

# THE CHRISTIAN AND THE SPIRIT WORLD

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Pilgrim Mennonite Publications  
234 E Rosebud Rd  
Myerstown PA 17067  
[www.pilgrimministry.org](http://www.pilgrimministry.org)  
(717) 933-5191

## **FORWARD FROM THE AUTHOR**

At times when I have been asked to have devotions for school children in the fall especially around Hallowe'en, I have chosen the subject of ghosts. I will open by asking the children if they believe in ghosts. With rare exception children will answer with a vehement, "NO!"

I like to watch them closely as I ask the next question. "Do you believe in the Holy Ghost?" Immediately a look of confusion crosses their faces. "Of course, we believe in the Holy Ghost!" Then I will tell them, "Then you believe in ghosts!"

We do believe in ghosts. Our Bible is full of information about spirits and what happens to the human soul after death. We can know what God, the One who is the Authority on the subject, wants us to know about the invisible world of spirits.

Our children might be confused because what the Bible teaches as spirit reality conflicts with what the world believes. We do not believe in the whole world of false ideas and suppositions that show up at Hallowe'en or what is pictured in movies or the graphic novels of our day. That is why I do not fault children for not believing in ghosts. When I was a child, I likely would have answered the question about ghosts just as they do.

However, we are not studying the spirit world as a rare oddity or casual curiosity. The purpose of this study guide is to find out reality in an invisible world from a Biblical perspective. The Bible teaches about four main areas of the spirit world:

1. the spirit faculty we are given as humans,
2. God-ordained spirits that give us spiritual enablement,
3. spirits that are opposing us,
4. and how to have victory in the spiritual war being made against us.

I will admit this study has affected my life. As a result of this study I have learned:

- My God-given human spirit should play a much larger role in my day-to-day worship and personal experience. I will endeavor to give my spirit access to the Spirit of God in singing, meditation, worship and prayer in a greater dimension than before.
- It may be questioned whether the Bible teaches that angels have emotions. It is obvious angels want to avoid premature assignment to torments. That is clear. But time and again we find passages about emotions God has and we as humans have. Any reference to how an angel feels is basically missing. We know we are made in the image of God and therefore are more God-like than angels are.
- If angels do not experience the full spectrum of emotions as God and we do, then when we as redeemed humans arrive in the presence of God, we will fill heaven with worship and emotion not known up to this point. When we get to heaven, we will feel more at home with the Triune God-head than with any other heavenly beings. Also we will feel more at home with God than any other being in heaven does. We will just feel like family. This may help us

- understand in a more perfect way why God created the human family.
- It is to be appreciated the way that Jesus participates in our emotions. No other human being can get that close. Other mortals may have gone through something similar, only Jesus actually feels the emotions we have.
- There is no Bible support for Christians to rebuke spirits. When God allows demons to oppress us we should embrace the experience even while we remain aloof and distant from an angel from Satan. If we have ever invited an involvement from Satan in our lives, this should be renounced. Temptations and sickness and other human problems are not solved by renouncing demons.
- We should have a greater distrust in our emotions and a greater fear of the fallen human nature. Directed in obedience to His Word, human emotions and human nature are our greatest gift to God. In this life they remain our greatest vulnerability.

This study guide accepts the Bible as the last word on the intangible but very real subject of angels. No other voice has any authority here. The Bible helps us test the new theories that arise from time to time to separate truth from fiction. It teaches us about the personalities we cannot see who are very active in behind-the-scenes events. It helps us understand the boundaries established by God within which spirits operate. (Our human boundaries are more physical than theirs, but the spirit world is governed by spiritual limitations and the Bible helps us understand those parameters.) Through Bible knowledge with the Apostle we can say “While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal” (2 Corinthians 4:18).

Two verses in Romans 16 give us the perimeters for our study. **18** For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the **simple**. **19** For your obedience is come abroad unto all men. I am glad therefore on your behalf; but yet I would have you wise unto that which is good, and **simple** concerning evil. (Emphasis mine.)

In some ways it is unfortunate that **simple** in verse 18 and 19 are translated into the same English word. They come from totally different Greek words. In v18, the meaning is “*fearing no evil from others, distrusting no one*” Unless we use discernment, we will be deceived by wily men and become confused in our doctrine. While we should not be suspicious of everyone, we do have the responsibility to reserve trust until we have opportunity to observe day by day fruit. This is a **simple** we want to avoid. The word **simple** in v19 is a different Greek word. The definition in **Strongs** for this word is, “*without a mixture of evil, free from guile, innocent, simple.*” This is a **simple** we want to pursue with all our heart.

What the Bible is saying is, we need to be on our guard and not easily swayed - not simpleminded. But God wants us to be pure in our doctrine and practice and not corrupted by occult inroads - very simple.

The worldly mind has always been intrigued by the world of magic and the

occult. Something in the nature of the human heart believes there is more to reality than what can be perceived by the five natural senses. Also, all of us have problems we do not have answers for: failing health, developing addictions, natural disasters or uncertain futures. All of these problems drive us to look for sources beyond ourselves for answers.

People do not want to believe the God of the Bible because He calls man to holiness and accountability for his actions and warns of a judgment day that is coming. Humanity definitely wants to avoid thinking about this scenario. And so man invents a world apart from the divinely revealed Word, the Bible.

Some men believe only in natural realities. They ascribe to agnosticism and live and die in unbelief.

However, there are too many things in the world around us and in the human spirit that are unexplainable by science and the scientific method alone. So in an intriguing search cycle, generations of skepticism often yield to generations that invent their own gods, or become involved in the occult. Out of this cycle of unbelief, a remnant is called by grace to believe and obey the Truth of the Word of God.

Today even the world of science and medical research is beginning to open the door to occult power. Case in point is medicine. In times past the scientific method was the standard. If a treatment was not explainable by logical deductions and did not work for nearly 100% of the patients with an ailment, the treatment was rejected. Not so any longer. Today more doctors are being open to what they once would have labeled as metaphysical.

We must take a stand against our present day occult invasion. We dare not have the modern novels of vampires and witches on our shelves. We dare not have books on our shelves from the modern religious writers with their philosophies of casting out demons in order to have victory over sinful lusts. We dare not turn to the occult for healing for our illnesses.

This course is committed to staying very close to what the Word of God teaches. What the Bible says is true. We will not be avoiding controversial conclusions when there appears to be Bible support. It is not our goal to stir up controversy, but sometimes we need to take a fresh look at timeworn subjects. The goal is to stabilize our thinking by studying many passages and comparing Scriptures with Scripture. This will give us the ability to give answers to the questions of our day.

~ H. Stephen Ebersole  
Revised October 2016

# LESSON 1

## THE SPIRIT OF MAN

What difference would it make to you if you learned you have a special faculty that can serve as a link of communication from your heart to the throne of God? That by meeting certain conditions and participating in certain thought disciplines you could commune with the Almighty, and receive affirmation from Him? That by developing this blessing you could grow in godliness? That is exactly what the verses of this lesson are to help you discover.

The spirit of man is a God-given faculty that can connect with the Holy Spirit of God. Unfortunately it can also be taught to communicate with evil spirits. We want to learn all we can about what the Bible has to say about this phenomena to nurture our link with God and to avoid all other connections.

The Bible teaches us that man is a created being made up of three parts: body, soul and spirit. These three parts in many ways resemble the three-fold nature of the Godhead. We are made in His image. These three integral parts are distinct one from another and yet so closely joined and overlapping that we can scarcely separate them in our own experience. The condition of one invariably influences the condition of the others.

The soul appears to be the real person. The body the soul lives in for time in many ways resembles the bodies of the animal world. This body is the connection for the soul with nature and tangible reality. The soul has the choice to use its body for good or for evil.

The soul is also given a spirit. This spirit gives the soul of man ability to make contact with spiritual reality, a world unseen by the natural eye. The soul can use the spirit to connect to the Holy Spirit. In Christians the Holy Spirit bears witness with the spirit of man that he is a son of God. Unfortunately, the spirit can also reach out to evil spirits.

If consistently fed by the Word of God, the spirit leads the soul upward in his spiritual journey in righteousness. Godly spiritual activities become nourishment for the soul. The fruit of the Spirit is the result in time and eternal life is the reward for eternity. This soul is a blessing to all who are affected by it.

The purpose of this lesson is to study our God-given human spirit so we understand both our nature and the resources He has given us to attain spiritual victory.

### CONFIRMING THE THREEFOLD NATURE OF MAN

**1Th 5:23** And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

**1Co 6:20** For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

**He 4:12** For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

**1Co 14:15** What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also.

**Ph 3:3** For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.

### THE HOLY SPIRIT AND MAN'S SPIRIT

**Pr 20:27** The spirit of man is the candle of the LORD, searching all the inward parts of the belly.

**Jb 32:8** But *there is* a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding. **9.** Great men are not *always* wise: neither do the aged understand judgment.

**1Co 2:11** For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.

**Ro 8:13** For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.

**14** For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. **15** For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. **16** The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:

**Ga 4:6** And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.

**Is 57:15** For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy *place*, with him also *that is* of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.

### GENERAL REFERENCES TO THE SPIRIT OF MAN

**Pr 15:13** A merry heart maketh a cheerful countenance: but by sorrow of the heart the spirit is broken.

**Pr 16:32** *He that is* slow to anger *is* better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city.

**Pr 18:14** The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity; but a wounded spirit who can bear?

**Ec 8:8** *There is* no man that hath power over the spirit to retain the spirit; neither *hath he* power in the day of death...

**Ec 12:7** Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.

**Lu 23:46** And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost.

**Ja 2:26** For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.

**QUESTIONS FOR THOUGHT AND DISCUSSION**

1. Briefly describe each part of your threefold nature and how these parts interrelate.
2. What are some activities you can use your spirit for to bring glory to God?
3. How do the Spirit of God and His Word work with your spirit when you have done wrong?
4. What happens to each part of the three-part nature of man when he dies?
5. Discuss the lifestyle of a man whose spirit is in tune with the Holy Spirit compared to one whose spirit is dead toward God.
6. How can each one of us use our worship services for maximum benefit?
7. Why does God require us to have an humble and contrite spirit before He will dwell in us?
8. How might proper Biblical child training mold the spirit of a child and thus influence his adult walk with God?
9. How can we show that we have proper respect for the work of the Spirit with a man who is struggling?
10. What aspects of the spirit of a man are outside his control?

**CONFIRMING THE THREEFOLD NATURE OF MAN**

1. **Every man, woman and child is given a spirit. It is his faculty for making contact with his Creator.** We do not always think about our spirit and its importance because it is not as obvious to us as our body or our mind. But this is an important part of our nature. In a way it is more important than learning how to communicate with our fellow man. In our human communications we receive among other things correction, comfort and companionship. When our human spirit communicates with the Spirit of God, we receive the same qualities even to a richer and fuller degree than when our spirits commune with each other.
2. **We have the ability to be preserved blameless in our body, soul and spirit.** Paul prayed for this experience in the lives of the converts of the early New Testament church. He knew it was not only a possibility but a distinct need for early Christians to succeed in their Christian journey. Our bodies will grow old and die, but in Christ they can still be preserved blameless. They are designed to be vessels for holiness in every stage of life and in every stage of physical health. God wants the same for our spirits. He wants them to be in good functioning order, so we receive the input from heaven for our souls to be what God wants.
3. **Through the spirit of a man, the Spirit of God is able to convict and convince man of all his hypocrisy and leave him open and naked before His Creator.** The Word of God leads us to think of concepts and truths far beyond our immediate circumstances and experiences. As we open the Word, we read of saints who persevered in situations far more difficult than our own. Our minds are taken to the throne room of God where we marvel at His mercy and grace. We ponder our past sins and our present temptations, and see them in the light of eternity. This becomes a powerful motivation to persevere in holiness.
4. **There are certain spirit activities that bring us into contact with the living Spirit of God.** Perhaps spirit activity begins with **hearing** the Word of God which opens the eyes of faith. It continues with **worship**, when we envision God in His Holiness and bow our hearts in surrender to Him. As we lift Him up, we become smaller in our own minds. When we allow **conscience** to sift through **memory** we receive **conviction** about past offences that should be cleared and present positions that should be maintained. This is the Spirit working through our spirit. As we **meditate** upon the word of God, our life journey becomes clearer as to how we should live in such a way as to be ready to die at any time. This **fellowship** and **prayer** becomes a way of life, and the transition into the very presence of God becomes a welcomed journey. **Singing** in the spirit takes on meaning and is spontaneous and personal.

**THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE SPIRIT OF MAN**

5. **The Spirit of God uses the spirit of a man to search out his inner thoughts and attitudes.** When the spirit of a man becomes energized by the Holy Spirit, every

part of the life of this man's life is changed. As stated earlier, a spirit of a man has access to his conscience, his memory and his sense of justice. It is a powerful tool in convincing man when he has done wrong to his God, his fellow man or to himself. This leads the man away from self-centered or sinful living. It leads him to consider the needs of others.

**6. *The Spirit of God also uses the spirit of a man to bring him inspiration and refreshment.*** In the days of Scripture formation, the Spirit of God communed with the human spirit of holy men and inspired the writing of Holy Script. In our day the work of writing Scripture is completed, all Truth is already revealed. Today the Spirit of God uses the Bible to give inspirational sermons, writings and other means of lifting man toward his heavenly goal. When saints live in this circle of inspiration they enjoy a divine influence known as grace in their lives. This helps them with the problems of earth living that take others down. It leaves a testimony of the grace of God.

**7. *God's Spirit uses the spirit of a man to bring the man security and fulfillment.*** The Apostle Paul uses two New Testament passages to teach us that the Holy Spirit communicates the sense of sonship to the spirit of the believer. In one passage, the Holy Spirit communicates to us that we are not slaves bound to a harsh unfeeling master, but sons bound to a loving, caring Father. While we are inferior to God in many senses, we are also linked to Him in our spiritual identity. In the other passage we are taught the Spirit teaches us to cry out in prayer to God with all our struggles and cares. The Spirit leads us to unburden our hearts to Him whenever we find ourselves carrying a load too heavy for us, or to cry out in joy when we are overwhelmed with thanksgiving. There is tremendous emotional potential for the child of God when he develops these capacities given him through his spirit.

#### **GENERAL REFERENCES TO THE SPIRIT OF MAN.**

**8. *A person who is taught that he has a spirit and has learned to hearken to direction has greater potential for happiness and fulfillment in life.*** Many children are left to grow up with little understanding of their spirits. They feel they cannot control themselves—how they feel or what they do with their minds. They may receive discipline in natural learning projects and this helps them relate to the natural world, but they have no understanding of the things of God. The Holy Spirit will seek to reprove the world of sin, righteousness and judgment.<sup>1</sup> Since the ungodly person often chooses to hearken only to his lower nature, the voice of the Spirit is ignored. Any conscience or sense of judgment or view of eternity is diminished and left undeveloped. A child who is trained to hearken to his parents will be more inclined to hearken to the call and direction of the Holy Spirit.

**9. *A parent does his child a favor when he teaches him discipline and self-control over his attitudes.*** The spirit of a child and his selfish attitudes are inseparably related. When a child is left to vent his anger or mope in his depression, he

becomes victimized by his own emotions. Others will suffer too, but the child is the one who suffers the most. King Saul is a sad example of a spirit left to himself. As he wallowed in self-pity, his depression grew and an evil spirit troubled him. This eventually led Saul to seek one with a familiar spirit.

When a parent takes on the responsibility of helping a child relate to the strong surges of his emotions, he is working with the spirit potential that every person has. When a child grows up allowing anger or depression to rule in his life, that person hears the voice of those emotions more loudly than the voice of the Spirit of God. Jonah is another example of the Spirit of God pleading with a man who stubbornly held on to anger and resentment. We believe Jonah eventually yielded to the voice of God, at least if he was the one who wrote his own story. As parents we need to hearken to the Spirit as we face our own strong emotions. Then we will be in a position to work with our children as they face their emotional struggles.

**10. *Ultimately it is in the hands of God to decide when we will be born and how we will die; it is ours to choose how to live in between.*** What else can be said? We all take life for granted, but we see the hand of death all around us. In our day society is beginning to look with favor on assisted suicide for those who have lost quality of life. The Bible still gives the right to decide the day of one's death to God. And when God decrees, no man "hath power over the spirit to retain the spirit."

Jesus seems to be the exception with regards to His Spirit. He actually commended His Spirit into the hands of God so His body could die. When He did so, His soul left His body and descended into the lower parts of the earth.<sup>2</sup> It seems reasonable that the Prince of Life<sup>3</sup> would not have died had He not yielded up His Spirit.

When the soul is deprived of its spirit, it immediately also separates from the body in death. We do not understand how spirits are given to tiny embryos in conception, nor how they are taken away in death, because this is the work of God. As Christians we are given a tremendous advantage in that we see life from the perspective of eternity and have the resources to prepare our souls for eternal fellowship with the Father.

#### **IN CONCLUSION**

Let us remember we are a soul on a journey. Our spirits are given us to reach out and up to the Spirit of God; or perhaps it is better said, to respond as the Spirit of God reaches down to us. Let us each do our part in developing and nurturing our spirit capabilities to the fullest potential to be an overcomer in the spiritual trials of our day. And let us not fail to help our children take rule over their spirits, too, so they may join us in the fellowship of the ages in the presence of God.

## LESSON 2

# THE SPIRIT OF GOD

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The most impressive Spirit Being in all eternity is the Spirit of Almighty God. Mysteries surround the Holy Spirit's nature that surpass our comprehension—many of the truths revealed about Him we simply accept by faith because of the authority of God's Word.

The Spirit is the Creator of all other spirits. As finite mankind, we can never understand how the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, are One. Neither can we comprehend how the Spirit of God can dwell in the heart of the humble<sup>4</sup>. As Christians, however, we accept these teachings by faith because they are taught in the Scriptures.

The Bible presents a Holy Spirit that was active in both the Old and New Testaments. In each theater He operates in an entirely different realm and dimension. The Holy Spirit is the same person; He has not changed. However, the way the Holy Spirit works with men is pertinent for the dispensation in which they live. He led men into carnal warfare and into acts of aggression for the people of God in the Old Testament. He will not do that today.

In the New Testament the Holy Spirit convicts men to draw them to the Father. Instead of helping godly men physically kill the wicked, He helps godly men love and bless their enemies. He helps mere men overcome evil with good when they have been wronged. He helps suffering men take courage against persecutors and to speak the truth in convincing ways. He inspires the individual believer to fulfillment in his walk with God.

The Holy Spirit is also the behind-the-scenes operator of the Church. He gives gifts to the Church and guides the Church through the challenges of the day. When He is honored and His directives are followed, He is a safer Guide in choosing leaders and in raising up gifts than all the wisdom of men put together. He leads the seeker to those who can share the truth so more seekers come into the fold. It is imperative we recognize His work as being more important than the organization of our own human energies.

Disciples of Christ will study the Word in order to discern between true and false expressions of Holy Spirit activity. In our day we have heard the Holy Spirit credited for present day tongues, miracles and supernatural revelations. Most of these activities are more about honoring man than God. If we are not grounded on Bible truth we may fall prey to these false teachings.

This lesson teaches the Christian what the Scriptures reveal about the person and work of the Holy Spirit of God in our day.

### THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

**Ge 1:2** And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness *was* upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.

**Ge 6:3** And the LORD said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also *is* flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years.

**Ju 11:29** Then the Spirit of the LORD came upon Jephthah, and he passed over Gilead, and Manasseh...

**2Pe 1:21** For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost

### JESUS' PROMISE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

**Jo 3:5** Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. 6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit 8 The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

**Jo 4:24** God *is* a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

**Mt 12:31** Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy *against* the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men.

### THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE CHURCH AGE

**Jo 14:16** And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; **17** *Even* the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.

**26** But the Comforter, *which is* the Holy

Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

**Jo 16:13** Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, *that* shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.

**14** He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew *it* unto you.

### THE HOLY SPIRIT WITH THE DISCIPLE

**Lu 11:13** If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall *your* heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?

**Ro 8:26** Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

**1Co 3:16** Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and *that* the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?

**Ga 5:22** But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, **23** meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. **24** And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. **25** If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

**Eph 1:13** In whom ye also *trusted*, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,

**Eph 4:30** And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.

**Eph 5:8** For ye were sometimes darkness, but now *are ye* light in the Lord: walk as children of light: **9** (For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth;) **10** Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord.

**QUESTIONS FOR THOUGHT AND DISCUSSION**

1. *What two significant events on this earth were directly controlled by the Holy Spirit?*
2. *Give three people the Spirit came upon in the Old Testament and enumerate what He did for them.*
3. *What is the Spirit's part in the New Birth?*
4. *What can you do so your human spirit can make contact with the Holy Spirit in activities such as Bible reading, praying, singing and evangelism?*
5. *What is your understanding of blaspheming the Holy Spirit?*
6. *How do we know that some of the present day emphasis of magnifying the Holy Spirit is not of God?*
7. *How did Jesus describe the Holy Spirit's presence in His disciples' lives as changing after Pentecost? How did it work out?*
8. *List some of the special blessings the Holy Spirit brings to the believer.*
9. *Explain what is meant when the Holy Spirit seals the believer.*
10. *What answer do you have for supposed differences between what the Spirit tells people today and what is written in the Bible?*

**THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE OLD TESTAMENT**

1. ***God's Spirit was present in the Old Testament as seen in major historical events.*** From the beginning the Holy Spirit moved (Hebrew brooded) over creation.<sup>5</sup> Even though there is progressive revelation about the Holy Spirit and progressive involvement in men's lives, there is no reason to believe this expression of the God-head is an afterthought of God or any different person who dwells in our hearts today. Later we will see He is sent to work with the Church in Jesus' Name, but He has been here with the human story even from the beginning.
2. ***The Holy Spirit enabled men when they were called to a task outside the ability of ordinary men.*** The Bible specifically teaches the Spirit worked in men like Jephthah, Samson, Saul and David. Through His enablement they "subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, (and) turned to flight the armies of the aliens.<sup>6</sup> These men in themselves were only ordinary men. God's Spirit made them heroes.
3. ***The Holy Spirit inspired holy men to write the Word of God.*** A very important work of the Spirit was the penning of Holy Writ. These words are written for our admonition, to give us patience and hope. As we read and meditate on Spirit inspired writings about what the Holy Spirit did with holy men a Holy Spirit power comes into our own lives. The word "inspired" means God breathed. When God breathed into the clay figure of what was to become Adam's body, it sprang into life. When we poor mortals allow God to breathe His Spirit into our experience through partaking of the Scripture, we too take on divine life.

**JESUS PROMISE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

4. ***Conversion of heart can only be accomplished by the Holy Spirit's work in one's life.*** Jesus taught Nicodemus that there is a new birth. Man with a fallen human nature cannot change himself. There really is a Holy Spirit that will come into the heart of a fallen man and create a new nature in him. While man needs to meet certain qualifications, what results is nothing short of a miracle. This miracle goes on to lead the person in a Spirit led life, a life totally unpredictable by human standards. As much as we depend on human training, there is not and never will be a substitute for what the Spirit does in one's life.
5. ***For true worship to happen, there needs to be communion between man's spirit and the Holy Spirit.*** Jesus taught that worship is a spiritual activity, even a spiritual phenomena. Something supernatural happens when a person connects with the God-head. This is not because a person goes to some hallowed ground or sees

some apparition. Worship takes place when a person enters into Truth in doctrine, in his spirit and in his life. In his heart and life the disciple unites with his Creator in spiritual union. God is actively seeking those who will worship Him in this way. He is a rewarder of those that diligently seek Him.

