befriend Satan and it leads us into sin. As we saw in the previous chapter, one of the reasons God allowed Satan to remain on the earth was so that we would learn to fight against Satan and our sin nature and the world system, and become overcomers (conquerors) (Revelation 2:17; Revelation 2:26; Revelation 3:12; Revelation 3:21)! It is similar to what God did with Israel and the Canaanites. God wants to teach us how to RESIST—to fight Satan, and not give in to him.

"Fight the good fight of faith." (1 Timothy 6:12) (NASB)

It is true that Satan is stronger and smarter than we are, and he has a powerful world system that is fighting against us. But one thing is stronger than all of them put together—the Holy Spirit who lives inside us! We'll talk about our special relationship with him in the next chapter.

1 John 4:4 says: "You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world."

22. Our Walking Partner

Chapter 22 Our Walking Partner A Bride From Adam's Side

Genesis 2:21-24 says: "...So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then He took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh at that place. The LORD God fashioned into a woman the rib which He had taken from the man, and brought her to the man. The man said, "This is now bone of my bones, And flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman, Because she was taken out of Man." For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh." (NASB) When God wanted to give Adam a wife, he made Adam fall into a deep sleep. Then he cut open his side and took out a rib and created a woman out of that rib and gave her to Adam. Her name was Eve. God the Creator could have created Eve just by speaking or by using dust, or in many other different ways. But instead he chose this rather unusual method of creating Adam's wife, which seems to indicate that it could be a type of picture. Adam's "loss" was soon turned into a wonderful "gain." This was a true historical event which happened to the "first Adam." But some scholars think it could also be a type or prophetic picture of something that would happen to a future "Adam" also. Think about the time Jesus died and was still hanging on the cross. What happened to his body as he hung there in the "sleep" of death?

John 19:34 says: "...one of the soldiers pierced Jesus' side with a spear, bringing a sudden flow of blood and water."

Okay, we know that this soldier wanted to find out if Jesus was truly dead or not, so he pierced his side with a spear. But the piercing of Jesus' side could possibly be connected with Adam and Eve. God had created a wife from Adam's side while he was sleeping, and then he gave the wife to Adam. In a similar way, after Jesus "slept" in death while hanging on the cross, his side was also pierced. And another kind of bride was purchased from the body and blood that flowed from his wounded side. God created a bride for Christ.

Christ's Bride

Christ's bride isn't like Adam's wife. Christ's bride is the church. Of course, we're not talking about a building or even a local church. We're talking about people all around the world who have believed in Jesus Christ as their Savior. All these believers are the church, and all of us together are the bride of Christ.

Eve was created from Adam's pierced side, and we could possibly even say that in a similar way, the church came from the Savior's side—the pierced, broken body and spilled blood of Christ on the cross. The church was formed from Christ and became one with his body, just like Eve came from Adam's body. The Bible says that they "become one flesh" (Genesis 2:24; Colossians 1:18).

Ephesians 5:31-32 quotes this exact passage and says: "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh." This is a profound

mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church.”

Two Become One

Ephesians 5 quotes verses about Adam and Eve’s marriage and connects it with an important mystery—the marriage of Christ and the church. God shows us how we as the church were meant to have a very close relationship with Christ, so he used marriage as a picture of that loving partnership. God created marriage to be a permanent relationship of a man and woman who are totally committed to love and help each other. God created Eve to be an ideal companion and helper for Adam (Genesis 2:18). In the same way, he wanted the church to be Christ’s companion and helper. Christ and the church have formed a new family. The church is God’s family and lives throughout the whole world.

Marriage is a picture of Christ and the church, but unfortunately sin has marred this picture since many marriages are not good marriages. But Christ is an example of a perfect husband. Good husbands don’t want to harm or discourage their wives. They protect, love, and care for their wives and children and help them in whatever way they can. A good husband will sacrifice himself for his wife just like Jesus sacrificed himself for the church and lovingly cares for us and strengthens us (Ephesians 5:25-29). And good wives don’t disrespect their husbands (vs 33). Instead, they respect them and help them and support them in their work as a good friend and partner to them. In the same way, we, the church, should be like a respectful and supportive wife for Christ, because we are one with him—we are his family now and we need to work right alongside him and support him in what he is doing. So how did we actually become one with him and his family? The Holy Spirit Unites Us Into A New Body Or Family The Bride-Price In many cultures around the world, if a man wants to get married, his family must first give some money and gifts as a pledge or promise to the bride’s family in order to identify the woman as his chosen bride. You probably remember that Jesus’ mother, Mary was “betrothed” in this way:

Matthew 1:18 says: “...Mary was pledged (betrothed) to be married to Joseph...before they came together...” In Israel, once the groom gave this gift to the woman’s family, then they were considered to be legally married. The woman became united with her husband and his family in marriage, even though they were not living together yet. This money or gift was like a deposit showing that he would return to get her because she was already identified or marked as his wife. Then the man would go back home and prepare a house for them, and within a year he would return and take her to live with him and his family. This is a beautiful picture of what Christ did with his bride, the church. But he didn’t pay for us with money or gifts. Instead, he bought us with his own blood (1 Peter 1:18-19). When we think of Christ’s bleeding body on the cross, we see the costly bride-price he paid for his chosen bride. So in God’s eyes, Christ chose us as his own bride, to make us part of his family. And that’s what we are! The bride of Christ. And even though we do not yet live with our “Groom,” the Lord Jesus, we already belong to him—and his Father is our Father. We are his family now, and we wait for his return while he prepares an eternal home for us (John 14:2-3).

Christ Chose His Bride And Marked Us As His Own So after Christ paid for us with his own blood, what gift did he give to us his bride as a deposit or pledge of his promise that he would return to take us to his home?

Ephesians 1:13-14 says: "... when you heard... the gospel ... When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession..."

2 Corinthians 1:22 says: "He...set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come."

Christ gave us his Holy Spirit as a mark of ownership, and claimed us as his very own, and so we have become one with him. So, we know that we are no longer part of Adam's family who was our previous "father" (Romans 5), because the Holy Spirit now lives within us. We are now part of Christ's body and his family. It is a spiritual family.

We Are Christ's Spiritual Family The first Adam was the father of a huge family. Everyone born into this family has a physical body, but they are spiritually dead in God's eyes (Ephesians 2:1-4). Their spirits are not in fellowship with God and they are unable to please God (Romans 8:7) because they are sinners born into Adam's family. But the "second Adam" is Christ.

Christ created a new family—a spiritual family. And now we call this family the church, which is his spiritual body. Everyone in this family is made into ONE body by the Spirit of Life living inside them. The Holy Spirit Is The Spirit Of Christ The Spirit of Life inside us is the Holy Spirit, but he is Christ's Spirit also. God is a Trinity. He is ONE God made up of three individual persons—God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Romans 8:9-10 mentions all three being in us:

"...the Spirit...the Spirit of God...the Spirit of Christ..." (NET) Galatians 4:6 says: "And because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts..." (NET) The Spirit Of Christ Is In Us—Forever!

We see that the Holy Spirit is one with the Spirit of God the Father and with the Spirit of Christ also. Together they are ONE. This is difficult for us to understand how three persons can be one, but God is far greater than our understanding and he himself has said it, so therefore we just need to believe it. And it is this very same Spirit of the Trinity that lives inside of us believers! Jesus was the one who promised that the Holy Spirit would come to live inside us:

John 14:16-20 says: "And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever—the Spirit of truth...He...will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. Before long, the world will not see me anymore, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you."

Jesus here says that after he leaves, he would not leave us as orphans, but the Holy Spirit would come and take his place until he returns, and then he continues on to say that "I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you." And so again we can know for sure that since the Holy Spirit is living inside us, that Christ is also living inside us (Romans 8:9-11; Acts 16:7)!

Think about that—what an amazing privilege to have the Lord Jesus himself living right here within us! And he promised that the Holy Spirit which is in us will be our "Helper" forever!

We Are Like Christ's Hands And Feet On This Earth

Jesus said: "I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you." This shows us two very important truths. First, it shows us that we share the same Father with Christ, so we are family—God's family. It also shows us that since Christ really is living inside us, then we are the body of Christ.

Ephesians 5:30 says: "...we are members of his body." The Holy Spirit has joined us together into one family, one body—the body of Christ. So now, as members of Christ's body, we are like his hands and feet—his eyes and ears and mouth on this earth—and by using his Spirit within us, he can do his work through us here on this earth. That was God's plan from the very beginning long ago, when he created marriage to join man and woman into one family and become one flesh. Marriage is a picture of Christ and the church (Ephesians 5:32).

Christ And The Church Became One So We Can Share Everything, Like A Husband And Wife In God's eyes, the church is like Christ's wife and so we have become one family—one body with him—just like God joined Adam and Eve together in marriage. Those two were joined together as lifelong partners, so they can share everything and work in unison and harmony for the same goals as if they were one person. Even so now, the Holy Spirit joins us with Christ so that Christ can live in and through us, and we can work as one—partnerstogether in accomplishing the will of God. The Holy Spirit Unifies Us With Christ And Shares His Power And Wisdom With Us The Holy Spirit is the one who joins us with Christ by baptizing us into Christ's family and by living inside us. So now we can share the strength and wisdom of Christ, and the Spirit enables us to be Christ's hands and feet and mouth on this earth. If you think about that, it is absolutely incredible! The Holy Spirit—the power and wisdom of the Trinity making His home in us! This is absolutely amazing!

We need to thank God for this grace, and for all that he provides. But since we have all this incredible power and wisdom available to us, what type of work do you think he wants to do through us, his body?

Partners With The Holy Spirit In A Very Important Work When Jesus was about to ascend into heaven, he promised the believers that they would receive power from the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit would use them to do a very important job.

Acts 1:8 says: "... you will receivepowerwhen the Holy Spirit comes on you; and youwill be my witnessesin Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

Christ said that the Holy Spirit would come and live inside all believers and give us the wisdom, power, and authority to accomplish a very critical job: he wants us to tell the good news of Christ everywhere. That was his special instruction to us and he chose us specifically for this work! But why would we need so much power and authority for telling such a simple message as the gospel? Jesus knew that Satan would do everything in his power to fight against the gospel message being spread around the world, so Jesus promised that his Spirit would come and live inside us to do battle with the forces of Satan and his kingdom. On the Day of Pentecost, Christ kept his promise and sent the Holy Spirit as a Helper for the disciples to do the work of telling the good news. And now, since the Holy Spirit lives inside of us, he wants to use our hands and feet and mouths to do this work. He can use our hands to help others in need. He can use our legs to carry God's word to places where it is not known. He can use our mouths to tell the good news and many other messages from God's word to strengthen the believers. In this way, Christ is

continuing his work here on this earth. The Holy Spirit Battles Against Our Sin Nature Within Us
The Holy Spirit lives inside us and he wants to guide and direct the members of our body, as if they were the hands and feet of Christ. But the problem is, we know that our sin nature lives inside us too. And our sin nature is like an ally of Satan. Our sin nature still wants to direct our thoughts and desires and every part of our body. It is a battle.

Galatians 5:17 says: "For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other..." So this is a constant conflict or battle within all of us believers. Our flesh or sin nature wants us to do Satan's work, and the Holy Spirit wants us to do his work. So what can we do about it? Actually, the verse before this one has the answer.

Walk With The Spirit—Our Walking Partner Galatians 5:16 says: "...walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh."

Some translations say "...walk in the Spirit." But what does it mean to walk in (or by) the Spirit? It means to walk "under the rule of" or "under the guidance of" the Spirit. The New Living Translation explains it this way:

"...let the Holy Spirit guide your lives."

Vs. 18 continues on with the same idea when it talks about being "Led by the Spirit." And vs. 25 says, "keep in step with the Spirit." The Dangers Of Walking Alone Or Without A Guide

We have to remember that this passage was written hundreds of years before they had cars or airplanes. In those days, most people walked from town to town and even to other countries. When traveling away from home, they would often go long distances through barren wilderness or rugged mountain trails. They did not have mobile phones to help guide them or call for help. These desolate areas were home to lions, bears, and other wild animals and also many highway robbers. So it was usually not wise or safe to walk alone (1 Kings 13:24).

Rich people could ride horses and hire armed soldiers to guide and protect them, but most people could not afford that. So people often walked in groups (Luke 2:44; Acts 9:7) or they traveled with a friend or relative who could act as a guide—someone who was familiar with that road and knew the way. That person would know the dangerous areas to avoid and how long it would take to arrive. They would know where to find well-water and food along the way. They would also know where to find honest people and safe shelters when traveling overnight. To walk with a trustworthy guide and protector was the safest and most productive way to travel. But to walk by yourself or with a stranger or some other shady characters was foolish and dangerous. This gives us a great word picture because, in a similar way, we also need a spiritual guide for our spiritual journey. Just like we read in Galatians 5:16 : we need to "walk by (the guidance of) the Spirit." We are "led by" the Holy Spirit's guidance through the dangers of life's journey and so we need to "keep in step" with him every step of the way because he is the only one who really knows what lies ahead and he is the perfect guide, protector, and provider on the roads of our life. We can trust his guidance and power to lead us correctly.

Proverbs 3:6 says: "In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths."(NKJV)
God Has Always Desired To Walk With Us In Fellowship

It was always in God's plan that we should walk with him, in close fellowship with him as our guide. Before Adam and Eve sinned, God used to walk with them in the garden of Eden (Genesis 3:8-9). The Spirit of God within them allowed them to enjoy very close fellowship together with God and they must have learned many things and asked him many questions as they walked and talked in the garden and admired all of his wonderful creation. He would teach them everything they wanted to know. But then, after they sinned, Adam and Eve lost their close fellowship with God and it was not the same as it was before, because they had turned against their Guide in life. So now they had a sin nature that did not like to listen to God. But God still desired to walk with people and fellowship with them. Many years later, Enoch walked in very close fellowship with God (Genesis 5:24) and so did Noah (6:9) and others throughout history. God even chose people like Abraham and his descendants (Israel) and invited them to walk with him in a special close relationship (Leviticus 26:12). And now God invites us to walk with him too, by giving us the Holy Spirit to live right inside of us. That way, we can walk in very close fellowship, through the help of the Spirit within us, even though the sin nature is still within us. **The Sin Nature Is A Terrible Guide And Walking Partner In Life**

Galatians 5:16 says that if we continue to rely on the Spirit's guidance in all our daily choices, we will not be led by our "flesh" (or sin nature). The flesh is a terrible guide for life. It will only guide us into trouble. It would be similar to asking a drunk driver to give us a ride to a distant town or asking a criminal for directions to a safe place to spend the night. The flesh will always lead us towards harm and destruction.

Galatians 6:8 says: "Whoever sows to please their flesh, from the flesh will reap destruction..."

Satan's World System Is Also A Bad Guide Through Life

We also need to remember from a previous chapter that our sin nature is like a good buddy to our enemy Satan. That is because our sin nature naturally wants to be rebellious and give in to Satan's temptations. Of course, Satan himself cannot be everywhere all the time and tempt all of us, but his world system is everywhere, and he uses that world system to constantly tempt our sin nature to act. If we allow Satan and his world system to tempt us, then our sin nature will lead us to habits and self-centeredness that will hurt us and others.

Galatians 5:19-21 says: "The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like."