#### ***THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE CHURCH AGE***

**6. *The Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son.*** Jesus said, “Whom the Father shall send in my name...” We have this question in our baptism vows, an affirmation that we believe the Holy Spirit is sent to the earth by the Father and the Son. This statement is founded directly in Scripture and has been a part of church dogma for centuries. Interestingly, it is one of the doctrines that caused separation between the Orthodox and the Catholic churches in the late AD 500's. The Catholics moved ahead without the Orthodox bishops in stating the Holy Spirit proceeded from the Father and the Son. The Orthodox responded with a statement that the Holy Spirit proceeded from the Father through the Son. Tragically when men with hearts void of the Holy Spirit tangle with each other they can divide even over the One who is to bring the Church unity.

**7. *The development of apostolic doctrine and the writings of the New Testament is to be directly attributed to the work of the Holy Spirit. All special revelation is now closed in our day.*** “He will guide you into all truth...” became the epistles. “He shall bring all things to your remembrance...” became the gospels. “He shall show you things to come...” is now our book of Revelation. “He shall guide you into all truth...” is our assurance that all truth was given to the apostles and through the epistles. We seek no further divine revelation and reject as pseudepigrapha (false writings) all other works that claim divine inspiration. Believing the Bible as we have it today gives great stability to the Church. False prophets work from the platform that they have direct inspiration from God. In this way they point people to themselves, their authority and their vision. True leaders point people to the Word. We together bow ourselves to a higher Authority. We dare not establish principles outside the Word. The entire realm of traditions becomes much more simple when we acknowledge that traditions, too, must bow to the Bible, for the Bible stands supreme in authority.

**8. *The Holy Spirit must be recognized as the ultimate leader for the Bride of Christ.*** It is tempting for leaders of the Church to feel they must maintain some control over special aspects of church life. There is a temptation to control who is placed into offices of responsibility. When men or organizations usurp control over the calling of leaders or the direction of where the Church should go the Holy Spirit is not given His place. The great cause of Christ and the Church inevitably suffers.<sup>7</sup>

#### ***THE HOLY SPIRIT'S RELATIONSHIP WITH THE DISCIPLE***

**9. *The Holy Spirit does intercessory work for the disciple at the Father's throne.***

When we cross over into eternity, we will probably be surprised how involved the Holy Spirit was in interceding for us. It is so human to feel alone. Even Jesus felt alone while on the cross. Jesus' promise was that He would never leave us but guide us until the end of the age.

**10. *The Holy Spirit seals the disciple's heart in his daily life.*** Seals play an important part in legal work. A seal on a document represents the weight of the authority represented by that seal on that piece of work. It is prohibited to tamper with official seals. All are to recognize the genuine quality of the work. Someday we too will see how much the holy seal on our hearts kept us from molestation by Satan or his demonic forces.

**11. *The Holy Spirit produces fruit in the disciple's heart as He works from the inside out.*** This fruit is genuine but not native to humanity on its own. A person cannot manufacture more Spirit fruit through self effort. Spirit fruit is grown only as a person walks with the Holy Spirit in his heart.

#### ***IN CONCLUSION***

“And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you”(John 14:16-17). Most of us recognize that we are in a spiritual conflict that threatens to destroy our souls for eternity. Wise are the disciples who choose to draw close to God through His Spirit and receive of His enabling grace in their lives.

# LESSON 3

## THE NATURE AND ORDER OF ANGELS

According to the Bible we are surrounded by an invisible world of spirit beings. Though difficult to fully grasp, there are several instances where men's eyes were opened and they saw the reality of what must exist all the time. It is good for us to remember this fact because we live in the age of reason and enlightenment which seeks to deny the reality of the spirit world. Also, in the present Church Age, the written Word and the Holy Spirit have largely replaced these visible appearances of angels. They are still real.

And there is another area to be on guard. In our day we are witnessing a resurgence of interest in angels. This interest is supposedly innocent. Demon worship is supposedly the dark side of the occult and angel worship is part of white magic. The New Testament warns against worshipping of angels "Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen..." (Colossians 2:18).

The proper response to this push to worship angels is to understand what the Bible teaches us about them. There are a number of interesting truths in the Bible about these spirit beings that we should understand. In the future we as humans will work together with angels to carry out God's will.<sup>8</sup> While we cannot now yet see them, knowing they are present to minister<sup>9</sup> to us should give us comfort and also keep us from doing things we think no one else can see.<sup>10</sup>

Some questions may be raised: "In what ways are angels different from mankind?" and "Do angels even have emotions as we experience them?"

We know man was created in the image of God and this is not said about angels. Men and angels both have a will, but angels are not said to struggle with guilt over their past choices, neither do they come to repentance. They worship, but is this an expression of their sense of order; or do they feel the awe and wonder mankind feels when he comes into God's presence?

As we understand the place God has for angels, it gives us a sense of purpose and security. We are presently created in an order lower than angels. And yet some day we will judge angels.<sup>11</sup> Our earthly humiliations will be over and through Christ we will be elevated to a place above angels.<sup>12</sup> This is an extra incentive to faithfulness. So as we suffer in the humiliation of Christ's kingdom, we may also share in His glory with His angels.

This lesson highlights the characteristics and responsibilities of angels.

### THE PLACE OF ANGELS IN GOD'S PROGRAM

**Co 1:15** Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: **16** For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether *they be* thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: **17** And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.

**Ps 103:20** Bless the LORD, ye his angels, that excel in strength, that do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word. **21** Bless ye the LORD, all ye his hosts; ye ministers of his, that do his pleasure.

**Lu 15:10** Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.

**Re 5:11** And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; **12** Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb...

### ANGELS COMPARED TO MEN

**Ps 8: 4** What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him? **5** For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour.

**1Co 6:3** Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life?

**Re 22:8** And I John saw these things, and heard *them*. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which shewed me these things. **9** Then saith he unto me, See *thou do it* not: for I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God.

**He 1:14** Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?

### ANGELS COMPARED WITH CHRIST

**Mt 26:53** Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?

**He 1:4** Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. **6** And again, when he bringeth in the firstbegotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him.

**He 2:9** But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.

### LIMITATIONS OF ANGELS

**Mt 22:29** Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God. **30** For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven.

**Mt 24:36** But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.

**1Pe 1:12** Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into.

### ORDER AMONG ANGELS

**Ju 1:9** Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee.

**Dan 10:13** But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days: but, lo, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me; and I remained there with the kings of Persia. **21** But I will shew thee that which is noted in the scripture of truth: and *there* is none that holdeth with me in

these things, but Michael your prince.

**QUESTIONS FOR THOUGHT AND DISCUSSION**

1. Describe some of the glorious facts about angels.
2. Who created angels, and for what purpose are they created?
3. How do angels share in the salvation experience of a sinner? Does Luke 15:10 teach us that angels experience joy?
4. In what ways are angels superior to men?
5. Considering the above verses along with Ephesians 1:20-23 and Ephesians 2:6, what will the relationship between angels and saints be after the resurrection?
6. Why did the angel not accept man's worship? How can this be reconciled with the times when heavenly beings accepted man's worship? (Example Moses in Exodus 3:4-5, and Joshua in Joshua 5:13-15.)
7. Why was Jesus temporarily given a place under the angels?
8. What are some limitations angels face?
9. What are some of the types of angels you remember from the Bible? How do we know they are not all given the same rank and responsibility?
10. Read Colossians 2:18, Galatians 1:8, and 2 Corinthians 11:4, 13-15. What

*could be the danger in esteeming angels too highly?*

### **THE PLACE OF ANGELS IN GOD'S PROGRAM**

**1. Angels are created beings, not just non-personal messages.** The word "angel" in the Old Testament is *Malak* and means messenger or to dispatch as a deputy. Some liberal scholars believe angels to be nothing more than a message, similar to a radio wave or a letter sent. In Bible study we find angels to be persons. We are given the names of some which would indicate personality. They were created so they had a beginning. They have specific duties which they fulfill throughout all the generations of men. They have a future in which we will share a part. Some day we possibly will know them intimately, even as they know us now.

**2. The angels were created by Jesus<sup>13</sup> and there is evidence to believe it was in the six days of the creation.<sup>14</sup>** (There is much debate on the timing of the angels creation.) No wonder the demon in the man in the synagogue<sup>15</sup> confessed that he knew Jesus. Jesus had created him and Jesus was likely the very first Person he saw when he was created! He cried out because he had an uncontrollable urge to confess Jesus as Lord. He well understood Jesus has the authority to and someday will consign him to torments for ever in the last day. Angels are glorious in power and might, but they are created by the very One who holds us in His love.

**3. By all indications, there are innumerable hosts of angels.** When the scriptures use numbers to describe how many angels there are, they use numbers that relate to infinity. We do well to stand in awe of the host of heaven when we see formidable earthly enemies rather than to be intimidated by man who will but fail.<sup>16</sup>

**4. Angels constantly involve themselves in worship of the Almighty, in doing God's pleasure and in beholding the salvation of souls.** In the next two lessons we will observe other activities of angels as they are sent on special missions, but it is good to take a peek into their everyday life. These activities of worship, and obedience are ones we too can share in. We need to remember that in doing so we are being involved in heavenly activities.

### **ANGELS COMPARED TO MEN**

**5. Mankind is created lower than the angels, but the redeemed in Christ will one day be exalted to a status above them.** Throughout the Bible record, men consistently reveal an urge to worship angels. There are many reasons for this. Angels were created around 6,000 years ago.<sup>17</sup> Their experience and exposure is awesome compared to mortals of less than threescore years and ten. They travel from earth to heaven,<sup>18</sup> from the presence of God to the valleys of men's dwellings. They neither slumber nor sleep. We do not know that they need food for energy like we as humans do even though the Bible refers to angel's food.<sup>19</sup> These are only a few areas of angel's superiority over men.

And yet one day in being joint-heirs with Christ we will be given a place for eternity over the angels.<sup>20</sup> In our eternal bodies, we will be equal to the angels in that we will not marry and neither can we die.<sup>21</sup> These things cause us to marvel at

God's blessing to us through salvation. In essence we discover that by sharing this fallen world for a season, we may be partakers in salvation that will one day be an exaltation for all eternity.

**6. Though greater than men, angels consistently reject man's worship.** Angels understand they are created beings and they, with mankind, are to worship the Creator. All worship of the created is forbidden. Therefore, all holy angels reject the worship of men. Any angel that accepts or seeks man's homage is demonic in nature. Any source that invites or encourages saints to pay adulation to angels is to be strictly avoided!

**7. Though greater than mankind, God consistently requires angels to minister to men's needs.** Herein is a marvel. God creates superior beings and asks them to serve inferior beings. Angels minister to men. Adult humans minister to infants and children. Jesus the Creator of all was asked to serve and then die for inferior humanity. We should recognize this pattern and fit into the calling God has for us. This will enable us to willingly and graciously serve in situations we may be tempted to feel are beneath our dignity.

### **ANGELS COMPARED WITH CHRIST**

**8. Christ is the Only begotten Son of God, the Creator; angels are messenger-servant beings.** Even while Jesus was on earth, the angels waited on His command. He could have said one word and an innumerable company of angels would have come to set Him free. In the eternal world Jesus has an inheritance far above any of the angels.<sup>22</sup>

We know that while Jesus was on this earth as a man, He made himself lower than the angels. While He used His authority as Son of God to forgive sins<sup>23</sup> etc, He never used His deity (which was never compromised) as an easy way out of His human struggles. When angels came to strengthen Him in the garden, it was because in His humanity, Jesus was weaker than they. In His willingness to pour out His life unto death, He tasted death in a way the angels never could or can.