So, it is not wise for us to walk through life without a good guide, and it is also dangerous to allow the sin nature and the world system to guide us through life. Satan will use those things to lead us to ruin. But we were created to walk with God under the control and guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Resist Satan By Walking By The Spirit

James 4:7 says: "Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." (1 Peter 5:9)

If we are humbly submitting to God as this verse says, we are simply walking by the Spirit's guidance which means we are resisting Satan and the temptations of our flesh. When we say "Yes" to the Spirit, then we are also saying "No" to Satan and will not be listening to our sin nature.

Remember...

Galatians 5:16 says: "...walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh." When we "walk" under the Spirit's guidance, then our flesh will not produce its bad results. Instead, our lives will be greatly changed by the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23) and Christ's life will be seen in our lives. It will be as if we are Christ's hands and feet and mouth and he is helping others through us.

Romans 6:12-14 says: "Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts, and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. For sin shall not be master over you...." (NASB) Walking Is A Step By Step Process

Walking with the Spirit of God is not something that is done once and it's over. It is a day-by-day, minute-by-minute walk with God. That's why it is not called "Running in the Spirit" or "Jumping in the Spirit" or even "Flying." Instead, the word picture is "walking" because it is a step by step process. Every day, minute by minute, choice by choice, God wants us to keep walking continually in step with him by choosing to rely on him and obey him every step of the way as we travel down life's path.

"Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit." (Galatians 5:25) Ears To Hear What The Spirit Says The Holy Spirit is always right there within every Christian and he is always faithfully speaking into our hearts and minds and warning us about Satan's lies and reminding us when we are being tempted by the flesh. But we have to choose to listen to his voice inside us. The Bible emphasizes that it is our job to listen. Many, many times, it says this:

"Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says..."(Revelation 2:7; Revelation 2:11; Revelation 2:17; Revelation 2:29; Revelation 3:6; Revelation 3:13; Revelation 3:22; Also Matthew 11:15; Matthew 13:9; Matthew 13:43; Mark 4:9; Mark 4:23; Luke 8:8; Luke 14:35)

God has many ways to speak to us. He uses his word, the Bible. He speaks to us through other people who know the word and he also speaks in our hearts and minds through his Spirit. God is always speaking to us, but if we don't listen to the Spirit's voice and obey him, then we are resisting the Spirit and submitting to Satan's wishes.

Resisting The Holy Spirit The Israelites did not have "ears to hear." They would not listen to God. And so God often called them "stiff-necked people," because they would not allow the Holy Spirit to guide them.

Acts 7:51 says: "You stiff-necked people! ...You always resist the Holy Spirit!"

God warns us not to quench or stifle the Spirit when he is talking to us. He only wants to help us and he wants what is very best for us. So we should listen to him and not resist the Holy Spirit.

1 Thessalonians 5:19 says: "Do not quench the Spirit."

If we do stifle the Spirit's guidance in us, this will "grieve the Spirit" (Ephesians 4:30). Of course, even though he will be sad because of our disobedience, he will not leave us because we are his children and God has promised that he will live in us forever. But he will wait for us and he will also

discipline us like a father disciplines his son to correct him (Hebrews 12:5-11). He will continue to speak to us until we listen. If we have failed to listen to him and he corrects us, then what should we do?

1 John 1:9 says: “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.”

Some people think that confession means to tell God about their sin. But of course, God already knows the sin before we even do it. The Greek word for “confess” in this verse actually has much more meaning than that. It means to “say the same thing as.” That means that God wants us to agree and change our way of thinking so that it is the same as God thinks about this sin. God knows our hearts and thoughts. Even before we confess our sins, he already knows what we are thinking. And when we do agree with him about our sin, it’s like we are judging ourselves and our own sin and...

“...by the Spirit (we) put to death the misdeeds of the body...” (Romans 8:13) In other words, the Spirit is helping us recognize what sin is, and as we do, we agree with God that Jesus’ death paid for those sins so that we don’t have to live that way any longer (Romans 6:2). That way our sins are no longer conquering us, but instead, we (by God’s Spirit in us) are conquering the power that sin wants to hold over us. It brings God great joy when we do agree with him about our sins, because then he purifies us so that our fellowship with him is not hindered and we can continue in good fellowship with him again.

What Does It Mean To Be “Filled With The Spirit?”

If we continue to confess (admit) our sin and rely on the Spirit for all our guidance, then there is nothing that hinders our relationship with the Holy Spirit. And so his guidance is filling every part of our lives. God calls this being “filled with the Holy Spirit.” The Bible uses a good word picture to help us understand what this means:

Ephesians 5:18 says: “Don’t be drunk with wine, because that will ruin your life. Instead, be filled with the Spirit...” (NLT) Word Picture: Alcohol Vs. The Holy Spirit When people start out drinking a little bit of alcohol, they can still talk fairly normal and walk straight at first. But as they continue drinking and they become “full of alcohol,” then the alcohol takes over more control of the person’s thoughts and words and their hands and feet and their entire body. Their words become slurred and they can’t think properly. They begin to speak and act silly or even fight with others and do things that they would normally be ashamed of. Eventually they may not be able to walk straight and may even fall down and become unaware of what’s happening. The Bible says that drunkenness harms people and so we should not allow alcohol to control us and bring us to ruin. But this verse says that instead of being full of alcohol, we should be filled with the Holy Spirit. The Spirit has the opposite effect of alcohol. The Holy Spirit doesn’t control us like alcohol does. He doesn’t make us act foolish or crazy or fall down and say things that don’t make sense. The Holy Spirit doesn’t want to shame or embarrass us. He doesn’t want to harm us or others—he wants to help us and encourage us. He wants us to be kind to others and make us live in peace with them and say words that are helpful and uplifting. To be filled with the Spirit means to be filled with his wisdom, his teachings, his guidance, his thoughts and his actions in every area of our lives. The Spirit causes us to act like Jesus. But the Spirit doesn’t force his control over people like demons

do or like alcohol does. Instead, the Spirit waits for us to voluntarily make those choices to “be filled.” We need to offer ourselves to God willingly like a freewill offering or sacrifice (Romans 12:1). The Hands And Feet And Mouth Of Jesus

Romans 6:13-14 says: “Do not offer any part of yourself to sin as an instrument of wickedness, but rather offer yourself to God as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer every part of yourself to him as an instrument of righteousness. For sin shall no longer be your master...” As we allow the Holy Spirit to be our Boss and Guide in every choice that we make, then we are giving our bodies as a freewill offering to him to use in whatever way he chooses. Verse 13 says that our hands and feet and mouths become his “instruments of righteousness.” The Greek word “instrument” here means a tool or weapon. So the Holy Spirit can use us like a toolbox full of tools that God can use to do his good works. We can be like his mouth to speak kindly to others. We can be like his hands to serve others and help them just as Jesus would, and like his feet to take us where he would go. It’s like we are the “hands and feet and mouth of Jesus,” his representatives on earth, through the work of his Spirit who lives in us. Remember...

“...we are members of his body” (Ephesians 5:30) Jesus Made It Possible For Us To Walk With God Again Like Adam And Eve Did

Adam and Eve broke fellowship with God, but Jesus has made it possible to walk with God in fellowship again, because Jesus became human and died in our place. He became one with us, so that we could be one with God. He sent the Holy Spirit to live inside of us so that we could walk with God and be guided by God, just like Adam and Eve were long ago. Sin had separated us from God, but now Christ has given us a new freedom to hear God’s voice and walk in close fellowship with him again.

Romans 8:1-2 says: “...there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death.”

We are now united with Christ, so God calls us righteous as he is righteous. We can praise God for this wonderful new relationship and fellowship and freedom we now enjoy: a freedom from the slavery of sin. We are free to relate to God as family and as a friend. That’s what Jesus said to his disciples:

John 15:15 says: “I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master’s business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you.”

Jesus Walked With His Disciples To Show Us What God Is Like

Jesus spent a lot of time walking long distances with his disciples as they went from town to town. He could have gotten a horse like other important men did in those days. But he didn’t. He wanted to spend the extra time walking with his disciples so they could talk about everything as they went from place to place. This shows us that God loves to be with us and talk with us. We should never think that God is too busy to listen to us. And we shouldn’t think that God only wants to talk about the big things in life. It would be similar to a husband and wife who enjoy talking to each other as they walk to their garden or somewhere else—they talk about many different things. Or like two

friends walking together—they talk about everything that’s on their hearts—the big things and the little things. God also loves to talk with us about everything that is on our hearts. That was his plan from the beginning. The Holy Spirit inside us enables us to walk and talk with God in this way, so we should not be too busy to talk with him, nor should we think that he is too busy to talk to us! As We Walk With The Holy Spirit, He Uses Us To “Crush The Head Of The Snake”

Satan tried to defeat and destroy mankind through Adam, but Christ came and defeated Satan’s power over us through the cross. Then he sent his Holy Spirit to live inside us who believe, so that we too could defeat Satan.

1 John 4:4 says: “You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world.” So we don’t need to fear Satan and the demons anymore. We don’t need to let him tempt us to follow our sin nature. God kept his promise to send his Holy Spirit who has overcome Satan and our sin nature. So we can be close to him and walk in the strength and wisdom of the Holy Spirit. Satan and our sin nature cannot destroy us. As we let the Holy Spirit guide our thoughts and lives, we can overcome Satan and his schemes (Romans 8:37) and as we resist him, he will flee (James 4:7).

We know that the Lord Jesus Christ “crushed the head of the snake” once and for all at the cross. But now the Spirit of Christ within us believers allows us the opportunity to use that victory to defeat Satan in our daily lives. Now we too (as his hands and feet) can ‘crush the head of the snake’ (Romans 16:20). We do this by allowing the Spirit of Christ to live through us as we walk with him. So let’s praise God for this wonderful gift of the indwelling Holy Spirit and that he wants to walk with us in close fellowship!

Things That The Holy Spirit Does To Help Us

The Holy Spirit only speaks the truth, so he helps us discern lies (John 14:17).

He helps us see our sin and understand God’s judgment (John 16:8).

He helps us know Christ intimately (John 15:26).

He gives life to our spirits (John 6:63; Titus 3:5).

He baptizes us into Christ’s family (body) (1 Corinthians 12:13).

He marks us as belonging to Christ and He is the seal (guarantee) of the promise to show that Christ will come back to get us (Ephesians 1:13-14; Ephesians 4:30).

He is the water of life we “drink” to gain spiritual strength (1 Corinthians 12:13).

He is our Helper (John 14:16).

He alone strengthens us to follow God’s will (John 15:26; Romans 8:4).

He will guide and direct our thoughts and actions (John 16:13).

He prays for us (Romans 8:26).

He alone can overcome the power of our sin nature (Galatians 5:16-25).

He produces fruit in our lives (Galatians 5:22-23).

He will live with us forever (John 14:16)!

In the last few chapters we have seen how much the Holy Spirit helps us do battle with Satan during the church age. In the next chapter, we'll look ahead into the future and the last days of the earth. We will see what the Holy Spirit's role will be in using Satan in a big way during those days.

23. The Holy Spirit Will Open The Way For Satan's King

Chapter 23 The Holy Spirit Will Open The Way For Satan's King Satan Wants To Confuse Us About The End Times

Many people have heard about the end times, but they are confused about details. Some people go too far and say things or set dates which God has not given. So, it's important to remember that God always keeps some things a mystery so that Satan does not know what God is going to do. He always seems to have some surprises in store for Satan and so he can't tell us every detail in the Bible. But God does give us enough details so that we generally know what to look forward to and have hope—even if the world continues to get worse. The Bible does tell us clearly that a terrible time of judgment is coming on the earth that is much worse than any other time in history (Matthew 24:21). It will be especially terrible for Israel (Jeremiah 30:7), but Jesus will return a second time to save them. Satan wants to confuse us about the end times, so he has spread his confusion everywhere. As always, he wants to frighten believers and also confuse unbelievers. He doesn't want anyone to understand and believe the truth.

2 Peter 3:3-4 says: "...in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires. They will say, "Where is this 'coming' he promised? Ever since our ancestors died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation."

It's true, there are many scoffers like this even today who mock the idea of end times or judgment or Christ's second coming. God says that they will be lost. But what about Christians? And what about Satan and his demons? What will happen to them in the end times? We will try to discuss these topics in the next few chapters, but since the end times is such a huge topic, we cannot cover every detail. Other good books have been written about it, so we will just try to look at general details and specifically focus on what things Satan is involved in and what the Bible says about SATAN'S ROLE during the last days.

God Delayed Destroying Satan To Do Some Work In The End As we have seen already, Jesus conquered Satan's power through Jesus' death on the cross and the empty tomb. But he hasn't removed Satan from the earth yet because he still has a purpose for Satan. But what is it, and how will God use Satan in the last days? We know that two of Satan's names are the Murderer and Destroyer (John 8:44; Revelation 9:11). Satan loves to hurt and kill people, but God doesn't allow him to just go around killing anyone he wants to. Satan needs God's approval first before he is allowed to do certain things. And God has a purpose for allowing Satan to do certain things—like using Judas to betray Jesus. But other times we don't know what God's purposes are. It seems pretty clear from Scripture that God will use Satan in many ways during the end times especially in bringing hardships and suffering to the world—especially to unbelievers. For example, God plans to use Satan to punish rebellious people and bring some people to repentance, and even to strengthen some believers. God is all-powerful and can use even his worst enemy to accomplish these goals.

Every Day Begins In The Night The Bible often compares darkness and light, night and day throughout the Old and New Testament. We know that every day begins in the darkness of night (Genesis 1:5 b) The Jews begin their day in the evening. In a similar way, the “Day of the Lord” will begin with a time of great spiritual darkness—a time of tribulation when Satan is very active. But God will use this for his purposes. The Coming Tribulation And Kingdom—The Day Of The Lord The world has always had times of suffering. But the Bible talks about a time of “Tribulation” in the end times—a time of great suffering which the world has never yet seen, or ever will again (Matthew 24:21; Revelation 7:14). It is also called the “Day of the Lord,” because during this time, the rebellious people of the world will finally begin to see that Jesus is actually the true LORD over the earth, not Satan. When the Lord begins to judge the earth and show his power and authority over it, he will finally receive the glory and praise that he deserves, and every knee will have to bow before him as the true LORD. Also, during this time, God will punish Israel so that the nation will repent and believe in the Lord Jesus as their Messiah. Then “the people living in darkness” will see “a great light.” Jesus will finally rule his people Israel in his kingdom during the second part of the Day of the Lord. “...a light has dawned.” (Matthew 4:16).

God’s Wrath Against Sin Will Be Seen In The End Times

God has always been patient and gracious to all people everywhere. But if people continue in stubborn rebellion and sin, God must judge them. God hates sin and the Day of the Lord will show how much he hates it. Some people think that God never gets angry, but the Bible has many examples of God’s anger and wrath against sin (Revelation 6:16-17; Revelation 11:18; Revelation 14:10; Revelation 14:19; Revelation 15:1; Revelation 15:7; Revelation 16:1; Revelation 16:19; Revelation 19:15; Revelation 21:9). The Tribulation is called a time of great WRATH.

God Will Rescue The Church First The apostle Paul talks about a time of God’s wrath that is still coming, but before that happens, God will take the believers away to heaven so they won’t experience God’s great wrath during the tribulation. God has not appointed us to suffer his wrath.