### **LIMITATIONS OF ANGELS**

**9. Even though angels are superior to men in many ways, the Bible reveals they have limitations or boundaries that man does not have.** In studying these boundaries we come to appreciate the temporary limitations we have as humans. One great distinction is that angels do not have family. They do not marry or give in marriage; there are no baby angels being born into angel homes. In the work associated with raising a family we may forget what a blessing it is to have children. Some of us are granted a narrow window of time to contribute to heaven's population, whereas angels are never given this opportunity. Another limitation of angels is they apparently cannot understand the emotions of being redeemed. They marvel at Christ's actions of coming to die for men, they celebrated His birth and

they witness rejoicing when a sinner comes to salvation but they “desire to look into” the mystery of redemption.<sup>24</sup>

#### **ORDER AMONG ANGELS**

**10. Angels are created in orders and with rank according to their Divinely appointed responsibility.** The huge division between angels is between those who serve God and those who serve Lucifer. Apparently there is conflict and even war between those sides, and good angels may be hindered in carrying out their ministry of service to men.<sup>25</sup> But even in the righteous conflict of good angels versus evil ones, respect for created authority and rank prevails.<sup>26</sup> From this we are to learn that all who are in God’s service will maintain respect for the office God gives to another regardless of character flaws.

#### **CONCLUSION**

It is good for us to understand what the Bible teaches about angels. There is much superstition around us. We also face temptations to appeal to higher powers when we face life’s problems that have escalated out of our control. We need to remember we are well cared for by our God and His holy angels. We want to accept His plan through the disciplines of life and be faithful for the wonderful future God has reserved in heaven for us.

# LESSON 4

## THE MINISTRY OF ANGELS TO SAINTS

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According to the Scriptures, one of the duties of angels is to serve men and women who have turned their hearts toward God. There are many occasions in the Bible when angels became directly involved in ministering to saints. In our dispensation the focus is on God's grace, our faith, and the work of the Holy Spirit. Thus it is not surprising we do not visibly see and connect with angels or we might be tempted to honor their word above the Bible. However, we still have good reason to believe that angels are active today. They are not involved in sharing the salvation message or doctrine. They do minister to our needs and keep us from harm or danger except for what is in our Father's plan for us.

Therefore, we are not in our conflict alone. Even though we may have lonely hours and experience reverses, just beyond the thin veil of flesh we are surrounded by beings who also behold the face of the Father.

Many issues in life appear differently when we know we are under our Father's constant care. Consider the matter of trust versus worry. When we know we are not alone we will not imagine worst case scenarios; we will not permit our minds to run wild. We think of the Father's love and His mighty angel's care of us. When tragedy does take place, because "accidents will happen," we know we have a loving Father who has very capable agents working with us. We do not end up blaming ourselves. We trust in spite of uncertain times; we submit in times of loss.

These expressions of faith are so important in maintaining emotional balance and equilibrium in life. We will not need to depend upon the world's methods of securities when our minds and treasures are kept by the power of God. Saints in many periods of time and in other parts of the world have been severely persecuted, even martyred for their faith. The Bible pictures persecution as being the norm. As pampered "Christians" in the Western world we may yet face a time when we will need to rely more fully on these spiritual powers. How will we have these powers then if we do not have faith to handle our relatively simple life today?

Additionally, a reverse side to all of this is that the Bible teaches that men of God may serve angels! This is a strong motivation for us to be hospitable to strangers. Knowing angels are present should change both our temperament and social hospitality.

This lesson is designed to help us receive encouragement and inspiration from the unseen ministry of angels.

### ANGEL'S MINISTRY TO MEN

**Ex 23:20** Behold, I send an Angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared.

**21** Beware of him, and obey his voice, provoke him not; for he will not pardon your transgressions: for my name *is* in him.

**22** But if thou shalt indeed obey his voice, and do all that I speak; then I will be an enemy unto thine enemies, and an adversary unto thine adversaries. **23** For mine Angel shall go before thee, and bring thee in...

**Ps 34:6** This poor man cried, and the LORD heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles. **7** The angel of the LORD encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them.

**Ps 91:9** Because thou hast made the LORD, *which is* my refuge, *even* the most High, thy habitation; **10** There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling. **11** For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. **12** They shall bear thee up in *their* hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.

**Mt 18:10** Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven.

**Lu 16:22** And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried;

**1Co 11:6** For if the woman be not covered, let her also be shorn: but if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered. **7** For a man indeed ought not to cover *his* head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man. **10** For this cause ought the woman to have power on *her* head because of the angels.

**He 1:13** But to which of the angels said he at any time, Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool? **14** Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?

**He 13:2** Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.

**Ac 7:53** Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept *it*.

**He 2:2** For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward...

### ANGELS APPEARING TO MEN

**Ge 16:7-12** . . . . . *Hagar*

**Ge 19:1-22** . . . . . *Lot*

**Ge 21:17-21** . . . . . *Hagar and Ishmael*

**Ge 22:11-18** . . . . . *Abraham*

**Ge 28:10-12** . . . . . *Jacob*

**Ex 3:1-4** . . . . . *Moses*

**Ex 14:19-20; 23:20-23** . *Children of Israel*

**Nu 22:22-35** . . . . . *Balaam*

**Ju 6:11-23** . . . . . *Gideon*

**Ju 13:2-23** . . . . . *Samson's Parents*

**1Ki 19:2-8** . . . . . *Elijah*

**Da 3:24-28** . . . . . *The Three Hebrew Boys*

**Da 6:19-22** . . . . . *Daniel*

**Lu 1:11-19** . . . . . *Zacharias*

**Lu 1:26-36** . . . . . *Mary*

**Lu 2:8-15** . . . . . *Shepherds*

**Ma 2:13;19** . . . . . *Joseph*

**Jo 5:2-4** . . . . . *Impotent at the pool*

**Ma 4:11; Lu 22:42-43** . . . . . *Jesus*

**Ac 5:17-20** . . . . . *The Apostles*

**Ac 8:26;26** . . . . . *Philip*

**Ac 10:3-9; 21-22** . . . . . *Cornelius*

**Ac 12:5-11** . . . . . *Peter*

**Ac 27:23-26** . . . . . *Paul*

**Re 1:1** . . . . . *John*

**Re 14:6-7** . . . . . *Tribulation souls*

**QUESTIONS FOR THOUGHT AND DISCUSSION**

1. Upon what conditions could the Israelites expect the protection of the Angel?
2. Give three characteristics of the Angel who led the Israelites.
3. What special provision can the saint claim that is not available to the sinner?
4. How did Satan turn the promise of angelic protection into a temptation?
5. What did angels usually look like when they appeared to men? How does this differ from their appearance when seen in their native habitat such as Isaiah and Ezekiel saw them? Can you think of any reason for the difference?
6. What does a woman with her head covered (and a man without a headship sign) signify to angels?
7. Why was there seemingly so much angel activity in the Old Testament and in the early days of the Apostles and so little physical evidence of their presence today?
8. Why were so many of the people who saw angels filled with fear?
9. In the Gospels (John 5:2-4) it is recorded an angel would trouble the water and then healing would take place. Do we gather that different angels are given different gifts and abilities along with their responsibilities?
10. What positive ministry will angels have during the tribulation period? How does that differ from our present dispensation?

**TEACHING RELATING TO ANGEL'S MINISTRY**

**1. While God cares for all mankind, special care is promised for those who are consistently and conscientiously righteous.** Jesus promised that He and the Father form a special relationship to all those who obey Him. "Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world? Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him" (John 14:22-23). When the young man in Elisha's day became fearful about the army that surrounded them, Elisha did not choose to delude the young man or close his eyes to the present very real threat around them. Rather he chose to ask God to open the young man's eyes to the spiritual reality—heaven's army around them.<sup>27</sup> While the young man's problem was not necessarily a spiritual problem, it was solved by a spiritual solution. In the walk of faith, there are ways we too can choose to see the armies of heaven around us, and it will make all the difference. When a person who is struggling with emotional issues chooses spiritual disciplines such as Bible study or evangelism, faith opens his eyes to eternal realities. Then he often finds the emotional distress is lessened and eventually resolved.

**2. Jesus made it plain that we dare not tempt the Lord our God by deliberately exposing ourselves to danger.** Satan knows that angels protect saints. He has no doubt experienced this many times when he purposed to bring physical death or suffering to saints only to have angels stand in the way and protect them. But let's see what Satan was told when he offered this protection to Jesus. "Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple, And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God" (Matthew 4:5-7). We do well to hearken to this admonition. It is right to exercise reasonable caution and make wise choices in health. We are not to presume on the protection of angels.

**3. On the flip side, Jesus warned us to be careful how we relate to children, because their angels regularly travel from the presence of children directly to the Father's throne.** Children seem expendable. Parents can decide whether or not to bring them into the world; in fact there is pressure exerted to make parents feel guilty if they are given "too many" children. After children are conceived, some consider it acceptable or even preferable to murder them in the womb. After they are born, children are very vulnerable. Their Adamic nature eventually emerges in obnoxious ways. Some adults find children trying. Rather than learn patience and develop godly virtue, they resort to abuse. The abuse of children is an affront to God and illegal in our society, but it is a sad fact that many children are abused and

it is never found out—at least not in time. Christian parents will remember that no abuse to children goes unnoticed by the child’s angel. They also will remember when they are tempted with impatience that no reviler has any inheritance in the Kingdom of God.<sup>28</sup>

**4. Angels may not understand redemption or even love but they are very conscious of authority.** Women wearing a headship sign reveal they are willing to take their place in divine order. That is the very area where Satan failed. He refused to be among those who are “minsters to those who shall be heirs of salvation.” Rather he insisted “I will be like the Most High.” Being out of order marked the beginning of his downfall. Angels have no problem recognizing submission and/or rebellion. It resonates with their own experience in the dawn of creation. The Bible implies there is extra attention given to godly women who accept the sign of a covered head.

**5. The Mosaic law is said to have been given by the disposition of angels.** While there are references to the “Angel” involved in giving the law, this fact is highlighted in the New Testament to emphasize the superiority of a New Covenant given to us by God’s own Son. Our covenant is far greater; it is given by God’s own Son.

#### **ANGELS APPEARING TO MEN**

**6. According to the decree of God, angels may appear in visible form to men.** Normally men cannot see into the spirit world. But on special occasion, especially in the Old Testament, God would “open” men’s eyes and they could see angels. This is known as an *angelophany*. On these occasions, angels usually appear to an individual alone or to a select group. Often angels appeared to bring a special message from God about an important event that was about to take place. These predictions came to pass as given. Other times, angels would come to enable men to perform some special task. Once the task was fulfilled, the angel would not appear again. We have no record of angels maintaining long term relationships with men.

Angel appearances are similar to but different from instances when Jesus Himself would come and appear to men. When the reincarnate Christ would appear to men this is known as a *theophany*; a visible manifestation to humankind of God. When either Christ or an angel appeared, man always felt inferior and fearful. The distinguishing difference is that Christ accepted worship and angels avoided it.

**7. When angels appear to men, they are sensitive to the feelings of fear they stir in humans.** In both the Old and New Testaments angels appear to have startled and even frightened the people they appeared to. In each case, they encouraged and comforted the humans with a “fear not” admonition and the assurance they had not come to harm. We do not know if they understand fear in that they can feel it, but at least they know humans have fear as angels suddenly appear to them.

**8. The visible ministry of angels drops off dramatically as one moves into New Testament church life.** The last record of an angel ministering to men was before Paul’s shipwreck late in his ministry. The angel assured Paul that God was with them and no lives would be lost. He was sent to give assurance in a fearsome time, not to give doctrine or revelation.

We do not look for angels directives or promises in our day. If perchance we would encounter a paranormal experience, dream or have some supposed revelation from heaven,<sup>29</sup> this would need to be tested by the word of God. No personal experience can take precedence over Divine truth as it is written in the Bible.

#### **CONCLUSION**

After referencing his experience with hearing a voice from heaven, Peter says “We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts...” 2 Peter 1:19. Angels filled and continue to fill a place in God’s program but they are not our authority, God’s Word is.

## LESSON 5

# ANGELS EXERCISING THE JUDGMENT OF GOD

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It is clear from the Scriptures that angels are given far greater power and might than mankind. "And of the angels he saith, Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire." (Hebrews 1:7) From time to time they are given direction to exercise God's judgment on mankind. At times this judgment was for the express purpose of protecting God's people. Far more often, it was simply to bring punishment upon wicked men; the punishment they deserved.

It is a sobering thought to think that angels may be authorized to take life. We as Christians are not given that power. In fact we are commanded to do what we can to preserve and bless life.