1 Thessalonians 5:2-9 says: “for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. While people are saying, “Peace and safety,” destruction will come on them suddenly...and they will not escape. But you, brothers and sisters, are not in darkness ...You are all children of the light and children of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness. ... For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

God says that we will be saved and avoid his wrath during the “Day of the Lord”—the time of tribulation darkness—because he did not appoint us to suffer wrath. What will the tribulation be like? And how will Jesus rescue us from it? The Bible has some answers: The Rapture

Many people talk about the Rapture, but since the word is not in the English Bible some people are confused and think it is just a lie. But the teaching about the rapture is in the Scriptures as we will see. The English word rapture has been used for a long time and it comes from the Latin word “RAPTURO.” The biblical Greek word is “HARPAZO.” It means to be “caught up or snatched away.” It’s also found in 1 Thessalonians where Paul talks about God’s wrath:

1 Thessalonians 4:16-18 says: “For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the

clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. Therefore encourage one another with these words.”

Verses About The Rapture Should Encourage Us

Some people are fearful of the end times. But as we can see from verse 18, God doesn't want to frighten us but to encourage us. If we believe in Christ, this verse is very encouraging because it says that God will take us away to be with him when the time of wrath comes. The Bible says the Day of the Lord will begin with the Great Tribulation, a time of wrath—far worse than any other time before—so we can thank God that he will keep us from that wrath. Instead, we will be taken away. We will be “caught up”—snatched away to meet the Lord in the air. But in order to meet Christ in the clouds, our bodies need to be changed instantly. The Lord will give us new resurrected bodies and then take us away and we will live with him forever. This ‘Rapture’ was not yet revealed in the Old Testament. Paul calls it a mystery that was newly revealed to him:

1 Corinthians 15:51-53 says: “Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed—in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality.”

Some Christians don't believe in the rapture and are afraid of experiencing the tribulation and God's wrath along with the unbelievers. But we shouldn't be frightened by this. Paul said that God has not appointed us to suffer the time of wrath that is coming (1 Thessalonians 5:9; 1 Thessalonians 1:10). And he said that he wrote these words to encourage us, not frighten us. So we can rejoice and thank God for that precious hope! But we should be concerned for those that don't believe and will remain on earth during the tribulation. Satan will unleash his fury on them during that time.

During The Tribulation, Satan Will Use The Antichrist To Rule

We've already seen how Satan has his own type of demonic government which he uses to influence governments from all nations so that they rebel against God and be under his rule. At the present time, God is preventing some of Satan's efforts to have full control over the world, but later, after God takes us Christians away in the rapture, it looks like he will allow Satan to do much more during the tribulation.

Satan will raise up a new world leader (the Nauseating Nobleman in our outline). He will be the worst king this world has ever known. He will have Satan's power and be his representative on earth. Satan may even indwell this man (Revelation 17:8). People from all over the world will follow this man and he will rule with great authority (Revelation 13:2-3). The Bible calls him the ANTICHRIST (1 John 2:18; 1 John 4:3) since he opposes Christ and wants to take his place as king of the world. Maybe he will even pretend to be Jesus. The Bible also calls him the Beast (Daniel 7:7 Revelation 13), and the Man of Lawlessness, etc.

What Is Holding Back Satan And The Antichrist Now?

Some people think the antichrist already came long ago, and they claim to know who he was. Some say that he is here today and they even claim to know his name. But all that is very doubtful because the Bible tells us that something else must happen before the antichrist (the “man of

lawlessness”) is revealed:

2 Thessalonians 2:1-8 says: “Concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to him, we ask you, brothers and sisters, not to become easily unsettled or alarmed by the teaching...asserting that the day of the Lord has already come. Don’t let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction. He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God’s temple, proclaiming himself to be God. Don’t you remember that when I was with you I used to tell you these things? And now you know what is holding him back, so that he may be revealed at the proper time. For the secret power of lawlessness is already at work; but the one who now holds it back will continue to do so till he is taken out of the way. And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will overthrow with the breath of his mouth and destroy by the splendor of his coming.”

Notice here in verses 6 and 7 we see these two phrases:

‘...what is holding him back...’ and ‘the one who now holds it back...’ So “who” and “what” is restraining or holding back the “man of lawlessness” from being revealed by Satan? It looks like the “who” is the Holy Spirit, and the “what” is the removal of the church—the temple of the Holy Spirit. *The Holy Spirit And The Church Restrain Satan’s Work*

We know that only God is powerful enough to restrain or hold back Satan and his work on this earth. Jesus said he would send the Holy Spirit especially to “...convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment” (John 16:8 NASB). So it looks like the Holy Spirit is the Restrainer. Similar to brakes on a car, which slow it down, the Holy Spirit is keeping Satan from leading the world into self-destruction. But how does he do that? He “convicts the world” by speaking into people’s minds and hearts and tries to convince them to repent. But he also uses us, the church, to teach people about God’s word and show them what godliness and the love of God look like. Ever since the Day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit is the indwelling power and identifying mark of the church. And the church is the body of Christ here on the earth. So, the Spirit of Christ who resides within the church is the one who is restraining or holding back Satan—hindering him from doing many of the things he would like to do on the earth. Satan wants to put his own king on the throne, an evil king—“the man of lawlessness” (the antichrist). But for now, the Spirit of God and the church are restraining Satan from revealing the antichrist who will be the leader of all nations. And so it looks like when the rapture occurs, then the Holy Spirit (the Restrainer) will be “taken out of the way” (vs. 7) and also remove the church from the earth. And that will allow Satan much more freedom to do whatever he wants. So it is the Holy Spirit that will open the door for the “man of lawlessness” to be revealed. Then Satan will use the antichrist to confuse the rebellious unbelievers of this world and bring them to their final destruction. *The Holy Spirit’s Work May Change During The Tribulation* So if the Holy Spirit will allow Satan and the antichrist to do their work, does that mean the Spirit will not be working at all during the tribulation? No. We know that the Holy Spirit is always at work! From the very beginning (Genesis 1:2), at the creation of the world until now, he is always at work and will continue to work forever. But he works differently at different times. For instance, in the Old Testament he worked differently than he does today. During that time, we see that he mostly helped the leaders of the people. He came and gave special messages from God to the prophets and priests, and he empowered the judges and kings

to guide and lead his people. But at that time the Holy Spirit did not live inside all believers like he does now. During the Old Testament times he would come and go and leave people whenever he chose. But Jesus told his apostles that that would change during the church age.

John 14:16-17 says: “And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever—the Spirit of truth. ...he lives with you and will be in you.”

Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit (our Advocate and Helper) would no longer just be WITH the disciples, but he would be IN us—forever (Ephesians 1:13). Jesus kept that promise, and ever since the Day of Pentecost in the New Testament, we know that the Spirit lives inside us permanently. We believers are the temple of the Holy Spirit—his dwelling place. So, in the future when Christ takes the church away to heaven, then his main dwelling place will also be there in heaven. So the work of the Holy Spirit on the earth will probably change then too. It’s possible that he will revert back to what he did before indwelling the church, by coming and going—as he did with Israel before the church age. That could be part of what he meant by saying the Restrainer will be “taken out of the way” (2 Thessalonians 2:7).

What Will The Antichrist Do?

After the Holy Spirit takes the church up to heaven, the antichrist will be revealed and start to work during the tribulation.

2 Thessalonians 2:8-12 says: “And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will overthrow with the breath of his mouth and destroy by the splendor of his coming. The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with how Satan works. He will use all sorts of displays of power through signs and wonders that serve the lie, and all the ways that wickedness deceives those who are perishing. They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. For this reason God sends them a powerful delusion so that they will believe the lie and so that all will be condemned who have not believed the truth but have delighted in wickedness.”

So, is God going to deceive these rebellious people? No. God could never lie or deceive people. Verse 11 says that God will send something that is a powerful delusion—something which will deceive people. He will send Satan and the “lawless one” and will allow them to use their power and deceitful miracles to deceive people during the tribulation. God will just be allowing Satan to do what he always does—deceive!

Why Will God Send Satan To Deceive People?

Why would God send a delusion to these people? The Bible says that they are “perishing” because they are proud and rebellious people who don’t want to believe in God (see 2:8-12 above). These verses are very clear. God wants to save them and he even sent his Son to die for them. He has given them the truth in the Bible, but they themselves “refuse to love the truth.” They do not want to hear the truth and believe. God tries over and over to help people with truth, but if they continue to reject Jesus and resist God, then God, who is righteous and holy, must judge their rebellion. So, since they love to hear lies, God will allow Satan and the lawless one to deceive them with powerful lies, so they will be condemned. During the tribulation, God will use Satan to deceive and punish the people who love to believe lies. They “refuse to love the truth.”

God Knows Who Will Believe In Christ

These verses also show us that God knows everything that is going to happen and how people will think. He already knows who will believe in Christ and who will not. So during the Day of the Lord, God will use Satan to test people and punish them if they are stubborn and don't want to believe God's Word. **The Antichrist Will Make An Agreement At The Beginning Of The Tribulation**

One of the major things that will happen after the rapture is that the antichrist will make an important agreement with Israel. At the beginning of the tribulation, the antichrist will make some sort of a peace agreement or covenant with Israel. It looks like he will agree to let them rebuild the temple in Jerusalem and start offering sacrifices again. The prophet Daniel spoke about this covenant:

Daniel 9:27 says: "He will confirm a covenant with many for one 'seven' (7 years). In the middle of the 'seven' he will put an end to sacrifice and offering. And at the temple he will set up an abomination that causes desolation, until the end that is decreed is poured out on him."

Daniel says that after 3½ years of the agreement, the antichrist will break his covenant, and it looks like he will take over the new temple himself. 2 Thessalonians 2:4 says that he will proclaim himself to be God at that time. We'll talk more about that later. Since we have not seen this agreement happen yet, we know that the antichrist has still not been revealed. Again, we know that the Holy Spirit is still holding him back and will keep doing so until the rapture happens.

We Don't Need To Be Afraid Of The Mark Of The Antichrist

Some people claim to know who the antichrist is. But whoever they might name is not likely the antichrist because the Bible says he hasn't been revealed yet. The Holy Spirit is still holding him back (2 Thessalonians 2:1-8) and will continue to do so until Christ has taken the Spirit (or Restrainer) out of the way (with the church at the rapture). So, if the church is still here, the antichrist has not yet been revealed.

So, if the antichrist has not yet been revealed, then we do not need to worry about accidentally getting his mark either. Many people worry about the mark of the beast. Some believe it is a type of ID card or a computer chip that they will put underneath their skin, or some sort of tattoo or other kind of mark. But we believers don't need to worry about this mark because it cannot be revealed until the beast is revealed. And they won't be revealed until after we are caught up to heaven. Then everyone who believes in him will receive his mark. And the mark will not be hidden anymore. But for now, it is not here, so we don't need to fear it or even guess what it is. **The False Prophet Has Not Appeared Yet** The Bible also tells us about another "beast" that will come, and he will force everyone to receive the mark of the antichrist in the last days (Revelation 13:11-18). This second beast is the False Prophet of the antichrist and Satan. He will perform many miracles by Satan's power and tell everyone to worship the antichrist and listen to him. This false prophet has not yet appeared, so we know that the mark also has not yet appeared. So again, we Christians do not need to fear the mark. When the antichrist and the false prophet arrive, we will be gone along with the Restrainer, the Holy Spirit. **Who Will Receive God's Seal During The Last Days?**

Revelation 7:3-4; Revelation 14:1; Revelation 14:3 tell us that 144,000 people will receive God's special mark or seal during the tribulation. Some religious groups claim that they alone will be included in that number. Some even claim that the "seal" is actually the Old Testament Sabbath day (Saturday). And they think that worshipping on Sunday is the mark of the antichrist. But the

Bible doesn't say that at all.

Revelation 7:3-8 says: "...Don't harm the land or the sea or the trees until we have placed the seal of God on the foreheads of His servants." And I heard how many were marked with the seal of God—144,000 were sealed from all the tribes of Israel: from Judah, 12,000; from Reuben, 12,000; from Gad, 12,000; from Asher, 12,000; from Naphtali, 12,000; from Manasseh, 12,000; from Simeon, 12,000; from Levi, 12,000; from Issachar, 12,000; from Zebulun, 12,000; from Joseph, 12,000; from Benjamin, 12,000." (NLT)

These verses make it very clear that God is not talking about a specific religious group or church, but rather "144,000 people from the tribes of ISRAEL." God did not use figurative language here. Instead, he used several verses to list very specific names and very precise numbers in saying who it is. He said it was going to be 12,000 people from each of the Israelite tribes listed. During the tribulation, the church will already be gone, so God is going to use believers from Israel again to be his witnesses to the world. 12,000 people from each of those tribes will have a special mark of protection from God. We don't know exactly who those people are, but we do know they will be ONLY from Israel, because God was very precise in naming those tribes and he knows exactly who is in each tribe that will be marked with a seal. The Sabbath day cannot be the mark of God or the mark of the antichrist as some people claim. The Bible says that the mark of the antichrist will be on their hands or foreheads (Revelation 13:16; Revelation 14:9), and people cannot put a day like Sunday on their foreheads! And besides, the antichrist's mark will not be hidden or secret. It will be something out in the open and people will receive it willingly because they believe in the antichrist.

Also, the Bible is clear that we no longer need to worry about the law of the Sabbath or on which particular day we worship (Colossians 2:14-17).

Romans 7:4 says we who are in Christ have "died to the law..." (Romans 8:1; Romans 3:19-22)

24. Satan's Roles During The End Times

Chapter 24 Satan's Roles During The End Times After The Times Of The Gentiles, God Will Work Powerfully Among The Israelites Again

Long ago, God promised King David that he would establish his kingdom within David's family (2 Samuel 7:16; 1 Chronicles 17:11-14). David was a good king. He loved God and tried to lead Israel to follow God so that God was their king too. But after David died, Israel rebelled against God and didn't want God to rule over them. So God punished Israel and allowed the Gentile kings to rule over them instead, for a long time. Then after many years God sent Jesus who was in David's family just like God had promised. Jesus came to save the Israelites, but instead, they rejected him and nailed him to a cross. God knew that would happen, so in his plan, he set Israel aside for a while and gave the Gentiles a chance to believe in Jesus as king. So now we are in what we call the church age. But what about Israel?

Romans 11:11 says: "Did (Israel) stumble so as to fall beyond recovery? Not at all! Rather, because of their transgression, salvation has come to the Gentiles to make Israel envious."

God did not totally reject Israel (Romans 11:1). He would never lie or break his promises to them. All the promises that he gave to Israel will still be fulfilled. But God will complete the "Times of the Gentiles" first, and then, after the rapture when the church has been taken away, it will be God's time to focus on Israel again (Romans 11:25-31). Because of their rebellion, Israelites have been scattered all over the world, but God wants to return them back to their land and establish a kingdom there with their new King. But they have to repent first. So God will be working hard to convince them to turn back to him during the tribulation period so they will repent. God will use Satan to punish them, so that in their troubles they will recognize their guilt and believe in Christ as their true King. Then he will rescue and save them as he promised.

"How awful that day will be! No other will be like it. It will be a time of trouble for Jacob, but he will be saved out of it." (Jeremiah 30:7) God Will Give Satan More Freedom And Authority During Tribulation

After the church is raptured and the tribulation begins, Satan and the antichrist will deceive many people and they will perish (2 Thessalonians 2:8-12). Some Israelites and some Gentiles will believe in Christ during this time, but not the majority, because it will be a very difficult time for them. Many of them will be killed. God will give Satan much power and freedom to do what he wants during that time.