When God decrees it, angels move and we as humans can offer no resistance at all. There is no medicine, no antidote, or cure. There is no weapon, strategy, nor army that can prevail. We as humanity can survive only as we align ourselves and our lives with God Almighty. Think of the work accomplished by the death angel in the day of Sennacherib. 185,000 able bodied soldiers slain in one night.<sup>30</sup> When God wishes to fulfill His will through the power of angels there will be no resisting it.

In this study we have been raising the question to what degree do angels have emotions. We know God (and the entire God-head) has emotions similar to ours, or at least in such a way as we can connect with. The Bible specifically states that God has great wrath. In spite of mercy and love toward His created beings, God becomes angry<sup>31</sup> when man chooses the road of rebellion and sin.

Angels carry out the effect of that anger, but do they feel angry with the wicked? Do they feel pity when innocent suffer along with the wicked? It is not important that we have answers to all these questions. It is important that we know and live with the knowledge that no mortal can live outside God's direction and survive in the world to come.

This lesson illustrates the power given to angels to exercise God's wrath against the ungodly and how good men can receive great benefit when God wishes to discipline them through conviction.

### ANGELS EXERCISING GOD'S WRATH IN HISTORY

**Ps 78:43** How he had wrought his signs in Egypt...**49** He cast upon them the fierceness of his anger, wrath, and indignation, and trouble, by sending evil angels *among them*.  
**1Ch 21:14** So the LORD sent pestilence upon Israel: and there fell of Israel seventy thousand men. **15** And God sent an angel unto Jerusalem to destroy it: and as he was destroying, the LORD beheld, and he repented him of the evil, and said to the angel that destroyed, It is enough, stay now thine hand. And the angel of the LORD stood by the threshingfloor of Ornan the Jebusite.

**2Ki 19:20** Then Isaiah the son of Amoz sent to Hezekiah, saying, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, *That* which thou hast prayed to me against Sennacherib king of Assyria I have heard. **34** For I will defend this city, to save it, for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake. **35** And it came to pass that night, that the angel of the LORD went out, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred fourscore and five thousand: and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they *were* all dead corpses.

**Mt 28:2** And, behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it. **3** His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow: **4** And for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead *men*. **5** And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. **6** He is not here: for he is risen, as he said...

**Ac 12:21** And upon a set day Herod, arrayed in royal apparel, sat upon his throne, and made an oration unto them. **22** And the people gave a shout, *saying, It is the voice of a god, and not of a man.* **23**

And immediately the angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory: and he was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghost.

### ANGELS EXERCISING GOD'S WRATH IN THE FUTURE

**Mt 13:39** The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels. **40** As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world. **41** The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; **42** And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.

**2Th 1:7** And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, **8** In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: **9** Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; **10** When he shall come to be glorified in his saints and to be admired in all them that believe.

**Re 12:7** And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, **8** And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. **9** And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

### POWER OVER THE ANGEL

**Ho 12:3** He took his brother by the heel in the womb, and by his strength he had power with God: Yea, he had power over the angel, and prevailed: he wept, and made supplication unto him: he found him in Bethel, and there he spake with us...

**QUESTIONS FOR THOUGHT AND DISCUSSION**

1. Evaluate the ten plagues performed in Egypt and place them in the correct row.  
 “Natural” disasters —  
 Pestilence —  
 Diseases —  
 Homicide —
2. What are some lessons we need to teach our hearts as we witness angels’ power over ungodly men?
3. What seems to be the motivation in David’s day that caused God to call the angel’s judgment to a halt?
4. How did the appearance of the angel to the soldiers compare to the way the angels appeared to Mary Magdalene in John 20:12?
5. What part will angels fill when Jesus returns in vengeance?
6. Since angels are so powerful and able to destroy men in vengeance, why doesn’t God allow us to witness their activity with our natural eyes?
7. Some have advocated that as believers we have authority over angels and can give them direction. What are your thoughts on this?
8. What will be the response of Christians when they see Christ and His mighty angels wreak judgment and vengeance on the ungodly?
9. What are some observations we should make from the angel war in heaven?
10. What can we learn from the fact that Jacob “had power over the angel and prevailed?”

**ANGELS EXERCISING GOD’S WRATH IN HISTORY**

1. **Angels are not nonresistant, in other words it is proper for them to resist evil.** In scene after scene in the Bible, angels are revealed as beings used to carry out the wrath and judgment of God. Angels not only witnessed the rebellion of Lucifer against God, they themselves also made a choice to submit to God or rebel against Him. Therefore they understand the two camps between which men will choose regarding the Almighty. They understand that resistance and punishment are very much a part of God’s plan to deal with Satan and his forces. When they are assigned to carry out destruction they know this is God’s perfect plan for the culmination of the ages. In eternity, humans who had the freedom to choose will bring all their love and devotion before a holy God. Those who reject Him and the Gospel offer will be punished with the Devil and his angels.
2. **There is purpose to God’s anger and wrath.** Men may be angry for wrong reasons. It is certain that man’s anger does not work God’s righteousness.<sup>32</sup> God’s anger is always for proper reasons and does work His righteousness. His anger is not a release of selfish emotion, but rather an expression of divine holiness. This anger and display of judgment is part of the plan of mercy and love to protect from all evil those who serve Him. God will eventually separate those who give themselves to Him from those who reject Him. When God does bring punishment on the wicked, this will not be an expression of unrighteousness, but of righteousness and holiness.
3. **There is purpose to saints serving God’s grace through nonresistance trusting in God and His angels for protection.** Jesus’ teaching in the Sermon on the Mount makes it clear His disciples are to take a different course than Old Testament saints. In the Church age, God’s people are to put grace on display, showing love to both friend and foe alike.<sup>33</sup> The Kingdom of Jesus is international and inter-cultural. Christians do not become involved in national conflicts or personal conflicts.<sup>34</sup> Rather God asks Christians to respond with love and forgiveness when human relationships are frayed. This mentality makes Christians defenseless—or at least it seems that way from a natural perspective. When people witness a Christian show love and blessing upon his enemy, the watchers receive a small demonstration of the great love the God-head has for mankind.<sup>35</sup>
4. **God uses angels to protect nonresistant Christians.** Since Christians are defenseless, it seems from a human standpoint that they would soon be taken advantage of by the world and possibly even annihilated. What people cannot see are the hosts of angel forces that encamp around those who fear God. As Christians, this calls for the exercise of faith. It is difficult to choose to trust God rather than natural armaments. But have you ever thought of what an angel could

do to a fighter jet? Much less what he can do to an angry man's threats? When looking through the eyes of faith nonresistance, will seem the only sensible choice. In fact, we as disciples of Christ should have more fear of disqualifying angel support by taking resistance into our own hands.

**5. Angels may be behind the "natural disasters" and pestilence of our day.** Being surrounded by a natural world we look for natural causes when disaster strikes. Indeed, viruses and bacteria, tornadoes and hurricanes do have natural connections. But why do they begin without warning or diminish seemingly without cause? Why do winds converge in the weather patterns they do? We have every reason to believe our God is working in exactly the same way through angels of destruction as He did in the past. God is not the victim of "natural causes," indeed He is the Author of them.

#### **ANGELS EXERCISING GOD'S WRATH IN THE FUTURE**

**6. Angels will not only be involved in the announcement of Jesus coming for the Church but also in bringing judgment on the sinners.** According to 1Thessalonians 4:16 there will be a loud announcement made by the voice of the archangel when Jesus comes back for the Church. At that time Jesus will raise the righteous dead and give them eternal bodies. He will also change the bodies of the righteous living to incorruptible spirit bodies. He will unite and catch away both groups to be His Bride forever. Angels will also be present when Jesus comes back with the church to judge the wicked. In that hour apparently both angels and resurrected saints will comprise the armies of heaven. We will rejoice with them in our Lord's victory and reign!

**7. Angels will be involved in a great conflict to rid heaven of all fallen angels.** Truly there are things in the future we only see darkly. Are fallen angels still allowed access to God's throne as in the days of Job<sup>36</sup> and Jehoshaphat?<sup>37</sup> Do devils go and accuse us to God on a regular basis? At any rate, one day the holy angels will accomplish the cleansing of heaven and Satan and all fallen angels will be forever banished. This may take place just before the Lord Jesus brings His Bride home to be with Him in His Father's House.

**8. Our hope is bound up in aligning ourselves with God's will for our lives.** The Bible gives us a glimpse of many spiritual realities which we cannot perceive through any of our senses. From a natural standpoint it does not seem like God is in control. It does not seem like there is anything that will stop the wicked from having their way. Miracles are over. Accounts of marvelous deliverance from enemies seem to belong to an entirely different era. We live in the age of salvation by grace through faith. We are given facts of spiritual reality in the Bible, and then

we need to choose by faith to believe in Christ. This is our only hope to make it through the present deception to our eternal home.

#### **POWER OVER THE ANGEL**

**9. We have one example in the Holy Record of a person resisting an angel and being able to prevail.** That was Jacob. This passage in Genesis 32:24-32 seems to glorify Jacob's struggle with the angel. But how can this be? Man is powerless to resist the power of angels. Yet a 97 year old man had power over the angel! Surely God has a purpose for us in recording this account. The day He sent the angel to Jacob, God had full intent of blessing Jacob. Jacob had made the decision to serve the Lord, but he had many patterns of selfishness in his life. The struggle with the angel was no doubt to show Jacob how much more of his life he needed to yield to God. As the angel battled him, Jacob's view of the angel changed. First he struggled to escape from the angel and get away, then he struggled to keep him there so the angel would bless him.

Some have likened this angel to the grace of conviction. Conviction may seemingly come out of nowhere and beset us with its awful power. We struggle to get free, feeling the terrors of hell as it were in our conscience. Later we begin to realize we need that conviction. Then we embrace it, determined to receive all the good from it that we can. We want it to change us from the inside out.

#### **CONCLUSION**

One theme has prevailed in this lesson. When God orders angels to carry out judgment they are unstoppable. The only hope we have is to choose to be in submission to God today so we are on the side of angels. Then we may trust in their care, a provision from the Almighty.

## LESSON 6

### SATAN

Contrary to humanistic opinion, there is a literal devil and his created powers are formidable. In Hebrew his name means “to oppose” or “to obstruct.” Forms of his name are often translated “the accuser, or slanderer” or “the adversary.” This gives us some insight into his character.

Through comparing various Scriptures we learn by deduction that Satan (also known as Lucifer) was created chief of the angels by none other than Jesus Himself.<sup>38</sup> He was created above the archangel Michael and the messenger angel Gabriel.<sup>39</sup> In this position he was given wonderful powers and privileges.

There are limits to Satan’s power because he is not divine. He is not part of the Trinity. He is not omnipotent. There are things he simply cannot do. He may relate to men only within God’s permission.<sup>40</sup> He is not omnipresent—he cannot be at more than one place at a time. He is not omniscient—he does not know nearly everything, even about us. There are things we know he does not understand.<sup>41</sup> He does not fully comprehend God’s plan of redemption,<sup>42</sup> nor what God is planning for the future glories for mankind.<sup>43</sup> He does not know what you and I are thinking until we betray our thoughts by words or actions. He is not omnipresent, he only walks up and down seeking whom he may devour.<sup>44</sup>

He is not created in the image of God. Redeemed humans and God share an affinity that Satan cannot understand. We are not given any hint that Satan can experience any positive emotions such as love and mercy. It appears that if he has any emotions at all they are only negative ones. Compared to the many Scriptures speaking of God’s and man’s emotions we have only one allusion to Satan’s emotion and it is his wrath.<sup>45</sup> Even in this passage it may not be his feelings that are in focus but his tactics of intimidating mankind.

There is no reason for any man to feel he will find any sympathetic bonding with Satan when he shares in his eternal abode in the Lake of Fire. Only misery, agony and loneliness await those deceived by his lies.

Though Satan is the most powerful of all the created beings, God as his Creator is infinitely superior in majesty and might. There is no human who can be a match for Satan in his own strength. But let us take hope! There is no human who cannot withstand him when he is supported by Almighty God.