Look at some of the things God will allow Satan and antichrist to do:

Revelation 13:5 says: "The beast was given a mouth to utter proud words and blasphemies and to exercise its authority...."

Revelation 13:7 says: "(The Beast) was given power to wage war against God's holy people and to conquer them..." (remember...this is not the church, but a new group of believers during the

tribulation.)

Revelation 13:14 says: "Because of the signs it was given power to perform on behalf of the first beast, it deceived the inhabitants of the earth..."

Each verse here shows that God will allow Satan to exercise a lot of authority through the antichrist! God will give him the freedom to perform signs and miracles in order to deceive people, and in this way, God will use Satan to punish the unbelievers as we read earlier (2 Thessalonians 2:8-12). The antichrist will also be allowed to blaspheme God with his proud mouth and even wage war against some believers.

God Will Also Use Satan To Help Israel Repent

Many Jews today don't believe the New Testament. They only believe the Old Testament because they don't want to believe that Jesus is God. But during the tribulation they will begin to see many of the prophecies of the New Testament being fulfilled. Also, God will use Satan to persecute the Jews, so they'll remember what the prophets have said and then repent and believe in Jesus. Some Gentiles will also believe during that time, but the antichrist will kill many of them (Revelation 6:9-11). The Day Of The Lord The Day of the Lord isn't just one single day. It's a time period that God mentions often in the Old and New Testament. Back then—in Bible times—it was similar to saying Last Days or End Times. God has chosen that time—the Day of the Lord—to show the world that he is Lord of all. Jesus will show his power and authority and majesty. He will judge the earth and fix the many problems of the earth and then will rule over the earth as King. The Day of the Lord includes two specific time periods:

A time of judgment and punishment against a rebellious world (7 years of tribulation)

A time when Christ will rule as King on the earth (1000 years - Millennium).

The 7 years of tribulation and the 1000-year reign of Christ will glorify Christ as Lord of all. After the millennium there will be one more final judgment. And then finally, the present earth and heaven will be burned up and God will create a whole new world (Rev. Ch. 20 & 21; 2 Peter 3:10-13).

Seven Year Tribulation

Let's look at the first part of the Day of the Lord. Why do we believe the tribulation will be seven years long? When the books of Daniel and Revelation are combined and compared, we see that they support and complement each other perfectly and explain many things about the last days. The prophecies can sometimes be mysterious and a little tricky to understand so we need to study them carefully. Daniel gives us the foundational ideas about the tribulation first, and then Revelation explains it more in detail.

Daniel 9 Talks About The 70 Heptads A long time ago, after King David died, the Israelites rebelled against God, so they were taken into captivity and held as slaves in Babylon where they suffered greatly. During that time, Daniel the prophet read the book of Jeremiah. In Jeremiah, God had said that after 70 years he would punish Babylon for what they had done to Israel, so Daniel thought that their time of captivity would be over after the 70 years (Daniel 9:2; Jeremiah 25:11-12). As he was reading this, the 70 years were almost complete, so Daniel prayed

passionately and asked God to help release Israel from their suffering after that time was over. In Daniel 9:24-27 we read God's answer. Even though God would punish Babylon, he said that the 70 years would not be the end of Israel's troubles. Instead of 70 years it would take 70 heptads to bring Israel to repentance. In Greek and English, the word 'heptad' means 'seven' or a group of seven. For example, a group of seven days we call one week, so one week would be a heptad. But the Israelites used the heptad to count years also. So, 70 heptads is like saying "seventy sevens"(NIV) or "A period of seventy sets of seven" (NLT). $70 \times 7 \text{ years} = 490 \text{ years}$. That was the time that God had set to complete Israel's troubles and to bring in the Kingdom of Christ. In Daniel Ch. 9, God divided those 490 years like this:

7 heptads – $7 \times 7 \text{ years} = 49 \text{ years}$ to rebuild the temple.

62 heptads – $62 \times 7 \text{ years} = 434 \text{ more years}$ up until the time the "Anointed One" died.

($49 + 434 = 483 \text{ years}$)

1 heptad – $1 \times 7 \text{ years} = 7 \text{ final yrs.}$ to complete tribulation of Israel during the end times—this opens the way for the Kingdom.

The 7 heptads and 62 heptads add up to 483 years. These years have already passed. Israel did rebuild the temple and the Anointed One, the Messiah (or Christ), did come, just as God had prophesied. But Israel turned their backs on Christ. So after 483 years the Anointed One was "cut off" or "put to death" (Daniel 9:26). And verse 26 says that after he is killed, he "...will have nothing." In other words, he would not yet be accepted as King in Israel, but he would wait until later. So now 69 heptads (483 years) have passed and we're waiting for the last heptad (7 years) to fulfill the complete number of 490 years to bring back the Anointed One to Israel. Many scholars believe those last 7 years will be in the end times—we call it "the tribulation" or "time of Jacob's Trouble." After that, Christ will finally become King in Israel and sit on the "throne of David" in Jerusalem as he promised, and he will rule over his Kingdom forever.

Since God knew that Israel would reject the Anointed One, he had another plan to help the rest of the world. After Israel rejected Jesus as their king, God set Israel aside and began to help the Gentiles. During this time called the church age, God is actively working at drawing Gentiles into his family too (Romans 11:25-32). Then later, at the rapture, God will take the church up to heaven and the church age will be finished. Then he will focus on Israel again during the tribulation. The tribulation period will complete the last 7 years of the 70 heptads (490 years). After that, Christ will come back to rescue Israel from the antichrist and set up his earthly Kingdom which will last for 1000 years. The Tribulation Is Seven Years Divided Into Two In the book of Daniel we've seen that the tribulation will last seven years. But those 7 years are also divided in the middle (Daniel 9:27) with each half being $3\frac{1}{2}$ years each. In Revelation too we see the same thing. Sometimes it is called $3\frac{1}{2}$ years (Revelation 12:14) and sometimes it says 42 months (Revelation 11:2) and sometimes it talks about 1260 days (Revelation 11:3). All of these equal $3\frac{1}{2}$ years in the Jewish calendar. The first $3\frac{1}{2}$ years is called the time of tribulation. The second $3\frac{1}{2}$ years is called the "Great Tribulation." It will be a terrible time for Israel and everyone else that remains (Matthew 24:21).

Mark 13:20 says that "If the Lord had not cut short those days, no one would survive. But for the sake of the elect, whom he has chosen, he has shortened them."

God Will Use Satan And Demons During The Tribulation To Punish Disobedient Mankind The tribulation will be a terrible time, but the second half—the Great Tribulation—will be especially bad. Satan will do many terrible things as God allows him. One example is found in Revelation Ch. 9, where it talks about one of the things Satan will do with his demons. Some of those demons are now in prison in the bottomless pit, which is called the Abyss in Greek.

Some people think the Abyss is hell, but it's not actually hell (the lake of fire), but it may be similar. The English word hell is usually translated from the Greek word Gehenna which is a permanent place of punishment—the lake of fire, also known as the second death. But the Abyss is not a permanent place like hell. Instead, it's a temporary prison for spirits that are awaiting the time of judgment when God will later send them to hell. (2 Peter 2:4 uses the Greek word tartaros which is probably the same as Abyss).

God has imprisoned some of Satan's demons in the Abyss until the time of the tribulation. Then God will allow Satan to release them for a short time and allow them to come out and cause a lot of pain and terror for some people. So we can see here again how God can even use his enemy to do his work for him. He will use Satan and the demons to punish the rebellious people of the earth.

These demons will be fearsome-looking (like locusts with stingers and like horses going to battle.) They will torture and inflict much pain on rebellious people—so much pain that they will want to die. Later on, God will also release four more demons that are bound at the Euphrates River. He will use them to gather a huge army which will kill 1/3 of all the people on the earth. The army will be about 200 million strong (Revelation 9:14-18). Some scholars think this will be China's army because they have such a large army. But some scholars believe this is an army of demons that will look like men and horses.

We don't know all the details of what will happen, but we can definitely see God's authority here. He has authority over Satan's armies and mankind's armies too. God can use even his enemies!
The Antichrist Will Kill God's Two Witnesses

Some scholars believe that this huge army will form after the antichrist kills God's two special witnesses (Revelation 11). For 3½ years these two witnesses will prophecy in Israel and do miracles in God's power and they will encourage the Israelites to repent. But then after the 3½ years, God will allow the antichrist to kill them. And it looks like that might be the time when the antichrist goes into the temple and claims to be God and begins to really fight against Israel. In The Middle Of The Tribulation, The Antichrist Will Begin To Persecute Israel And Claim That He Is God

Jesus talked about the "great tribulation" or distress that Daniel spoke of (Daniel 9:27). This tribulation will get very bad for Israel in the middle of the 7-year tribulation.

Matthew 24:15-21 says: "So when you see standing in the holy place 'the abomination that causes desolation,' spoken of through the prophet Daniel—let the reader understand—then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains...How dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers! Pray that your flight will not take place in winter or on the Sabbath. For then there will be great distress (tribulation), unequalled from the beginning of the world until now—and never to be equaled again."

2 Thessalonians 2:4 says: "He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God." When the antichrist breaks his covenant with Israel and goes into the temple in the middle of the seven years and says that he is God, then Israel will know that he is a liar (Matthew 24:15). But it will be too late for most of them. At that time he will begin to fight against them and persecute them.

Satan Will Use The Antichrist To Fight Against Israel. It Will Be A Terrible Time

Revelation 12 contains a prophecy about this by using a word picture. It talks about a large red dragon, (ancient serpent, which represents Satan), and a pregnant woman, (which represents Israel). The woman is clothed with the sun and moon and stars (these symbols can also be found in Genesis 37:9-10, representing Israel). When the pregnant woman bears a son, then the dragon tries to devour the child, but God takes him to heaven. So the dragon (Satan) becomes very angry and wants to kill the woman instead. This prophetic picture shows us several things. First, we know that the baby that was born is Jesus who was born into the family of Israel (the woman). The Bible says he "will rule all nations." We also know that the dragon (Satan) tried to kill him when he was still a baby (Matthew 2:16) and tried to destroy him as King by crucifying him (John 13:2; John 13:27). But then God took him to heaven where he is seated on his throne at the right hand of God (Acts 2:33; Acts 5:31). Since he can't destroy Jesus, the dragon (Satan) will be very angry with the woman (Jesus' family, Israel) and try to destroy them completely. The prophets also wrote about this time that is to come. We read this verse earlier:

Jeremiah 30:7 says: "How awful that day will be! No other will be like it. It will be a time of trouble for Jacob (Israel), but he will be saved out of it." The Angels Fight To Throw Satan Out Of Heaven To Earth In Revelation 12 we have seen that the red dragon represents Satan. Verse 4 says that he swept 1/3 of the stars of heaven down with his tail. These stars represent Satan's demons or fallen angels (vs. 9) who also rebelled and sinned against God along with Satan long ago. So, in Revelation 12 we see Satan and this army again and they are fighting a huge battle in heaven. It is a spiritual battle with Satan and his demons against Michael the archangel and the other good angels, who will throw Satan and his army out of heaven. The battle probably has something to do with Satan asking God if he can destroy Israel completely, because that is the context of this chapter, and because Michael is the angel named here. In Daniel, Michael is called the "the great prince" (a powerful angel) who protects Israel.

Daniel 12:1 says: "At that time Michael, the great prince who protects your people, will arise. There will be a time of distress such as has not happened from the beginning of nations until then."

It looks as if this battle will happen in heaven right in the middle of the tribulation because verse 6 talks about 1260 days, which is 3½ years, and that is right in the middle of the seven years. The last 3½ years is called the "great tribulation" because it will be the worst tribulation that Israel has ever had.

Matthew 24:21 says: "...there will be great distress (tribulation), unequalled from the beginning of the world until now--and never to be equaled again."

Satan is called "accuser" of the brethren who accuses believers before God day and night (Revelation 12:10).

We have seen an example of that with the story of Job. So then in the last days, when Satan and the demons are thrown out of heaven, they will never be able to go back to heaven again to accuse the believers (Jews and Gentiles) before God (Revelation 12:7-12). From that time on, it looks like God will be restricting Satan and demons to stay only on the earth for the rest of his time. So Revelation 12:12 says that those in heaven can rejoice, but those on earth must be afraid because Satan will be very angry now!

Satan Will Only Have A Short Time Left And He Will Be Very Angry With Israel When God throws Satan out of heaven and restricts him to the earth, Satan will know he only has a short time left (Revelation 12:12) because God has set the time as 1260 days or 3½ years. So he will work very hard to inflict trouble and pain on Israel in every way he can, because he hates everyone whom God loves and he knows that God has chosen to help Israel and rescue them. Matthew 24:15-22 talks about this terrible time that will happen in the middle of the tribulation.

God will not allow Satan and the antichrist to completely destroy Israel. Instead, he will provide some ways of protection for them so they know that he cares for them. Jesus warned the Israelites that when the great tribulation came they should not stay in Jerusalem but escape immediately.

Matthew 24:16-18 says: "...let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. Let no one on the housetop go down to take anything out of the house. Let no one in the field go back to get their cloak."

Revelation 12:14 says: "The woman (Israel) was given the two wings of a great eagle, so that she might fly to the place prepared for her in the wilderness, where she would be taken care of for a time, times and half a time, (3½yrs) out of the serpent's reach."

It looks like God will hide and protect those Israelites who believe his word and flee into the wilderness. But those who remain in Jerusalem will probably perish. Satan and the antichrist will try to destroy them wherever they go. They will try to chase after the many Israelites who will still be living in other countries as they are today.

Revelation 12:17 says: "Then the dragon was enraged at the woman and went off to wage war against the rest of her offspring--those who keep God's commands and hold fast their testimony about Jesus."

(These verses are talking about the Israelites who will believe in Jesus during the great tribulation. It is not talking about the present-day believers in the church.) The Meanings Of The Symbols Here's a summary of the meanings of the symbols from Revelation 12, 13 : The pregnant woman is Israel. (Revelation 12:1-2; Genesis 37:9-10) The red dragon is Satan. (Revelation 12:3) The child that is born is Jesus. (Revelation 12:5-6) The angel is Michael. (Revelation 12:7-12) The other children of the woman are the believing Israelites that are scattered around. (Revelation 12:17) The beast from the ocean is the antichrist. (Revelation 13:1) The second beast from the ground is the False Prophet. (Revelation 13:11) God Will Use The Antichrist To Punish Rebellious People

Revelation chapter 13 has much to say about the Beast, also known as the antichrist, or the man of lawlessness (lawless one). This chapter also talks about his government, which will rule over everyone on earth at that time. Satan will use this man as his king and will control his government

to work against God and try to destroy everyone on earth. In this way God will use Satan to punish all the rebellious people on earth because they refuse to listen to God and follow him (2 Thessalonians 2:9-12).