This lesson is to help us better understand Satan so we can be equipped to overcome his lies and his temptations.

#### SATAN’S ORIGIN AND FALL

**Is 14:12** How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! *how* art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! **13** For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: **14** I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High. **15** Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit. **Ez 28:14** Thou *art* the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee *so*: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. **15** Thou *wast* perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee. **16** ...thou hast sinned: therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God: and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire. **17** Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness...

**Jn 8:44** Ye are of *your* father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.

#### SATAN’S ACTIVITIES TODAY

**Ge 1:1** ...And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? **4** And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: **5** For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. **Jb 1:9** Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, Doth Job fear God for nought? **10** Hast not thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? thou hast blessed the

work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land. **11** But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face.

**2Co 11:4** For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or *if* ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with *him*. **13** For such *are* false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. **14** And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. **15** Therefore *it is* no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.

**Ep 2:2** Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:

**1Pe 5:8** Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:

#### SATAN’S FUTURE DEFEAT

**Lu 10:17** And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name. **18** And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven.

**Ro 16:20** And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly...

**Re 20:1** And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. **2** And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years. **10** And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet *are*, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

**QUESTIONS FOR THOUGHT AND DISCUSSION**

1. *What clues can you find in the passages in Isaiah and Ezekiel that reveal the being in focus is more than human?*
2. *Give four character or physical traits of this created being.*
3. *Is it ever possible for Satan to tell the truth? How can Satan quote Scripture and still be lying?*
4. *What are Satan's primary tactics when he works to undermine men's relationship with God?*
5. *Was the promise Satan made of man having his eyes opened and becoming "gods" realized?*
6. *When Satan comes into God's presence, how does he attempt to destroy the relationship between man and God?*
7. *What are some ways Satan presents himself and his ministers as angels of light today?*
8. *Explain Satan's tactics as a roaring lion.*
9. *Why did Jesus turn the disciples thoughts away from their spiritual powers with a statement about Satan's fall from heaven?*
10. *What involvement will believers have in the subjection of Satan?*

**SATAN'S ORIGIN AND FALL**

**1. *Pride was the vice that transformed Lucifer from a useful angel into a rebellious enemy of his Creator.*** There seems to be a fine line between acknowledging one's created abilities and thinking of oneself as better than others. We do not know all of what pushed Lucifer over the edge into rebellion, but we are sure pride was a big part of the equation. It is difficult to understand that all the sin and all the hurt that exists in the universe began with such a small beginning. Think of the murders, the adulteries, and the thievery, etc. that happens every day. It all goes back to that small beginning. If pride could turn an angel into a devil and eventually bring all the sin and suffering and hell fire for eternity, let us beware of its subtle influences in our own lives and relationships.

**2. *Satan was not corrupted by someone outside himself; his own thought patterns created sin in all the forms as it is expressed today.*** God does not answer to a standard of holiness; holiness is His character. Satan does not deal with sin and iniquity, he is the personification of it. There was no one there to tempt him. Iniquity and lying were found in him who once was pure and holy. When we choose sin and iniquity, we are choosing the person of Satan as our master. It is not just a little moral choice, it is a choice of identification. That is why we have the teaching in Romans 6:16, "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?"

**3. *Along with pride and iniquity, Satan immediately became a murderer and a liar. He is the opposite of every benevolent virtue of God.*** Cut off and alienated from his Creator, Satan became the opposite to every virtue in its opposing vice. Instead of perfect love, he is murder. Instead of absolute truth, he is falsehood. Instead of mercy, he is cruelty. While men may feel in their fallen nature they have more of a kinship with Satan than with the holiness of God, even the most wicked man has no way to grasp the horror of darkness Satan really is.

**SATAN'S ACTIVITIES WITH HUMANS**

**4. *Satan's chief approach to humans is to create doubt about the goodness of God and undermine His authority.*** In essence, Satan plied Eve with two questions. "Does God really mean what He says?" and "Is what He is asking of you what is really the best for you?" These questions filter into the thoughts of every man in one form or another. How can a just and loving God allow so much wrongdoing and so much suffering? Does the Bible really mean what it says? Churches may ask, "Can't we just compromise a few things to be more attractive to more people?" while youth ask "Do we really need to live all the commandments of God? Can't a good average of obedience be enough?"

It is a really good and necessary thing to remind ourselves that the very best we will ever find for our lives is to live in the perfect center of our Creator's will.

No sin or rebellion will ever satisfy as much as holiness and submission.

**5. *Since Satan's trait is dishonesty he has no problem disguising himself as a benevolent and acceptable master.*** Satan cannot be honest. Even evil men have a line of evil they will not cross. The lowest man in prison will pride himself that while he did do this or that, there are other areas where he absolutely would not go. This cannot be said of Satan. He not only has no line of morality, he also entices men beyond every line of decency that may be imagined. He is dishonesty.

**6. *Satan promises mankind gratification in all the areas of human desire.*** God created mankind with strong desires. These desires give us some God-like capabilities, having a pull toward being creative and benevolent. But these desires are corrupted in the Fall so they may become passionate motivations for evil. Satan capitalizes on these desires. He promises fulfillment for the "lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life."<sup>46</sup> It is not wrong that we have these capabilities or even these desires; only that they can take us in such wrong directions. When we fulfill our God-given passions in a way that honors Him, we find greater fulfillment in life. When we respond in the Devil's way, we are faced with greater emptiness. Some of the answer to temptation is to passionately serve God with all our heart and resources thus finding outlet for the energies and abilities He created us with.

**7. *Satan knows Scripture and will quote it when it serves his purposes.*** Every verse Satan quoted to Jesus was true. The falsehood was in the fact that following the verse in that setting would have led Jesus to violate greater Bible truths. Satan has years of exposure to God's revealed will. He is more versed in the Bible than anyone of us. His problem with the Bible is that it is Truth. So he only quotes it out of context. He will not offer the Bible to a person in a way that would help that person to go right. He does make many suggestions and applications that seduce the person to go against greater principles and eventually ensnare that person into sin. One of his chief deceptions is to have souls deeply troubled by the wrong they see in others so they give themselves over to wrongdoing and justify themselves in it.

**8. *Satan conquers some hearts through deception and others through intimidation.*** "As the ministers of righteousness" or "as a roaring lion;" how can this all come from the same source? Satan has one goal in mind and that is to undermine the work of our Creator. Therefore he quickly adjusts to the weakness of each personality. Some are more easily deceived while others are more quickly overwhelmed by what seems to be never ending pressures and problems of life. Focusing on the negatives of earth experience they fall prey to self pity, depression and despair. Forgetting the promises of God we can easily begin to have more vision of the devil's program than that of our own God. Remember, to us "are given...exceeding great and precious promises: that by these (we) might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world

through lust" (2 Peter 1:4).

### **SATAN'S FUTURE DEFEAT**

**9. *Satan will be defeated by Christ and the angels, and we as saints will share a part in the victory.*** We may not understand all of what is meant by God bruising Satan under our feet shortly. The picture likely compares to what we find in Old Testament accounts when the victors would place their feet upon the necks of their enemies such as in Joshua 10:24. Whatever the exact meaning we know it signifies victory, finally and forever. Can you imagine a time when you have the privilege to have Satan under your feet? When you know his power over you is broken forever? When the reproach he has brought upon God and the creation is gone for eternity? Let us live each day with this vision in view.

**10. *The beauty and glory of heaven will be enhanced by the fact that Satan and his forces are forever banned and consigned to the Lake of Fire.*** In life we are tempted to hold ill will toward men who have hurt us. These men are not the real problem. The real problem is the devil who is behind them. In life we may be tempted to feel a bit of remorse for him who was once an angel and that he has to exist in eternity in the Lake of Fire. That remorse is ill founded. Let us keep in sharp focus that we can forgive all men. The one who may receive no forgiveness from us is the deceiver of our souls. He is the ultimate enemy of God and of every living soul.

### **CONCLUSION**

All creation and especially all living men bear the scars of Satan's fall on their souls. Each one of us has inherited a nature that resonates with Satan's nature and our impulses are to say "Yes!" when he comes with an offer. Strange it is how we can see through the temptation someone else faces, but fall flat on our face for our own! We must see through the lies of Satan and we must learn to say "NO!" to each of his deceptions.

## LESSON 7

# THE FALLEN ANGELS

According to the Scriptures, there is a host of enemy beings around us that we cannot see. These are fallen angels; otherwise known as devils or demons. While we may think we are rather far removed from their influences, we will do well to study this lesson closely. Fallen angels are very involved in our world today.

There are two words in the Old Testament translated devils, the one comes to us in English as satyr, or a male goat. The other one is defined as demon, and comes from the root word meaning, "to ruin, destroy, devastate." In the New Testament, all the words translated *devils* come from the same root; a word that means "of the gods" and "able to distribute fortunes."

There is a direct link between idols, demons and devils. "What say I then? that the idol is any thing, or that which is offered in sacrifice to idols is any thing? But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils..." (1 Corinthians 10:19-21). This would teach that evil angels are present in the worship of pagan or heathen religions. Undoubtedly they are involved in our world in other ways as well; in ways we must allow the New Testament to define.

One of the prevailing teachings of today is that every problem, every temptation, every negative emotion, we as Christians experience is because of demonic oppression. This teaching maintains demon oppression is overcome by rebuking the demons in the name of Jesus. Is this what the New Testament teaches?

Anabaptist theology has focused more on the fallen nature of man and fallen emotions that linger are present in the life of the Christian. It has emphasized the need for the believer to fill his life with spiritual disciplines such as singing, praying and reading the word. These next lessons will explore which model of the Christian life is scriptural. Will we find victory by rebuking demons and claiming freedom? Or is victory to be found by putting off the old man and feeding our spiritual nature? Since the Christian warfare is real, we need to answer these questions scripturally.

What are the parameters for demons? What may they do and not do? How careful should we be with items we may have in our possession that may have been "blessed" by witches? How much time should we spend making sure evil spirits have been exorcized from our property and our possessions?

The goal of this lesson is for us to have a Biblical view of the demon world so we can avoid their devices.

### TEACHING ABOUT SATAN'S ANGELS

**Re 12:4** And his (the dragon's) tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth...

**Mt 8:28** And when he was come to the other side into the country of the Gergesenes, there met him two possessed with devils, coming out of the tombs, exceeding fierce, so that no man might pass by that way. **29** And, behold, they cried out, saying, What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? art thou come hither to torment us before the time...

**Ja 2:18** Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works. **19** Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble.

**1Jo 4:1** Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. **2** Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: **3** And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that *spirit* of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world. **4** Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world. **5** They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them. **6** We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.

### INSTANCES OF EVIL SPIRITS AT WORK

**Ju 9:23** Then God sent an evil spirit between Abimelech and the men of Shechem; and the men of Shechem dealt treacherously with Abimelech:

**1Sa 16:14** But the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the LORD troubled him. **23** And it came to pass, when the *evil* spirit from God was upon Saul, that David took an harp, and played with his hand: so Saul was refreshed, and was well, and the evil spirit departed from him.

**2Ch 18:18** ...I saw the LORD sitting upon his throne, and all the host of heaven standing on his right hand and *on* his left.

**19** And the LORD said, Who shall entice Ahab king of Israel, that he may go up and fall at Ramothgilead?... **20** Then there came out a spirit, and stood before the LORD, and said, I will entice him. And the LORD said unto him, Wherewith? **21** And he said, I will go out, and be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets. And *the LORD* said, Thou shalt entice *him*, and thou shalt also prevail: go out, and do *even* so.

**2Co 10:7** And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. **8** For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. **9** And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness...

### THE JUDGEMENT OF FALLEN ANGELS

**Mt 25:41** Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:

**Ju 1:6** And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day. **7** Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them in like manner ...suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.