God Will Use The Demons To Influence Kings

Revelation 16:13-16 says: "Then I saw three unclean spirits that looked like frogs coming out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of the demons performing signs who go out to the kings of the earth to bring them together for the battle that will take place on the great day of God, the All-Powerful. ... Now the spirits gathered the kings and their armies to the place that is called Armageddon in Hebrew." (NET)

God will use the demons and allow them to perform all kinds of miracles which will entice kings to go and fight. God wants the kings to take their armies for the great battle, where they will be destroyed. So here God shows us again that he has all power and he will even use demons, his enemies, to punish rebellious people and accomplish his will.

Christ Will Return To Get The Israelite And Gentile Believers The seven years of tribulation will be a very terrible time. Almost everyone on the earth at that time will die (Mark 13:20). But at the end of those seven years, God will send Christ to save Israel and do away with his enemies and then he will establish his kingdom. We'll talk about that in the next chapter.

25. Satan Imprisoned By The Returning King

Chapter 25 Satan Imprisoned By The Returning King The Wedding Dress Of The Bride Of Christ We read earlier that just before the tribulation, at the rapture, the church will be...

“...caught up together ... in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. Therefore encourage one another with these words” (1 Thessalonians 4:17-18).

Yes, we believers should be very encouraged by these promises, because it is this same “Jesus who rescues us from the coming wrath”—as it says in 1 Thessalonians 1:10. So, while the world is suffering wrath and being oppressed by Satan and the antichrist during the tribulation, the church will be enjoying wonderful new fellowship in heaven—face to face with the Lord Jesus. At that time, Christ will judge and give rewards to the raptured believers in heaven for their service for him (1 Corinthians 3:10-15). It will also be a time when the church, “the bride” of Christ, will receive her special “wedding clothes” like a bride preparing for her wedding day. It will be a time of great rejoicing for the church.

Revelation 19:7-8 says: “Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready. Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear.” (Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of God’s holy people.)” The bride’s clothing is described as “fine linen, bright and clean.” This is the new “heavenly clothing” for the church—something that we will wear forever. It will always be in style and never wear out or get dirty. And somehow it will reveal the “righteous acts” of God’s people too. This is hard for us to understand. Maybe these clothes will be physical or maybe they will be some kind of spiritual clothes. We don’t really know. But somehow the righteous acts of God’s people will be visible for others to see and admire (Revelation 3:4-5; Revelation 18), like decorations on a beautiful wedding dress put on by a bride in preparation for her wedding day. Of course, any righteous acts that are done by us believers come as a result of Christ himself working in us through his Spirit. That’s why it says the clothes were “givento her to wear.” This clothing will reflect the glorious image or character of Christ himself, the Righteous One, and we will give glory to God for his gracious work in our lives. He will receive praise for his work in the church, but somehow by his grace, he has also chosen to share that glory with us, his bride (Romans 8:17)! Truly Amazing Grace!

Christ And The Church Are Ready For A Very Important Event In History: The Kingdom When the tribulation on earth is almost over, the church will be “ready” and waiting in heaven (Revelation 19:7) for the wedding feast of the Lamb. The announcement of the Wedding Feast of the Lamb and his bride marks the time when Christ will return and claim his kingdom on the earth. Christ will return to the earth along with his bride, the church, and finally set up his own government on this earth. The coming King and his kingdom will be one of the most important moments in the history of the earth. It is extremely important to God because this is what he has been planning for mankind since he created Adam and Eve in the beginning!

Matthew 25:34 refers to it as: "...the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world."

Since this kingdom will be such a big event in the history of all mankind, there will be much rejoicing and praise going on in heaven as everyone there will be looking forward to it! So we had better practice up on our Hallelujahs because we'll be part of this!

Revelation 19:1-6 says: "... I heard what sounded like the loud voice of a vast throng in heaven, saying, "Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God..."Hallelujah!" ...The twenty-four elders and the four living creatures threw themselves to the ground and worshiped God, who was seated on the throne, saying: "Amen! Hallelujah!" ... Then I heard what sounded like the voice of a vast throng, like the roar of many waters and like loud crashes of thunder. They were shouting: "Hallelujah! For the Lord our God, the All-Powerful, reigns!"(NET) Christ Is Already King But He Is Waiting To Claim His Kingdom On Earth The verse above says that the Lord "reigns," but keep in mind that this is even before he returns to earth to claim his kingdom. It's important to understand that the Lord has always been King (Daniel 4:3; 2 Peter 1:11). And as we stated before, he is the King over everything:

1 Chronicles 29:11-12 says: "Yours, LORD, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the majesty and the splendor, for everything in heaven and earth is yours. Yours, LORD, is the kingdom; you are exalted as head over all ... you are the ruler of all things..." (Psalms 24:1; 2 Chronicles 20:6)

Yes, the Lord is King over everything. But he also gave the earth to man to rule over it as a king under him. Man's kingdom was to be a sub-kingdom under the Kingdom of God.

Psalms 115:16 says: "The highest heavens belong to the LORD, but the earth he has given to mankind." (also Psalms 8:6)

Genesis 1:26 "...God said, "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule..."

Man was created in God's image so that he also would be a king over the earth. But he was still under the King of kings. When man submitted to Satan he became a slave to Satan and put himself under Satan's rule, therefore now Satan is the ruler over the earth (1 John 5:19; John 12:31). But when Christ became a man and then died and rose again in that physical human body, he defeated Satan's power—as a representative of the human race.

Therefore, other humans no longer have to be slaves and submit to Satan anymore. Christ also gave the Holy Spirit to believers in Jesus so that we would have the power to resist and defeat Satan. After Christ arose from the grave and had defeated Satan, he went to heaven and sat down on his throne at the right hand of the Father (Acts 2:33). The Absent King Will Return To Claim His Throne

Yes, even now as we speak today, Jesus is already King and he has all authority from the Father (Matthew 28:18), and he is seated on his throne in heaven. But he has not yet claimed his throne on earth. He has not yet taken the Throne of David in Jerusalem as promised (Is. 9:7; Luke 1:32). So, he is an absent king—waiting for his earthly kingdom to be established. That's what Jesus was talking about in Luke 19:11-12. The people thought Jesus would immediately set up his kingdom in Jerusalem, but he told a parable of a man who would go into a "distant country" to be appointed

king first and then return later. In the same way, Jesus went to heaven and was appointed king, but he is waiting to return as King over the earth. He is also like the bridegroom in the parable in Matthew 25:5 who is delayed in coming back but will return soon with his bride for the marriage feast of the Lamb. God the Father has said that the enemies of Jesus will first be defeated, and then Jesus will claim his kingdom on earth.

"The Lord said..."Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet." " (Acts 2:34-35)

Yes, his enemies will be defeated before he claims his throne in Israel and his new kingdom on earth. But let's look at his return first. When King Jesus Returns, It Will Be As An All-Powerful King And Judge The first time Jesus came to earth, he came as a tiny weak little baby. But the second time Jesus comes, he will come as the All-Powerful King over all kings. The first time Jesus came to earth, he was judged like a criminal and condemned by wicked judges. But the second time he comes to earth, he will come as the Righteous Judge over those people who falsely accused him! When Jesus returns to earth, he will come with great power and authority and his enemies will be all be defeated and judged (Revelation 19:11-16). No one will be able to stand against him.

Jesus' Second Coming Will Be Very Visible For All To See

Remember when Jesus left the disciples and went back up to heaven? They were all standing on the Mt. of Olives watching him go up into the clouds and up to heaven. Then two angels spoke to them and said,

"...Men of Galilee, why do you stand here looking up into the sky? This same Jesus who has been taken up from you into heaven will come back in the same way you saw him go into heaven." (Acts 1:11) (NET) So these angels told them that Jesus will return in the same way that he left—which means visibly, and in plain sight. People were watching him as he left the earth and went up through the clouds into heaven, so later people will also see him leave heaven and watch him come back down to earth in the same way as he left the first time (Revelation 1:7). And some scholars believe that he will even land in the very same place as he left—on the Mt. of Olives in Israel (Zechariah 14:4). The Second Coming Is Different Than The Rapture In the Bible, it appears that Christ's second coming is quite different than the rapture, so we should be careful not to confuse them. At the rapture, the Lord Jesus comes to get the believers—to take them away—but at the Second Coming he will come with the believers as his army (Revelation 19:14), along with his angels. At the rapture, Christ won't actually come down to the earth, but rather we will meet him in the clouds (1 Thessalonians 4:17). Also, the rapture will happen suddenly "in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye" (1 Corinthians 15:52), so that other people won't see Christ at that time. But the second coming of Christ will be a worldwide event. He will come in such a way that he is very visible for all people on earth to see him.

Revelation 1:7 says: "Look, he is coming with the clouds," and "every eye will see him, even those who pierced him"; and all peoples on earth "will mourn because of him" (Matthew 24:29-30). The reason these people will mourn when he comes this second time is because he will come to judge the wicked and rebellious people who have followed the antichrist, so they will fear him and mourn. And even some Jews will mourn. They are the nation who rejected their King and who "pierced him" (with nails on the cross). So Christ will judge all the unbelievers that are still alive at the end of

the tribulation—before he begins his 1000-year kingdom here on earth. Finally the earth will have a righteous and just King! The King Of Kings Returns To Earth Here's a quick overview of the details in Revelation 19:11-16 :

The Man sitting on the white horse and coming down from heaven is Christ. (A white horse symbolizes victory and a conqueror—someone who has won the battle).

His eyes are like blazing fire: This symbolizes a perfect Judge. Fire was used for light and also to purify things. Fire provides light to see in dark places. Jesus sees everything clearly, even the hidden dark secrets of men, so he judges people truthfully. Fire is also a symbol of testing, refinement and judgment. Fire is used to refine and test metals for purity. It burns off the impurities and leaves the pure metals. Jesus will judge sin like fire removing the dross. Nothing will be able to hide from his judgment.

Blood on his clothes (Revelation 19:21): Some scholars think this is a symbol of the blood he shed to redeem us. But probably this comes from Isaiah 63:2-3 where it is a symbol of the blood of God's enemies when Christ defeats them at his second coming (Revelation 19:15).

Word of God: This is another name for Christ (John 1:1). Jesus is the voice, the expression, the very best possible way to communicate to mankind who God is.

The army of heaven that rides on white horses and follows Christ: These are the believers that have received white robes that are clean and pure (Revelation 19:8). It may also be his angels.

The sharp sword coming out of Christ's mouth: this represents Christ's words. All people will be judged by his Word and his Word will defeat all his enemies like a sharp sword (Revelation 1:16; Revelation 2:16, Isaiah 11:4; 2 Thessalonians 2:8).

The Name "King of kings and Lord of lords" is Christ's glorious name.

Christ's Kingdom Will Overthrow And Remove Satan's Kingdom The Antichrist Will Gather A Huge Army

Revelation 19:19-21 tells us how Christ will win the battle over his enemies. The Beast (or antichrist) is the man Satan will use to rule everyone on earth during the tribulation. Then finally, he will gather an army of kings along with their armies from around the world and they will come and fight against Jesus and the armies of heaven (16:12-16). It looks like the armies from the east will also come against Israel to fight (Revelation 16:12; Revelation 9:14), and all of them will meet at a place called Armageddon (16:16). These huge armies will cover the whole land of Israel and a huge war will break out. God will use Satan and the antichrist to bring all these rebellious people together, and then at just the right time, Jesus will come down with his army of angels and Christians from heaven. It looks like we will come down with Jesus to the Mt. of Olives (Revelation 19:15; Revelation 19:19-21; 2 Thessalonians 2:8; Zechariah 14:1-4; Acts 1:9-12).

Christ Will Fight And Defeat Antichrist's Army No matter how many soldiers come that day, they won't be able to defeat Christ. All the armies of every nation can't frighten Christ. Even if they bring huge guns or bombs or fighter jets, none of these can defeat Christ. Christ has all power, and he will completely defeat the antichrist and the false prophet and their whole vast army. His enemies will all be defeated simply by Christ speaking words from his mouth (Joel 3:2; Zechariah 12:1-9;

Isaiah 33:1 to Isaiah 34:17; Isaiah 63:1-6; Isaiah 66:15-16; Jeremiah 25:27-33; Revelation 20:7-10).

Christ Will Send The Antichrist And False Prophet Directly To The Lake Of Fire At that time, God will not waste any time waiting to judge the antichrist (beast) and the false prophet. While they are still alive, Jesus will throw them directly down into the lake of fire where they will be tormented day and night forever. This place is called hell or the second death.

They will remain in the lake of fire forever and will never be able to leave again, so they will no longer be able to deceive people on the earth. The other rebellious people who die at that time will be judged later. But no matter if they are kings or presidents or generals of armies or very rich, influential people, their bodies will still become food for the birds of prey on the battleground (Revelation 19:17-18).

Satan Is Bound (Imprisoned) God Alone Is Able To Imprison Satan

Okay, we have seen how God will send the antichrist and his false prophet into the lake of fire (hell) at the return of Christ. But God will not send Satan there right away. Instead, the Bible says that he will imprison (bind) Satan for 1000 years during the kingdom (Revelation 20:1-3). Some people think that they can “bind” Satan through prayer even now. But only God is able to bind him and he will do that when it is the right time during the end times. Until then the Bible says that Satan is still roaming free on the earth today, so we are instructed to “resist” him (1 Peter 5:8-9). During the Kingdom, Satan will be bound for 1000 years, and during that time he will be in a spiritual prison and will not be able to deceive people on earth. The Place Satan Will Be Bound Is Different Than Hell

Satan will be bound in a place called the Abyss or bottomless pit. It’s not the same as hell. Hell is an eternal punishment, so those who are sent to hell (or the lake of fire) can never come out again. But God uses a similar place called the Abyss (or Tartarus, 2 Peter 2:4) which may even be connected to the lake of fire—but it is a temporary prison for some demons and Satan where they are “reserved for judgment.” The lake of fire is for after their judgment.

We already looked at Revelation 9:1-3 which talks about the time when God will open the Abyss and let some of the demons out to punish people on earth. And then again, during the 1000-year kingdom, this is where Satan will be bound—in the Abyss. And when the 1000 years are finished, God will let him loose for a short time. After that God will throw him into hell (the lake of fire) forever (Revelation 20:7-10).

Two Types Of Resurrections In the chart above, you will notice a few different resurrections mentioned which could be summarized into two main groups: Believers and Unbelievers—or Resurrection of the “Living” and Resurrection of the “Dead.” Here’s a quick look at their order.

The Resurrection And Satan

It is not our purpose to go into all the details of these events here, but why is the resurrection so important in the story about Satan? As we have seen earlier, the death and resurrection of Jesus was a huge victory over sin and death, so the resurrection of believers to eternal life is also a huge victory for Christ over Satan.

Hebrews 2:14-15 says: "...by his death he might break the power of him who holds the power of death--that is, the devil--and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death." So when Satan was defeated by the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus, he no longer had the power of death over us who have believed in Christ. We are freed from Satan's kingdom, and death has been conquered too. We no longer have to fear death. In fact, the resurrection is our hope of a new perfect resurrected body which is no longer bothered by sin or death. The "sting of death" is gone!

1 Corinthians 15:54-55 : "...Death has been swallowed up in victory." "Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?"

----- The Millennium—Kingdom —1000 Years Without Satan— The Meaning Of The Kingdom

After the return of Christ and the resurrection of Old Testament believers and tribulation believers, there will also be those people who did not die during the tribulation and are still alive when Christ returns. What will happen to them? They too will be judged: both the Jews and Gentiles. Those who have believed in Christ will enter the Kingdom. But before we talk about those people, let's review the meaning of the word "kingdom." The Old and New Testament both mention the kingdom many times. It was something the Jews had been waiting for—for hundreds of years before Jesus came. John the Baptist, the apostles, and of course, Jesus, taught about the coming "Kingdom of heaven" or the "Kingdom of God." These names both basically mean the same thing. They mean that "the government of God" or "the government of heaven" will be ruling over all people on the earth. We know that God has always been above all other governments and that he is the King of kings. Nevertheless we also know that God created Adam like a son (Luke 3:38) and he put Adam and his descendants in charge of the earth to rule over it as kings. But since Adam submitted to Satan, he allowed Satan to take over as the ruler of the earth. So later, God sent the "second Adam" (Christ) to take Adam's place and take back the earth from Satan, and remake the earth into a proper kingdom of God again—a kingdom that is not ruled by fallen angels or rebellious men. So Christ had to become a real human being in order to represent mankind, and then, as a human, he overcame Satan on the cross for mankind.

Why Hasn't Jesus Yet Established The Kingdom In Israel?

Long ago, God promised King David that a King would come from within his family and that he would be the King of everyone on earth (2 Samuel 7:8-17). We now know that he was talking about Christ. Christ is the one who will sit on David's throne in Jerusalem, and he will rule over Israel and all mankind, just like God promised (Acts 2:30). He will not just be the King of Israel, but he will be the King over all kings and Lord over all lords. So why hasn't Jesus yet claimed his kingdom in Israel? Jesus indeed did come from the lineage of David (Matthew 1:6-17) as God promised, and he did live among the Israelites and constantly talked to them about the kingdom that was coming. But Satan deceived the leaders of Israel so they didn't believe Jesus was the promised king. So the leaders and most people in Israel rejected Jesus as their king (Matthew 23:37-39; Mark 15:12-13) because they didn't want to repent. So Jesus didn't establish his kingdom in Israel at that time because they weren't ready to repent and accept Jesus as their King.

Israel's Rebellion Has Opened A Door For Gentiles To Enter The Kingdom

Israel chose to be the enemy of Jesus their king (Luke 19:10-28; Luke 19:41-44) and they had him killed on a cross. God said that their rejection of Christ opened the door for Gentiles to repent and become believers (Romans 10, 11).

Christians Are Citizens Of God's Kingdom Already

Ever since Jesus rose again and went to heaven, many people, including Gentiles and some Jews, have believed in him and accepted him as their Savior, so those people have made Christ King of their hearts and lives. So, in a sense, the kingdom of God is already inside them, because the King lives and rules there and they are his citizens.

Colossians 1:13 says "...he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves..." This verse talks about those of us who have been rescued from the "dominion" of darkness. This word dominion means the "authority or control" that Satan and sin have over people. So anyone who believes in Christ as their Savior is no longer under the authority or government of Satan. Satan is not our king or authority any more. We are under a new dominion—a new government—the Kingdom of God and Christ. We who are believers in Christ are already citizens of the Kingdom of God (the Kingdom of heaven).

Php 3:20 says "...our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ..."

Yes, we Christians are citizens of the Kingdom of heaven already, but we are still waiting for the king to return to set up his earthly Kingdom in Israel as he promised. It will be a time when Satan does not have dominion over Israel or the rest of the world. A new King will be in charge: the God-Man, Jesus.

Satan Always Fights Against Israel But He Will Not Win

Satan has always hated Israel more than other nations because Israel was chosen by God to bring the new King who would defeat Satan (Revelation 12). Satan has always turned Israel against God as their true king, but God will not let Satan win in this battle over Israel. God has chosen them and he will defeat Satan and win their hearts back to God (Romans 11:25-28). This will happen during the "time of Jacob's trouble"—the tribulation.

Jeremiah 30:7 says: "How awful that day will be! No other will be like it. It will be a time of trouble for Jacob (Israel), but he will be saved out of it."

Israel Will Finally Repent In The End Times And Many Will Enter The Kingdom The Bible says that during the tribulation many Israelites will finally repent and turn to God, and he will fulfill his promise to them and save them from total destruction by the antichrist. Then he will finally establish his kingdom in Israel. The apostle Peter and also Paul reminded people that this restoration of Israel was still coming in the future:

Acts 3:19-21 "Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord, and that he may send the Messiah, who has been appointed for you—even Jesus. Heaven must receive him until the time comes for God to restore everything, as he promised long ago through his holy prophets." (Acts 2:34-35)

Acts 15:16 says: “After this I will return and rebuild David’s fallen tent. Its ruins I will rebuild, and I will restore it...”

Christ Will Remove Satan And His Followers Before The Kingdom When Christ returns to establish his kingdom, he will first throw the antichrist and false prophet into the lake of fire (Revelation 19:20). After that, Satan will be bound for 1000 years in the Abyss during the Kingdom. The Christians will also help Christ judge the earth and remove all rebellious people that are still alive at the end of the tribulation (Matthew 25:31-46; Revelation 20:4). It won't matter if they are leaders of powerful nations or armies or if they are rich and famous, Christ will remove all the rebellious unbelievers before he sets up his kingdom. Satan and his followers will have no power at all over Christ and his kingdom. No one can stand against him. Christ will overcome all rebellious people on the earth and only believers will be allowed to enter his kingdom (Ephesians 5:5; 1 Corinthians 6:9-10; Galatians 5:19-21). **The Kingdom Will Be The Most Wonderful Time On The Earth**

What will this final kingdom be like? The prophet Daniel often spoke about the things that would lead up to this time. Others gave us a few details. But there's no doubt it will be the most amazing time on earth since the garden of Eden. Satan will no longer be in charge of the earth. He will be bound—imprisoned for 1000 years—and Christ will be the King—the most wonderful King who ever ruled on the earth. Believers who live through the tribulation will go into the Kingdom with Christ and they will honor and obey him as their Lord and King. They will finally be able to live in peace at last, since Satan and his kingdom will no longer be able to hurt them.

Peace, Security And Health

Imagine this new world without Satan. Peace and security will be the normal experience in life for those who live in the kingdom of Christ. The Bible says that Christ will “rule with a rod of iron,” which means that there will always be law and order, and crime will not be a problem. Hatred and jealousy will not be tolerated. People will not need to lock their doors or fear walking at night. There will be no wars. Under Christ, even the wild animals will live peacefully with mankind. Parents will not worry about their children playing with snakes or lions or bears or other wild animals (Is. 11:6-9). People will bear many children and repopulate the earth again, and they will live much longer. 100 years will be considered young, so they will probably live much longer—maybe like those who lived in the days of Adam and Noah (Is. 65:20-23). They will exist peacefully under Christ's kind-hearted reign until the 1000 years are over.

Kingdom of Righteousness 1 Corinthians 6:9 says: “...do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God?” At the beginning of the kingdom, only the “righteous”—the believers—will be allowed to enter (1 Corinthians 6:9-10; Galatians 5:21; Ephesians 5:5). (There will be some children born to them who will not believe in Christ, and will rebel, and we'll talk about them later.) Without Satan and his followers, the kingdom of this earth will be such a different place than what we see today. It will be a time of righteousness—without wars, persecution, or slavery. It will be a society without need for armies or police—with crime eliminated. A time when the righteous people under Christ will live in harmony. Everyone will know Christ the King (Jeremiah 31:33-34) and he will be honored and exalted by everyone. His government will function perfectly, and the people will gladly submit to their gracious King. This again is just another way that Jesus will display his power over Satan. Compared to Satan's earthly kingdom, Christ's

kingdom will be like paradise because it will be ruled by a Good King. In the next chapter we'll read about who will help Jesus rule this kingdom and what you yourself might be doing during that time.

26. A Kingdom Of Royal Priests

Chapter 26 A Kingdom Of Royal Priests

1 Corinthians 6:2-3 says: "...do you not know that the Lord's people will judge the world?do you not know that we will judge angels?"

Apostle Paul's statements in these verses may come as a surprise for some Christians. Is it possible that we Christians will be judging or ruling in God's government during the Kingdom? It might be hard for you to believe, but it's true, because God has said so in these verses and others as we shall see. Of course, the Lord Jesus will be the overall Judge and King (John 5:22), but he will designate believers to judge and rule over the earth along with him. This will bring great glory to the Lord Jesus who has planned this since the beginning of the earth. But it will also greatly humble Satan when he is imprisoned, and the humans that he tried to destroy will now be ruling over the earth that he once ruled. We'll talk more about how this affects Satan later, but first let's read about this new group of rulers who will judge and rule the earth with Christ. When Jesus was on the earth, he told the apostles that they would be helping him govern during the Millennium. He said that during the 1000-year Kingdom they would:

"...sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." (Luke 22:30) This word "judging" is the same Greek word that we saw earlier in 1 Corinthians 6:2 above. So it doesn't just mean judgments like those made in a courtroom, but it also means making decisions and governing and ruling as a king would—with authority. That is what Jesus was promising the disciples. And then later those disciples shared that promise with us as well. Let's look at some more verses.

Believers Will Reign As Kings And Priests On The Earth

Revelation 5:9-10 says "...You were slain, And have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, and have made us kings and priests to our God; And we shall reign on the earth." (Revelation 1:6).(NKJV) In this verse, some translations say "kings and priests," some say "kingdom and priests" or "kingdom of priests." But no matter which way we interpret these verses, all of them say that "we shall reign on the earth," which means to rule or reign as kings. But these are not normal kings. They are also priests. Royal priests. Kingly Priests. Okay, let's talk about the kingship part first. It's plain to see that this is a very high position of authority that Christ is giving us! Very high indeed! In fact, this position of authority is so unbelievable that Paul, in his letter to the Ephesians, prayed specifically that God would help the Ephesians understand and grasp just how high this position "in Christ" was. It is a very high calling! And so it would be good for us to pray for understanding also.

Praying For Understanding Of Our Heavenly Position

We have read some of these verses before, but it's good to read them again in relation to the Kingdom. Here's what Paul prayed:

Ephesians 1:18 to Ephesians 2:6 says: "I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is the same as the mighty strength he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every name that is invoked, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything FOR THE CHURCH...his body..."

... you were dead in your transgressions and sins, ...deserving of wrath. But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ ...And God raised us up with Christ and seated US with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus..."

Seated On A Heavenly Throne—Co-Heirs With Christ That is incredible, amazing grace! Even though we were lost sinners and spiritually "dead," God's grace made us spiritually alive when we believed in Christ. But he didn't just erase our sin debt and stop there. No. He made us his own children, so we could share the blessings and privileges of his very own Son. Whatever belonged to Christ, he is sharing with us also, since we are IN CHRIST.

Romans 8:17 says: "Now if we are children, then we are heirs--heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ..."

We are co-heirs with Christ, so that means his inheritance becomes ours too. His Kingdom becomes our kingdom. The great power that raised up Jesus and seated him at the right hand of the Father has raised us up too—a power that is "above all rule and authority..." And the Bible says that he did it "for the church...his body..." He not only wanted to save us, but he also wanted us to share his throne, his power, and authority with us, so he did something very amazing. He "seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus!" That's right! These verses in Ephesians show us that in God's eyes we are already seated there with him on his throne at the right hand of the Father, because he sees us already "IN CHRIST!" WOW! Thank you Lord Jesus! In God's eyes we are already seated with Christ in the heavenly realms, but he has also left us on this earth with some work to do for a short while, before Christ returns. And as long as we are in these earthly bodies, we still struggle along, waiting for the day when he returns for us and changes us completely. Our Bodies Need To Be Changed And Empowered In Order To Rule In The Kingdom

Romans 8:23 says that: "...we believers also groan...we long for our bodies to be released from sin and suffering. We, too, wait with eager hope for the day when God will give us our full rights as His adopted children, including the new bodies He has promised us."(NLT) At the rapture, believers will finally be united with Christ and given new bodies. Those who have died will be resurrected and we who are still alive will be completely changed (1 Corinthians 15:51-54; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18). These brand-new resurrection bodies will be eternal and free of sin and the sin nature so that we will be able to govern in the Kingdom. In heaven, Christ will reward us for our ministry and prepare us for our new work in the kingdom. Then when the tribulation on earth is finished, Christ will bring us back to earth to live and rule for 1000 years with him. Christ will give authority and wisdom to the church and give us specific responsibilities of judging and ruling in the Kingdom. In Revelation 20:4-6 we see believers seated on thrones with Christ and helping him judge those still

living on the earth. But here is something to consider: If rebellious unbelievers are judged and removed by Christ so they cannot enter the kingdom, then who will be left for the church to rule over? It looks like it will be those believers who live during the tribulation and are still alive when Christ returns (at the end of the tribulation). Those people will still be in their earthly bodies. Other believers who have died during the tribulation will be resurrected, and probably also the believers from the Old Testament will be resurrected at this time, and receive their rewards from God. Then all of us who have been resurrected and received new bodies will be like kings and priests under Christ during the 1000-year kingdom (Revelation 20:4-6) and we will be helping him with his government—the work of the kingdom. (Php 3:20-21; Revelation 20:4; Revelation 20:6; Daniel 7:9; Daniel 7:22; Daniel 7:27; 1 Corinthians 6:2; Luke 22:29-30; 2 Timothy 2:12)

Revelation 1:5-7 says: "...Jesus Christ, who is...therulerof the kings of the earth... To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood, andhas made us to be a kingdom and prieststo serve his God and Father—to him be glory and power for ever and ever! Amen. "Look, he is coming with the clouds," and "every eye will see him..." (also Revelation 19:6-16) Two Types Of Believers In The Kingdom The Bible teaches that only believers will be allowed to enter into the kingdom (Ephesians 5:5; 1 Corinthians 6:9). So it looks like there will be two types of believers in the kingdom under Christ—those with resurrected eternal bodies, and those with earthly bodies. Here's a little graphic to illustrate this and show the type of government or kingdom authority that Christ will set up:

Who Are The Kings and Priests?

Israelite believers from Old Testament times (they died and will rise again at Christ's second coming.)

Christians who are transformed or resurrected at the rapture.

Tribulation believers who die and are then resurrected.

At the beginning of the kingdom, all these believers from Israel and the church and the tribulation who have received new resurrected bodies, will then help Jesus as kings and priests in his government. They will help govern over the other believers (from the tribulation) who have not received new resurrected bodies yet. Who Are The Believers From The Tribulation?

We know that many believers will die during the tribulation, but some will live through it. Those believers that don't die during the tribulation will enter the kingdom with earthly bodies. Since they still have earthly bodies they will be able to marry and bear many children during the kingdom. God wants the earth to be filled with God-fearing people everywhere. So he will probably repeat the same blessing that he gave Adam and Eve and Noah long ago—He said:

"Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the earth." (Genesis 1:28; Genesis 9:1) Unbelievers Do Not Enter Kingdom

There will be two types of believers in the kingdom and Jesus will be the King over all. He will rule over every person in every country around the world (Is. 32:1-5; Revelation 19:15). And we believers will assist him with his kingdom government. But unbelievers from the tribulation period or those who have died before will not be allowed to enter the kingdom. They will not be resurrected until after the kingdom. They are reserved for the "second death" along with Satan.

Revelation 20:6 says: “Blessed and holy are those who share in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him for a thousand years.” A Kingdom Rule Was God’s Original Plan

Matthew 25:34 says: “Then the King will say ...’Come, ... take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world.’ ” The Kingdom of Christ will be fulfilling God’s original plan for mankind—something that he intended since the creation of the world—that godly people would fill the earth and rule over it in submission to God’s will.