**QUESTIONS FOR THOUGHT AND DISCUSSION**

1. *What powers were given to the two men filled with demons?*
2. *What evidence do we have that these devils knew Jesus?*
3. *What is wrong with the faith the devils have?*
4. *Why might unbelievers sense or “hear” from spirits in a “haunted” setting while Christians are oblivious to any such sensation?*
5. *What evidence do we have that demons are still given power to trouble interpersonal relationships today?*
6. *Why did the evil spirit leave Saul when the music was played for him?*
7. *Why did playing music not deliver Saul from an evil spirit on every occasion?*
8. *Does God ever use demons to accomplish His purposes in people today?*
9. *What is the final end of evil angels?*
10. *Why might some demons already be reserved in chains of darkness today?*

**TEACHING ABOUT FALLEN ANGELS**

1. ***The Scriptures indicate that approximately one third of all created angels chose to follow Satan in his rebellion against God.*** Satan thought he had very good reason to rebel against God. We are not given the exact reason but clues help us understand. We are told God designated that angels are to be ministering spirits, having a calling to serve menial tasks to those who shall be heirs of salvation. Angels in being created with greater power and might could have believed they had good reason to resist this calling. Why would anyone want to serve creatures lower than himself? Why accept that lowly mankind would one day judge them as higher beings? And so some angels followed Lucifer. Perhaps they reasoned as some Satan worshipers today that if enough created beings would follow him, they could one day overthrow God. Now, in being cut off from the goodness of God, there is no depth of depravity too low for them. Only the restraints of God hold them back.
2. ***When demons take possession of a person, not only is the victim powerless to control the demons, others cannot control the demon or person either.*** If demons have any passion it is to damn every soul that is under their influence. There is no such thing as a neutral demon! They cannot bear to see one Christian happy; one soul preparing for eternity and being an heir to sharing in the reward of heaven. In demon possession they have an extra degree of control over their victim and the suffering they bring is astounding. They will do all that is within their power to make mankind miserable and bring their subjects to the grave of a sinner or even suicide as soon as possible.
3. ***Demons are proof it takes more than faith to save a person; it takes a faith that changes one's life.*** Do demons believe in God? In Jesus? In the Holy Spirit? Of course! They likely wish they could doubt the existence of God. Do they believe in the Truth of the Bible? Perhaps they scheme to write a different ending, but they know without doubt their doom is sealed. However, in all the beliefs the devils have in God and in His power, their thoughts never translate into repentance or obedience. They only know rebellion.
4. ***Our only guarantee that we can overcome these evil angels is to have the Holy Spirit live within our hearts.*** One can sense the impending doom that demons realize every time they are brought into the presence of Christ or one of His followers. The Holy Spirit has infinite power over demons. By having Him dwell within us we partake in His authority over them. While it is right to respect the world of angels, we need not, and we dare not fear them. Jesus commanded us to only fear God, the One who can cast both soul and body into hell.<sup>47</sup>
5. ***Unbelievers who have developed their spirit sensitivity may sense the presence of demons. These demons usually masquerade as the souls of the departed.*** Unbelievers may sense spirits in haunted houses, around relics, or at battlefields where people lost their lives. They believe these spirits to be the souls of the departed, especially those who lost their lives unjustly or under great trauma. We

know the souls of the departed either to “be with Christ”<sup>48</sup> if they were believers or in “the place of torments”<sup>49</sup> if they lived in sin. They simply are not free to linger around the world. However, as our text informs us, demons do speak to people of this world and unbelievers hear them, and sense their presence. These demons speak untruths, things about this world in order to confuse the unbeliever and keep him focused on falsehoods. Again, our protection is the One who is greater and who lives within us as followers of Christ. We do not need to fear these demons and will find they do not give evidence of themselves while we are around.

Related to this subject is the fact that as believers we should be sensitive to the Spirit’s warnings in our lives. If we sense a warning or spirit check in researching medical resources or other helps for problems we should hearken. We should accept these intuitions as from the Holy Spirit<sup>50</sup> and steer clear of what does not “feel” right, at least until we know that all meets the standards of God’s Word.

#### ***INSTANCES OF EVIL SPIRITS AT WORK***

**6. *Evil spirits may be involved when brethren who were once in harmony begin to bitterly oppose each other.*** Satan not only wants us to doubt God, he wants us to doubt and mistrust each other. He would come and corrupt our sense of justice to turn it into a judgmental and critical attitude. Through his influence men become skilled in seeing inconsistencies and woeful tendencies in each other. Then rather than talk **to** each other they talk **about** each other. Rather than to cover these sins with charity,<sup>51</sup> they build concerns into offenses. This soon builds walls and deep schisms develop between brethren.

**7. *Beautiful or godly music may settle the mood of one who is troubled, but it cannot cure the underlying problem of an unclean spirit.*** The orderly arrangement of sounds in melody, harmony and rhythm is of divine origin. When men give themselves to orderly music, especially when the words point to divine themes, it recreates order in their own being. However, if the heart is set on rebellion against God, this heart rebellion will soon drown out any temporary benefit the music may have had. King Saul is an example of this. The simple fact that music did not cure his heart issue should not be construed to say that music is wrong. Music simply cannot force lasting change in a rebellious heart. The halls of heaven will resonate and resound with the melody of singing voices and melodious harps. All the while the caverns of the Lake of Fire will echo with the cacophony of groans, grinding of teeth and screams of helplessness.

**8. *God permits evil spirits to bring suffering to saints in order to put His grace on display.*** The word translated *messenger* of Satan is the same word *angello*s which is usually translated angel. In the Old Testament Job is highlighted for his patience in withstanding the evil angels of Satan. In the New Testament we have the example of Paul. The angel was allowed to cause Paul to suffer a “thorn in the flesh,” a ‘bodily annoyance or disability’. God knew Paul could handle this

suffering and it put His grace on display before evil men. The victorious testimony of Paul in enduring this trial benefits us even today. We need to remember that even though the influence of demons brings much conflict and despair into our experience, God is able to take their worst and bring great blessing to His kingdom.

Perhaps this example comes the closest to the “demon oppression” teaching we hear today. Paul was a saint who was troubled by this evil angel. How does he respond? He cries out to God with a request that this struggle be removed from his life. It is entirely appropriate for us to follow Paul’s example.

Equally enlightening is what Paul did not do. He did not rebuke the evil spirit. He had cast devils out of individuals before so he was experienced with the process.<sup>52</sup> He did not lay on hands; he did not even call for an anointing. He simply prayed and asked for deliverance. When God said “No,” he accepted this trouble as a new normal. He realized he could embrace the suffering and give a visible display of the grace of God. His attitude became one of “gladly” being a partaker of suffering of the thorn of the demon and as a result, displayed grace and left us an example for our experience today.

#### ***THE JUDGMENT OF FALLEN ANGELS***

**9. *All devils will meet just judgment in the eternal Lake of Fire.*** All living humans, no matter how hardened have an opportunity to repent unless they continue to blaspheme the Holy Spirit. We therefore should reach out in love and compassion to them, pleading for the mercy of God. Not so with devils. We dare not have communion or fellowship with them. We dare not accept any remedy or power they may supposedly have to offer.

#### ***CONCLUSION***

Satan is real and his angels, devils and demons are real too. They know the desperation of the struggle they are in and how they soon shall be consigned to eternal torments. We may expect great attacks in our thoughts and emotions from them, but we are not alone. God gives each one of us adequate protection if we keep our focus on Him. Decisions need to be bathed in prayer and all forms of trust in unknown powers must be renounced. However, should demons be allowed to bring suffering or vexation into our lives, we should not consider this unusual. Rather we should reach beyond them to the greater resources of faith. In doing this our lives will showcase Kingdom grace and divine deliverance.

## LESSON 8

# UNDERSTANDING AND RELATING TO DEMON POSSESSION

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The Scriptures describe a spirit phenomenon wherein an evil spirit actually lives in and takes possession over a human being. We will see in the accounts in this lesson that when a person is demon possessed, there are distinct characteristics of demon possession that are impossible to hide. This condition seems not to have existed in the Old Testament, but occurs quite frequently in the New.

We are not sure why demon possession appears on the scene of history and then disappears again. Some believe this came from Israel's exposure to Satan worship as it existed in the Persian empire. History tells us this is when an occult form of Judaism came into being and is still a fringe element of Jewish culture today. Also, it is in this time frame that the Apocrypha records the first illustration of demon possession.

In our day Satanism (Satan worship), is on the increase and heathenism continues to exist in many cultures. It is entirely possible that we will begin to see more demon possession similar to what is seen in the New Testament. Should demon possession again manifest itself, we have no reason to believe it will be different from the expressions we find in New Testament times. In fact, we believe the New Testament serves as the ultimate resource and text book on how we will recognize and relate to demon possession.

As referred to in our last lesson, we are faced with a doctrine of devils that proposes demons can oppress children and saints today. One of these is ancestral sins. These theories assume devils have different boundaries than they did in the New Testament and that Christians should respond in a different manner than Jesus and the disciples did in their day. We cannot accept this rationale or doctrine.

This lesson helps us become familiar with demon possession so we can identify it and respond to it as Christians should.

and said, Master, I have brought unto thee my son, which hath a dumb spirit; **20** And they brought him unto him: and when he saw him, straightway the spirit tare him; and he fell on the ground, and wallowed foaming. **21** And he asked his father, How long is it ago since this came unto him? And he said, Of a child. **22** And oftentimes it hath cast him into the fire, and into the waters, to destroy him: but if thou canst do any thing, have compassion on us, and help us.

**Lu 8:28** When he saw Jesus, he cried out, and fell down before him, and with a loud voice said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, *thou* Son of God most high? I beseech thee, torment me not. **29** (For he had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. For oftentimes it had caught him: and he was kept bound with chains and in fetters; and he brake the bands, and was driven of the devil into the wilderness.) **30** And Jesus asked him, saying, What is thy name? And he said, Legion: because many devils were entered into him.

**Ac 19:3** Then certain of the vagabond Jews, exorcists, took upon them to call over them which had evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth. **14** And there were seven sons of *one* Sceva, a Jew, *and* chief of the priests, which did so. **15** And the evil spirit answered and said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye? **16** And the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, and overcame them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded.

### JESUS' POWER OVER DEMONS

**Mr 9:23** Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things *are* possible to him that believeth. **24** And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief. **25** When Jesus saw that the people came

running together, he rebuked the foul spirit, saying unto him, *Thou* dumb and deaf spirit, I charge thee, come out of him, and enter no more into him. **26** And *the spirit* cried, and rent him sore, and came out of him: and he was as one dead; insomuch that many said, He is dead. **27** But Jesus took him by the hand, and lifted him up; and he arose.

**Lu 8:2** And certain women, which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary called Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils,

### TRUTHS ABOUT POSSESSION

**Mt 7:21** Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. **22** Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? **23** And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

**Mt 12:43** When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none. **44** Then he saith, I will return into my house from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth *it* empty, swept, and garnished. **45** Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first.

**Lu 10:17** And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name. **18** And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven. **19** Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you. **20** Notwithstanding in this rejoice not that the spirits are subject unto you; but

rather rejoice, because your names are | written in heaven.