Matthew 6:10 says: “...your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.” This verse says that during the Kingdom, God’s will is going to be accomplished on earth just like it is being accomplished in heaven even now today and every day. Finally the earth will submit to the godly rule of the true King and his government of God-honoring Royal Priests. This is what God intended from the beginning of time, when he told Adam to “rule the earth” on his behalf.

----- A Kingdom Of Priests God Chose Israel To Be A Kingdom Of Priests

Long ago, after the time of Adam, the world continued to rebel against God’s rule, so God raised up Israel to become a nation of priests. As they prepared to inherit the land of Canaan, God gave them his law and entered into a covenant or agreement with them. He chose Israel to be his priests. Here’s what God said to them:

Exodus 19:5-6 says: “Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.”

Is. 61:6 says: “...you will be called priests of the Lord, you will be named ministers of our God...”

God chose the nation of Israel to be his priests, and when they failed to obey God, then God assigned just the tribe of Levi to do the job (Exodus 32:29; Numbers 1:50-53). A priest is like a mediator, a “go-between” or a spokesman for God. Priests in those days were supposed to intercede on behalf of people and bring them close to God. Many people did not know how to read God’s word and did not have their own Bibles, so the priests taught them what God’s word said. They also made sin offerings on behalf of the people and prayed for those who wanted to come near to God. A New Family Of God’s Priests

God chose Israel and the Levites to be priests, but many of them were not good priests. They didn’t humble themselves under God and help the people. Instead they were proud and selfish and only thought about themselves. When Jesus was on earth, most of the priests refused to acknowledge him as their King and High Priest. They condemned him and he was nailed to a cross. They killed the very One that God had sent to help them. God allowed Israel to do this and used their stubbornness to open the door for the Gentiles to come into God’s family (Romans 11). And so the church began, and God has set the Israelites aside for a while. So now we Christians have become the new family of God’s priests.

1 Peter 2:9-10 says: “But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.” The High Priest Has Also Changed The

priesthood has also had another major change now because Christ has become our new mediator.

Hebrews 8:6 says: “But now Jesus, our High Priest, has been given a ministry that is far superior to the old priesthood, for He is the One who mediates for us a far better covenant with God, based on better promises.” (NLT) 1 Timothy 2:5 says: “For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus.” The Bible tells us clearly that there is only one mediator now. That is Jesus. Jesus is our new mediator—our new High Priest. He did this by becoming the sin offering himself, and as the “Lamb of God,” he died for all of our sins. Jesus himself completely paid for our sin debt by offering his own blood as a sacrifice, so he removed the need for animal sacrifices that previous priests had offered. So Jesus became the perfect High Priest and mediator of all believers (Hebrews 9:15; Hebrews 12:24). He completely replaced the old priesthood (the Levites) and he is now our High Priest forever and always will be. His Spirit also now lives inside all of us believers, so we are all priests of Christ here on earth because Christ lives inside us and does his priestly work through us.

All Of Us Believers Are Priests Of Christ

Since Christ is in us, all believers are now priests in God’s eyes (1 Peter 2:9). So we ourselves can go close to God and pray to him. We don’t need another priest or mediator to speak on our behalf, because Christ lives right inside us (Hebrews 4:16; Hebrews 10:19-22)! And because of Christ’s death, there is no longer any need for the priests to make sacrifices. Jesus is our resident High Priest and he has also made us priests along with him.

Revelation 1:6 says: “...(Jesus) has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father—to him be glory and power for ever and ever! Amen.” But what about the temple—a house of worship for priests of the Lord Jesus?

1 Peter 2:5 says: “you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.” This verse reminds us that we are like living stones of God’s new temple. We don’t need to wait until the 1000-year Millennium to act as priests for Jesus. The Holy Spirit already dwells inside us now and has made us his temple, so even now we can function like priests and kings in his service. We need to thank God for this wonderful position he’s given us and allow the Holy Spirit to guide us so we can be good servants to help others come to Christ. We also need to pray and intercede for others, just like Christ, our High Priest, prays for us.

God Still Wants Israel To Be Priests Too

We have seen that we Christians are now priests and also will be in the kingdom. But what about Israel? Has God forgotten his chosen people? No, he wants to use them as priests too. But they are sinners, just like us, so they must repent and believe in Christ first, so that God can also save them and use them as priests. So in the end times when they finally do repent, those Israelites will become priests of God too. Let’s look at some prophecies about this in the Old Testament.

Satan Tries To Disqualify Israel As A Priest

There’s a story in the book of Zechariah that talks about Satan and the priesthood of Israel in the end times. Zechariah had a vision or dream and it might seem a bit hard to grasp the meaning of it

at first. It's about a man named Joshua (Jeshua), but not the same Joshua that worked with Moses. This Joshua was born later and he was the son of Jehozadak (Zechariah 6:11). He became a high priest in Israel, so he represents the whole priesthood of Israel. Verse 8 says that Joshua and the other priests were symbols of things to come, so it seems that at least some of this passage is talking about the priesthood of Israel during the last days. Here's the prophecy that Zechariah wrote:

Zechariah 3:1-10 says: "Then the angel showed me Jeshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD. The Accuser, Satan, was there at the angel's right hand, making accusations against Jeshua. And the LORD said to Satan, "I, the LORD, reject your accusations, Satan. Yes, the LORD, who has chosen Jerusalem, rebukes you. This man is like a burning stick that has been snatched from the fire." Jeshua's clothing was filthy as he stood there before the angel. So the angel said to the others standing there, "Take off his filthy clothes." And turning to Jeshua he said, "See, I have taken away your sins, and now I am giving you these fine new clothes." Then I said, "They should also place a clean turban on his head." So they put a clean priestly turban on his head and dressed him in new clothes while the angel of the LORD stood by. Then the angel of the LORD spoke very solemnly to Jeshua and said, "...If you follow My ways and carefully serve Me, then you will be given authority over My Temple and its courtyards. I will let you walk among these others standing here. "Listen to Me, O Jeshua the high priest, and all you other priests. You are symbols of things to come. Soon I am going to bring My servant, the Branch...and I will remove the sins of this land in a single day. "And on that day, says the LORD of heaven's Armies, each of you will invite your neighbor to sit with you peacefully under your own grapevine and fig tree." (NLT) Explanation Of The Vision In this vision, Jeshua (Joshua) and the priests are symbolic of things to come, a time when everyone will "live peacefully under their own grapevine and fig tree" (Micah 4:3-4). Israel has not seen a time of peace like that yet, but they will finally live at peace during the time called the Millennium, the Kingdom, when Christ, "the Branch," will rule as king and bring peace. Christ also wants to use Israel as kings and priests during his kingdom. But in the passage in Zechariah, they are pictured as a priest with filthy garments. These filthy clothes signify that Israel is "unclean" and unfit to be a priest, because of their sin and because they have rejected their true King. And there is another problem in this story too—Satan. Satan is wanting to disqualify Joshua (or Israel) as priest.

Satan—The Accuser In this passage we see another side to Satan's work. Satan is constantly accusing sinners before God, just like he does here with Jeshua. Satan might want to say something like this: "God, you can't use this man as a priest! He is unfit as a priest. You're a holy God, so you can't possibly use a sinner like this! If you do, you won't be holy anymore. There's no way he can be your servant because he's a sinner!"

Satan is constantly accusing people and he even accuses God. So that's why the Bible calls him "the accuser."

Revelation 12:10 says: "...the accuser of our brothers and sisters, who accuses them before our God day and night..." When We Function As A Priest We Are Dangerous To Satan

Satan is the accuser of the believers. He's always trying to accuse us before God and bring up our sins so that God would reject us or not show his grace to us. Satan does not want God to use people as his priests and do his work, so he accuses us constantly before God. It's amazing to

realize that Satan sees us or anyone who functions as a priest to be dangerous to his own work. Satan does not want us to work as priests, so he opposes us directly.

Unworthy Israel Will Be Made Clean During Tribulation

It's true. We all are sinners just like Israel—like Jeshua the priest with dirty clothes. We are unworthy to be priests. Could a holy God possibly use sinners as his priests? How could God use rebellious Israel to help him rule the Kingdom? This vision, along with other passages, show us that God's purpose is to win back the hearts of Israel during the tribulation and then use them as priests. In Zechariah 3 God says this about Jeshua the priest:

“This man is like a burning stick that has been snatched from the fire.” This burning stick that is snatched from the fire and extinguished is a good word picture of what God will do with Israel. He will first allow Israel to suffer greatly during the tribulation, like a stick placed in a fire, and then when they repent, he will rescue them (Jeremiah 30:7). When Israel repents and believes in Christ, then God will remove their sin and make them clean (righteous) in his eyes. This is symbolized by God commanding that Jeshua's old filthy clothes be removed and then giving him new clean priestly clothes. Then those believing Israelites will become good priests for God during the Kingdom.

God Silences Satan The Accuser In Zechariah's vision, again we see God's power over Satan when he rebukes Satan and tells him to be quiet. God didn't allow Satan to accuse Israel, because even before the tribulation happens, God knows that some of them will repent and their sin will be taken care of by the blood of Jesus, so Satan won't be able to accuse Israel anymore for being unfit as priests. And also during the Kingdom, God will silence Satan by putting him in the Abyss. While he is imprisoned there, Satan won't be able to tempt or accuse anyone. Imagine—Satan's mouth will be shut for 1000 years (Revelation 20:1-3)!

God Will Appoint Israel As Priests Again Along With The Church

We saw in Romans 11 that during the church age, Israel has been set aside for a time while God focuses on the Gentiles. But in the last days, God will again renew his focus on Israel and fulfill his promises to them when they repent. If they believe and then die during the tribulation, God will resurrect them and they will be priests alongside of us Christians during the kingdom (Revelation 20:6). It looks as if God will appoint Christians and believing Jews together as priests. In Revelation it talks about 24 elders that will work alongside Christ during the Kingdom (Revelation 4:4; Revelation 5:8; Revelation 11:16; Revelation 19:4). Who do these 24 elders represent? In the Old Testament, God chose Moses' brother Aaron and his family to be priests of Israel. It was the priest's job to care for the tabernacle and to present daily sacrifices and offerings. Aaron's descendants were divided into 24 family divisions of priests (1 Chronicles 24:18). So since the number 24 is the same as the number of priestly lines in the Old Testament, it looks as if the 24 elders in Revelation symbolize the priesthood.

Priests And Kings Combined In The End Times

Some scholars also believe since there are 12 tribes in Israel and 12 apostles from the church age, that could mean that these two groups (Israel and the Church) will combine (represented by 24 elders seated on thrones), and they will work together as priests and kings during the Kingdom

to rule alongside Jesus. Jeshua (Christ) will be the King in Jerusalem over all the earth and his 12 apostles will rule over Israel as Jesus predicted (Matthew 19:28; Luke 22:30). And we Gentile believers will also help him rule over other areas, as priestly kings. Combining these two groups and also the two roles of priest and king under Christ was talked about in a word picture in Zechariah—referring to Jeshua (Joshua) the priest who was crowned like a king.

Zechariah 6:11-13 says: "...make a crown from the silver and gold. Then put the crown on the head of Jeshua son of Jehozadak, the high priest. Tell him... Here is the man called the Branch. He will branch out from where He is and build the Temple of the LORD. Yes, He will build the Temple of the LORD. Then He will receive royal honor and will rule as king from His throne. He will also serve as priest from His throne, and there will be perfect harmony between His two roles." (NLT) This vision in Zechariah was prophesying that Christ, (the Branch) would become both King and High Priest and rule from his new Temple in Jerusalem during the Kingdom. And we (God's children—both Jews and Gentiles) will rule with him as kings and priests, just like Jeshua the priest who was crowned like a king. And as we said earlier, we don't need to wait until the 1000-year Millennium to act as priests for Jesus. The Holy Spirit already dwells inside us now and has made us his temple, so even now we can function like priests and kings in his service. The Priesthood Of Believers Is A Great Victory Over Satan So how does this priesthood of believers affect Satan? Well, actually this is a great victory over Satan. This priesthood will bring great glory to the Lord Jesus, because this kingdom of priests is what God had in mind for ruling this world from the very beginning.

Matthew 25:34 refers to it as: "...the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world."

Adam and Eve were given this earth as their kingdom. They were supposed to "be fruitful and increase in number and fill the earth" with young "image bearers" of God, and rule over them like God would, with grace, love, kindness and care for those under their protective care—like God's kings and priests. But instead, man allowed Satan to steal the earthly kingdom from him and ever since then, Satan has always been trying to destroy the earth instead of caring for it. Satan is called a destroyer because he hates everything that God has made, so he rules with deceit—promising a better life—but instead he destroys the lives of those who follow him.

Satan's Rulers Compared To God's Kingdom Of Priests

Kings and Priests are supposed to be somewhat like fathers, on a much larger scale. One of their main jobs is to protect their people, much like a father protects his children. But Satan is the opposite—and he wants to use his power to harm people. And so, when Satan is king, he tries to raise up leaders who are also like him—leaders that are proud and selfish. They only care for themselves and not the well-being of their people (Jeremiah 23:1-2). Satan loves to raise up dictators, evil kings, and rulers who deceive and abuse and destroy people instead of helping them. As Satan rules over human leaders, then their governments become more and more corrupt, and people become more sinful. Hunger, theft, hatred, and violence become common and eventually people live in fear for their own lives. Satan's kingdom is full of fear—darkness, death and hopelessness. That is what Satan's kingdom is like. But during the 1000-year kingdom, God's priestly kings will not rule like that.

Robes Of Righteousness Describe Godly Shepherds And Priests Of The Kingdom

God's priestly kings will rule much differently than Satan. When God binds Satan during the 1000-year kingdom and uses the resurrected believers as a Royal Priesthood, there will be a wonderful peace on the earth that has not existed since Satan stole the kingdom from Adam. Resurrected believers will act as good kings and priests in God's kingdom government. The Bible describes them as wearing: "Fine linen, bright and clean..." which stands for the righteous acts of God's holy people (Revelation 19:8). This shows us that these royal priests under Christ will be leaders of godly character. They will mediate between God and man like Jesus did with his disciples—with wisdom, strength, love, grace, and gentle care. They will not only lead as kings, but they will also be intercessors who care deeply for their people. They will be good shepherds of their people, like David, a man who had a shepherd's heart for his people—a man after God's own heart. God's character will be seen in everything these priests do. Kindness, gentleness, loving care and patience will be the normal way people treat each other. Truth will always be expected, and people will trust their Kingly Priests, because they will reflect God's image. People in the kingdom will live without fear—in peace, harmony, and security.

Training Parents And Children To Love Their King The kingly priests in resurrected bodies will serve others on the earth like good shepherd-priests should. As princes in Christ's kingdom government, they will likely help organize and oversee communities as Christ directs. As "priests and shepherds" of God's flock, they will probably act as counselors and teach people how to function well in families and train parents how to raise godly children that believe and submit to King Jesus. Many thousands of children will probably believe and trust in Jesus during the Millennium. And Satan will not be able to do anything about it for 1000 years while he is imprisoned in the Abyss.

Satan Will Be Humbled By Those Who Once Were His Children In this way God will be using the priesthood of the believers during that time to totally humble Satan in a very special way. God will be using believers who were at one time children of Satan and opposed God, but now they will glorify God and show his loving character by being mediators—priests who bring glory to God and lead other people to God. This will bring much glory and honor to God and his Son Jesus!

God Is Using The Church To Teach Satan And All The Angels A New Lesson In the beginning, God made Adam and Eve to be rulers of the earthly kingdom under God's authority. But Satan was able to deceitfully take that kingdom away from him, so all of Adam's descendants became servants or slaves under their new boss—Satan (a fallen angel). But later Jesus came to earth as a human. And he obeyed God—as a human. He therefore defeated Satan, sin and death, so he created a new family—the church. The church was unknown—a hidden mystery in the Old Testament. But now, and especially in the last days, God is using the church to teach Satan and even all the good angels a special lesson. He's showing them how amazing is God's wisdom and glory. God is using the church, made up of weak humans, to defeat powerful angels like Satan. And in the end times, while Satan is bound, Christ will use the church to finally rule the earthly kingdom as God originally planned!

Ephesians 3:10 says: "...His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms..."

God is all-knowing and all-powerful. He can give authority to whomever he chooses and he can triumph over anyone like Satan who tries to overthrow his authority. He has defeated Satan and

the demons and totally humbled them through the work of Jesus on the cross.

“...having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.” (Colossians 2:15)

During the Kingdom, God will be greatly glorified through his wisdom in using the church and all his believers as Kings and Priests to rule over the earth.

What a wonderful time it will be in the world during the kingdom, but when the 1000 years comes to an end, God will allow Satan to test the people of the earth one more time. That's the subject of the last chapter.

27. Satan's Last Battle

Chapter 27 Satan's Last Battle Elephant Versus Spider

Every good story has a happy ending. God was the inventor of happy endings, so the story of the battle with Satan also has a happy ending. But this is not fiction or a fairy tale. God is truly going to end the story of Satan by making all things new again. But first, we need to remind ourselves that this battle is mostly OUR battle with Satan, and not so much a battle for God. It's hard to call it a battle for God, when God is able to get rid of Satan with a single word—and he is simply choosing to delay the time when he is destroyed. It would be like saying it is a battle between a spider and an elephant! It's kind of a silly word picture, but it helps us understand that Satan really does not have a chance of winning.

We know that Satan truly is God's enemy and fights against him in every way he can. But for God, the battle is more about helping mankind to win the fight against Satan. If we expand the use of our word picture here a little more, mankind is like an ant in the spider's web. Mankind has been deceived and trapped in Satan's web. The elephant could easily knock down the spider and trample him, but instead he chooses to help the ant beat the spider. So, the elephant becomes an ant in order to help the ants do battle with the spider. God became a man to save other "ants" from the "spider."

Why Did God Not Destroy Satan Long Ago?

Why will God not completely destroy Satan at the beginning of the Millennial kingdom? He could do it at any time if he wanted to. But instead he will only imprison him. It looks as if God has one more job for Satan to do. So after the 1000-year reign, God will release Satan from the Abyss and allow him to gather an army to fight against Christ and his kingdom. In this way, God will use Satan to gather up all the rebellious people of the earth who are willing to follow Satan as their leader, and then God will judge them. Again we see how God uses Satan as his servant to judge the unbelievers.

Satan Is Released And He Gathers An Army

Revelation 20:7-9 says: "Now when the thousand years are finished, Satan will be released from his prison and will go out to deceive the nations at the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to bring them together for the battle. They are as numerous as the grains of sand in the sea. They went up ...and encircled the camp of the saints and the beloved city..."(NET) Who Are These Unbelievers That Satan Gathers Together?

Let's consider who these rebels are. We know that only believers will be allowed to enter the kingdom. So they will not be part of this huge army that turns against Christ. So who else could it be? We already noted earlier that those who have not yet received new resurrection bodies will have children during the kingdom and repopulate the earth during the kingdom. So it looks like some of those children who are born during the 1000-year kingdom will grow up and will need to

make a choice who they will follow. Just like Adam and Eve had to choose to trust God or Satan, these people will need to choose whom they will believe in also. The verse above says that Satan will go out and “deceive” these people. They have not been tempted by Satan for 1000 years. God wants them to make a choice also—to choose to do the right thing and follow Christ rather than listen to Satan’s deceit. Those who choose not to trust Christ will believe Satan and rebel against God during this last battle. Satan will gather them to fight against the true King and his people.

God Will Defeat The Last Of The Rebels Who Follow Satan The names Gog and Magog possibly refer to the leader and the country that Satan will use to lead this army. But when Satan gathers these rebels, it will be a huge army that will come from every part of the earth. There will be so many, it will be like the grains of sand on the seashore when they come and surround Jerusalem, the city God loves. Jerusalem is the city from which Jesus will rule the earth. It will be the center of his kingdom. The people in Jerusalem might very well be terrified of such a massive army, but Jesus won’t be frightened. Satan’s power and his huge army will be like nothing in God’s sight. The Bible says that God will send fire from heaven and burn the whole army (Revelation 20:9), and then the last of Satan’s followers will be done away with.

Satan’s Death

Revelation 20:10 says: “...And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur, where the beast and the false prophet are too, and they will be tormented there day and night forever and ever.” (NET) This is a great verse! Satan the deceiver will finally be thrown down into the lake of burning sulfur (hell) and will never be able to leave! There is no release from the lake of fire, ever. The antichrist and the false prophet will still be there, where they will have been for 1000 years. So now the three of them will suffer and be tormented day and night forever.

We know that Jesus defeated Satan at the cross, but God has allowed Satan to remain all these years and has used him as his servant both to punish rebellious sinners and also to strengthen believers. But finally, after the Kingdom, God will be done with Satan, so he will be thrown into hell (Revelation 20:10). Then Satan will no longer be able to deceive anyone ever again. The mighty Satan will be totally powerless. He will never again rule a kingdom as before. All his power will be gone and his eternal punishment will begin. Then we will see the final fulfillment of the prophecy made long ago: the serpent’s head will be finally crushed! AMEN!

Judging Demons 1 Corinthians 6:3 says: “Do you not know that we will judge angels?”

It seems likely that this verse is referring to fallen angels, meaning that we will judge the demons. That is because good angels don’t sin, so there’s probably nothing to judge. But angels that have followed Satan and rebelled against God will be judged in the end times, probably when Satan is finally judged. Those are the same demons that we are doing spiritual battle with now, and it looks like God in his amazing wisdom and justice has chosen us to someday judge them. We don’t know for sure how that will work—only God knows—and he will reveal that later. Some believers may be concerned that we won’t know how to judge demons. But we need to remember that after Christ comes, we will have new bodies and brand-new minds that will know how Christ thinks, so he will enable us to do this work together with him. The Bible doesn’t really give us many details of the judgment of Satan and his demons, but it looks like the time of Satan’s judgment will also be the time when all the demons will be thrown into lake of fire (2 Peter 2:4; Jude 1:6). Their judgment

was planned and prepared long ago.

Matthew 25:41 talks about the "...eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels."

It's an amazing thing to see how God's justice works—to think that humans who have been trampled under the feet of Satan's kingdom for so long will actually be allowed to reverse that. It seems that through Jesus we believers are somehow involved with 'crushing the head of the serpent.'

Romans 16:20 says: "The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet."

Jesus Destroys The Last Enemy: Death The Heavens And The Earth Will Be Burned In Revelation 20:11-15 we read about the final judgment on the earth. But first it says that "The earth and the heavens fled from God's presence, and there was no place for them." This probably means that God will totally burn or melt down the old earth and heavens in preparation for the new (2 Peter 3:10-13; Matthew 24:35). From the time of Adam, this earth has been full of sin and pain and death. Death has reigned as a king over this earth, and so God is going to burn everything and make a brand-new fresh start by removing the old.

Final Judgment: The Great White Throne Judgment—For Unbelievers

Christ will sit on a Great White Throne and judge one last group of people. In verse 12 they are called "the dead," because it describes those who are spiritually dead people. These are all the unbelievers from the beginning of time to the end—they are followers of Satan. Also, they are called the dead because they have not been resurrected until this time. They are not part of the "first resurrection" group who are believers and are raised before them (Revelation 20:5). These are all unbelievers so they will experience the "second death." But first they must be resurrected.

Revelation 20:13 says: "The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them..."

What are 'death and Hades' in this verse? 'Death' here is referring to the physical body of those who have died and been buried in the ground. And 'Hades' here is referring to the spirits of these unbelievers and where they go when they die. Hades is a place of torment where the spirits of unbelievers go and wait until their resurrection and final judgment (Luke 16:23). So in the end, these two, 'death and Hades,' will be united to be cast into hell—God will resurrect all the bodies of unbelievers and reunite them with their spirits for their final judgment. Again, these are only unbelievers. Believers will not be judged here because they will have been resurrected already—before the Millennial Kingdom. We read about that earlier in Revelation 20:6 where it says:

"Blessed and holy are those who share in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him for a thousand years."

Most of the unbelievers probably will have died on land so their bodies decayed in the ground, while others may have died in the sea. But no matter where their bodies decayed, God is able to raise up those bodies again and unite them again with their spirits so they can be judged. Then they will experience the "second death."

God Will Use Written Records To Show People Their Own Sin The Bible says that Angels will open books that have recorded all of the deeds of “the dead.” We don’t know much about these books, but God is showing us here that there is a record of everything that has been done, whether good or bad. These records will be used as a witness against unbelievers and might even determine the degree of their punishment. We can see from this that God is always just. He already knows that these people will be sent to the lake of fire, but he will not judge them randomly or without a fair trial. He will show everyone plainly why they are condemned. Nothing will be hidden—everything will be exposed, and even if they had been dead for hundreds of years, the record books will show everything, so people will see exactly how their own sin condemns them. Again, these people are called the dead because they are spiritually dead—they are unrepentant and have not trusted God to save them. They have not believed in Christ and so all their sin is still unforgiven and still against them. Christ will judge each person individually, and each one will be without excuse (Romans 1:18-23) because we know that even just one sin would be enough to condemn them (James 2:10). In the end, they are all guilty. Will Good Deeds Help Unbelievers Avoid Judgment?

What about their good deeds? Will these people’s good deeds be able to help them? No. The Bible calls their works “dead works” (Hebrews 9:14) because these people are not spiritually alive. They have not been born again. And besides, none of these people will be called righteous by following the law.

Romans 3:19-20 says: “Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world held accountable to God. Therefore no one will be declared righteous in God’s sight by the works of the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of our sin.” This verse and others clearly show that trying to keep God’s law and doing good deeds will not make someone righteous enough in God’s eyes. We know that good deeds have value with God, but they cannot save anyone (Galatians 2:16). No matter how much good someone has done, even one sin by itself would be enough to condemn them—just like Adam and Eve, because God is perfectly holy. People are not righteous unless they have trusted in Christ and his grace for them. (Ephesians 2:8-9; Titus 3:5-7). The Book Of Life Will Testify Against Those Who Haven’t Believed

Yes, when the books are opened it will be obvious to everyone, and especially to God, that all these people at the Great White Throne judgment are sinners. But the big question is whether or not they have become righteous by believing in Christ. So another book will be opened to determine that. This book is called the Book of Life (Revelation 20:12; Revelation 20:15). In that book is recorded all the names of everyone who has believed in Christ as their Savior. And since none of these people have believed in Christ, their names will not be in that book. They are called spiritually “dead,” because they do not have eternal life, so they will all be cast into the lake of fire (hell).

Satan’s Followers Will Follow Him Into The Lake Of Fire

Everyone in Satan’s kingdom will perish along with Satan. Those who follow Satan in life will follow him in death too. God will say to them,

“Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels” (Matthew 25:41).

Hell or the lake of fire is an eternal fire. It's called the second death because those people have previously died physically. But then their body is resurrected again and united with their spirit in order to stand before God at the judgment. Then after their judgment they will experience a second death. This second death means eternal separation from God. This is the final death (Revelation 20:6; Revelation 20:14; Revelation 21:8). Some people think that hell will be a fun place to be with all their friends, and they think they can leave hell at a later time, but that's not true. Death means total separation—separation from God and other people. There are no parties in hell, and it is permanent—and there's no coming back (Luke 16:26-31).

God Destroys Satan's Final Power—Death Itself

1 Corinthians 15:24-26 says: “Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death.” When God finishes the last judgment, no one else will go to the lake of fire. Everything on earth will be made new and full of life. Jesus will have totally defeated Satan's last power over mankind—the power of death and the fear of death.

Hebrews 2:14-15 says: “Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might break the power of him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil— and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.”

After the Great White Throne judgment and the removal of the curse of death on the earth, there will be no more power of death over mankind. All Satan's powers will be gone and God will make all things new.

New Earth And Heavens

Revelation 21:1-4 says: “Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and earth had ceased to exist, and the sea existed no more. And I saw the holy city — the new Jerusalem — descending out of heaven from God, made ready like a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying: “Look! The residence of God is among human beings. He will live among them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death will not exist any more — or mourning, or crying, or pain, for the former things have ceased to exist.” (NET)

Long ago, Satan deceived Adam and Eve, and they became sinners and were forbidden to eat from the Tree of Life. But in the end, the Tree of Life will again be on the earth and everyone will be able to eat from it freely, forever.

Revelation 22:1-2 says: “Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations.”

It's true! Jesus will finally and completely remove Satan and death and all other enemies. So we believers will be able to live joyfully with Jesus our King forever and ever. Finally, heaven and earth will be rid of Satan forever. What a wonderful ending to a true story!! May God be praised and glorified forever! Amen!

28. Final Conclusions

Final Conclusions God's Purposes For Satan

All of God's creatures have a purpose. Even some detested bugs and crawling insects like cockroaches and worms are used by God for unpleasant tasks like cleaning up rotting food, dead trees and other plant life, and in turn this helps other things grow. In a similar way Lucifer who was originally created for a high and noble purpose and position, has chosen instead to become like a cockroach or worm—someone who loves death and decay. Now he's called Beelzebub—meaning "the god of refuse," or "lord of the flies." His purpose has changed, but God still uses him.

Remember when Satan used the snake to tempt Eve? God cursed the snake to become a crawling, slithering creature of the dirt to "eat dust." This was a sign to illustrate how Satan himself would be humbled by God. God still uses Satan for his own purposes as we have seen throughout the book, but his position is no longer glorious. Satan wanted to rule over man, but instead he was conquered by the Son of Man. And by God's grace, ultimately Satan will be humbled—trampled like a lowly worm by the very ones he tried to dominate—God's image-bearers. Romans 16:20 says it best:

"The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet." Will You Conquer Or Be Conquered? As we learned from scriptures, God allows enemies like Satan into our lives for different purposes. One purpose is to teach us to fight! Have you allowed God to use Satan as his servant in your life to teach you how to fight God's way? Or do you prefer to be like Israel in Canaan and ignore Satan and the spiritual battle that you are in, without realizing that you have become an ally to your enemy? If so, you are missing out on God's purposes for your life and you are still Satan's target! There is no middle ground. Fight or be enslaved! We are in a war zone whether we like it or not—as long as Satan roams this earth. God has provided everything we need, with great advantages and hope of a glorious victory. But the choice is yours—learn to fight and conquer—or be an easy target for Satan.

"But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us."(Romans 8:37) (NASB)

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