### QUESTIONS FOR THOUGHT AND DISCUSSION

1. *What actually was happening when a person was demon possessed?*
2. *What are common symptoms of demon possession?*
3. *What are some lessons we learn from the experience when Sceva's sons tried to cast out devils?*
4. *Why would there be a natural connection between demon possession and attempts at suicide or murder?*
5. *What gave Jesus as a Man the power to cast out demons?*
6. *What usually was to blame when someone was demon possessed?*
7. *How do we know one can believe he has ability to cast out devils and he is still not guaranteed salvation?*
8. *How should we respond if an acquaintance begins to tell us some instance of present day demon possession?*
9. *Why did Jesus and Paul consistently reject efforts of devils to honor them?*

10. *What can we do to keep a correct focus when we have done many mighty works in Jesus' name?*

### EXAMPLES OF DEMON POSSESSION

1. *Some demon possessed persons seemed to have times when they appeared to be normal, whereas others seemed to always be controlled by the demons.* Of course we do not know the details of these people's everyday life. Older people seem to be bound more or perhaps all the time. The young child the disciples met would have times or spells when he would cast himself into the water or fire. It would be the character of the powers of darkness to take increased control with the advance of age. Satan certainly does that with many addictions and other vices.
2. *A common thread of demon possessed people is a compulsion to commit suicide.* We do not know how much spirits communicate with each other, but it seems possible demons would have known of the presence of Jesus and the spread of His influence throughout the land. One can almost sense their desperation to avoid confrontation with Him. If they met Jesus, He would force them to leave their host and possibly consign them to immediate torments. It seems right to assume if they could have gotten their host to commit suicide that would have enabled them to walk through dry country looking for other victims.<sup>53</sup> Besides, the sooner they could take a victim into a Christless eternity, the sooner they would have him as a victim forever. When the devils begged to enter into the pigs, Jesus gave them permission. They then immediately caused the pigs to self-destruct which freed the devils from immediate bondage with chains of darkness.
3. *When demons in a possessed person come into the presence of righteous people they seem compelled to identify their presence and their knowledge of impending doom.* This statement seems to highlight a paradox principle of darkness. Darkness usually hides or conceals itself from the truth. When demon possessed persons come around righteous people, the demons within cry out their identity. Why? We find the reason in the words of the Apostle Paul. "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret. But all things that are reprovved are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest is light" (Ephesians 5:11-13). Darkness does not want to disclose its identity. The presence of light forces darkness to manifest its true identity.
4. *Demons are well aware of the spiritual status of those who come against them.* Men cannot deceive angels or demons. From the disciples' weak spiritual condition to the seven sons of one Sceva who were unbelievers, angels knew them all. We may be sure our true loyalty/identity is fully known to them. They have no question about which side we really are on.
5. *No one seems to be blamed or made to feel guilty for the condition of the demon possessed person.* Were there reasons why that "Of a child" the young man was suicidal? Or why the Gadarene was possessed? Were the reasons general ones

as in the apostasy of a nation? Or was it because of a family's choices or even the choices of the parent? We are not told the answers to these questions. We do have people today who seem sure they know all the answers and would like us to imbibe their theories. We will not strengthen our position when we begin to believe something is true just because popular preachers believe it. If the Bible does not teach it, we must not accept it just because someone says we should. We must stay by the Word.

**6. Ordinary people, no matter how much they cared, were powerless to confront and cast demons out of a possessed person.** Here is the heart breaking truth. Fathers and mothers longed for the well-being of their children. They watched helplessly and with great heartache the spells that drove their children to the precipice of suicide. Talking, loving, praying and watching did nothing to relieve the root cause. And is there any hint of pity on the part of the demons? Not a bit. The entire solution depended upon parents being able to find someone with the spiritual authority to deliver their loved one.

#### **JESUS' POWER OVER DEMONS**

**7. Jesus healed them all.** That is the long and short of it. One climactic encounter. One conversation. The entire problem was solved. We are sure the children had normal needs from there away; all children do. But the answer to the problem of demon possession was for Jesus to say the word. This should cause us increased love and respect for our Lord as we sense how He lovingly gave of Himself for these otherwise hopeless situations.

**8. Jesus took on Himself their infirmities.** In natural work, energy is given up to have a task accomplished. It costs something to achieve something. Jesus' disciples did not yet have the spiritual stamina to accomplish exorcism. In the instance when the woman touched the hem of Jesus' garment, "... Jesus said, Somebody hath touched me: for I perceive that virtue is gone out of me" (Luke 8:46). In another instance of the mass healing of large crowds the Holy Scripture records, "And the whole multitude sought to touch him: for there went virtue out of him, and healed them all" (Luke 6:19). This word "virtue" is often translated power. The Greek word is *dunamis* and comes to our present vocabulary in the word dynamite. We cannot understand all that Jesus gave up in that exchange.

**9. Jesus often required faith on the part of caring family members, but when the person was alone, He provided the spiritual power—all alone.** No one was passed over when there was no one available to provide the faith. Neither did Jesus force His deliverance on anyone. The principle comes down clearly to us today. We must have an active sacrificial faith for us to receive the blessings Christ would offer us.

**10. Some of the most loyal companions of Jesus had once been demon possessed.** What a change it made in the life of Mary Magdalene! She went from living as a hopeless reject to being a personal friend of the Savior. This is exactly what makes

our Savior so wonderful. No one is beyond His reach. Willingness to walk with Him turns a life of constant frustration and impending doom to fruitfulness and purpose for time and eternity.

#### **TRUTHS ABOUT POSSESSION**

**11. Having claimed power over demons is not proof of true spirituality.** Jesus revealed that there are people who are convinced they have power over evil spirits who are not even His disciples. His charge against them is that they continue to live with known sin in their lives. One might question what really went on. Did they actually cast out devils without even being saved?

When Jesus was accused of casting out devils through the power of Satan,<sup>54</sup> He set the record straight. Satan is not divided against himself. What Jesus did was through the true power of God. There may be lying wonders, but no power of Satan would be expended to actually free one of the captives of Satan. Take a supposed exorcist as an example: if he is lost (or in the camp of Satan) he cannot cast devils out in the power of Jesus. What he does may impress himself and other men, but it is not the work of God. From this we learn that people may be involved in accomplishments that seem impressive and not even be followers of Jesus! The test of discipleship is a life free from iniquity; not a life of great works.

**12. The answer to any foothold unclean spirits may have in our life is to be filled with the Spirit of God.** We cannot rest on past victories. We cannot continue to find momentum for our souls on the nurture of yesterday. To continue in cleansing and deliverance, each soul needs to experience being born again<sup>55</sup> on a daily basis. The answer to all addictions is to be addicted to the Lord Jesus with all one's heart.

**13. Being excited about our usefulness in Christ's work may be a snare to us; our safe refuge is worship and gratitude for salvation.** Satan was impressed with his powers. He fell like lightning from heaven. If he could fall undoubtedly we too can fall from our much more lowly perch. Let us come daily in worship and thanksgiving to the One who saved us and has written our names in heaven.

#### **CONCLUSION**

As we study the patterns of demon possession a model emerges. It is a model that we rarely see today. Possibly the devils are not ready to risk being confronted by Christians and the certain judgment they would face. If we do encounter demon possession, we need to confront it with the same ministry and service as early Christians so the souls of men may be set free.

## LESSON 9

# RELATING PROPERLY TO THE WORLD OF THE OCCULT

Just as the Bible teaches us how to reach out and establish a relationship with the true God, even so those who follow Satan have learned ways to use their spirits to communicate with evil spirits. This frequently is done so supernatural powers may be enlisted. Some have known very well what they were getting into. Others have become involved in occult practices without being aware of what they were doing. Consider the following true life experiences.

Myrtle was a convert to Christ as a result of evangelistic efforts in one of the larger cities over 60 years ago. One day out of curiosity she stopped at a fortune teller palm reader to hear her fortune told. The witch told her she would soon meet and marry a man from the military. Myrtle followed this counsel. She related her story many years later—regretting the decisions she made to leave the church and brokenly sharing the many things she suffered at the hand of her husband.

Sam, a young Christian, spent the night with his cousins. Late in the evening the young people brought out a Ouija board. They urged him to become involved in their “innocent” fun by asking the board questions. Sam did not feel right asking something questions that could not answer with reason and logic. In coming to a greater understanding of the occult in later years, he is grateful for the leading of the Spirit in that hour, and grieves the course of disobedience his cousins chose.

Phil and Daisy are a young Christian couple in a third-world mountain community. In instruction class they learn of the power of God over the world of spirits. They understand witchcraft very well; they know local witches and have witnessed sicknesses and/or deaths brought about when a witch was paid to cast a spell over a victim. They are encouraged to remove the pictures of Mary and the child from their home. “But these have been blessed by a priest” they explain. “If we take them away our home and our children will be made vulnerable to the powers of darkness.” They are helped to see that if they keep the pictures they will be compromising the hedge of God about their home. The images are discarded and no one suffers any ill effects.

These illustrations are not fiction, and many other illustrations could be cited. We need to be aware of God’s call to reject all hidden powers and trust in Him and His word alone.

This lesson is dedicated to help us understand what we need to know about the world of the occult from a Biblical perspective.

### AREAS OF OCCULT INVOLVEMENT

**Le 17:7** And they shall no more offer their sacrifices unto devils, after whom they have gone a whoring. This shall be a statute for ever unto them throughout their generations. **19:31** Regard not them that have familiar spirits, neither seek after wizards, to be defiled by them: I *am* the LORD your God. **20:6** And the soul that turneth after such as have familiar spirits, and after wizards, to go a whoring after them, I will even set my face against that soul, and will cut him off...

**De 18:9** When thou art come into the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not learn to do after the abominations of those nations. **10** There shall not be found among you *any one* that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, *or* that useth divination, *or* an observer of times, *or* an enchanter, *or* a witch, **11** Or a charmer, *or* a consulter with familiar spirits, *or* a wizard, *or* a necromancer. **12** For all that do these things *are* an abomination unto the LORD: and because of these abominations the LORD thy God doth drive them out from before thee.

**Ho 4:12** My people ask counsel at their stocks, and their staff declareth unto them: for the spirit of whoredoms hath caused *them* to err, and they have gone a whoring from under their God.

**Re 9:20** And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk: **21** Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts.

### OCCULT INVOLVEMENT ILLUSTRATED

**De 32:15** But Jeshurun waxed fat, and kicked...**16** They provoked him to jealousy with strange *gods*, with abominations

provoked they him to anger. **17** They sacrificed unto devils, not to God; to gods whom they knew not, to new *gods that* came newly up, whom your fathers feared not.

**1Sa 28:7** Then said Saul unto his servants, Seek me a woman that hath a familiar spirit, that I may go to her, and enquire of her...**8** And Saul disguised himself, and put on other raiment, and he went, and two men with him, and they came to the woman by night: and he said, I pray thee, divine unto me by the familiar spirit, and bring me *him* up, whom I shall name unto thee... **11** Then said the woman, Whom shall I bring up unto thee? And he said, Bring me up Samuel. **12** And when the woman saw Samuel, she cried with a loud voice: and the woman spake to Saul, saying, Why hast thou deceived me? for thou *art* Saul...

**1Ch 10:13** So Saul died for his transgression which he committed against the LORD, *even* against the word of the LORD, which he kept not, and also for asking *counsel of one that had* a familiar spirit, to enquire of it

### BELIEVERS RELATING TO THE OCCULT

**Ac 19:18** And many that believed came, and confessed, and shewed their deeds.**19** Many of them also which used curious arts brought their books together, and burned them before all *men*...

**2Co 6:14** Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers... **16** And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in *them*; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. **17** Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean *thing*; and I will receive you, **18** And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.

**QUESTIONS FOR THOUGHT AND DISCUSSION**

1. *When the Caananites offered sacrifices to their idols who were they really worshiping? Why did they do this?*
2. *Use a dictionary (English, Hebrew or Bible) to define the following terms:*  
*familiar spirits:* \_\_\_\_\_  
*wizards:* \_\_\_\_\_  
*divination:* \_\_\_\_\_  
*observer of times:* \_\_\_\_\_  
*enchanter:* \_\_\_\_\_  
*witch:* \_\_\_\_\_  
*charmer:* \_\_\_\_\_  
*necromancer:* \_\_\_\_\_
3. *Why is God provoked to jealousy when His people turn to demons for answers?*
4. *Using Saul as an example, why do people seek answers from those already dead?*
5. *What are some modern day books that should not be in our possession?*
6. *What are some underlying principles that would help us understand we should not use the Ouija board or water dowsing but at the same time not be obsessed over a cabbage patch doll that supposedly had the blessing of a witch?*
7. *How much effort should we put forth to try to find out about the various practices of devil worshipers?*
8. *How much responsibility do we have to make sure our communion table is not affected by those who practice occult in “natural” health practices?*
9. *What are some pagan idols that tempt Mennonites in our day, or do we think we are immune?*
10. *What is the best way to protect our homes and our loved ones from the inroads of the occult?*
11. *Is there any hope for someone who has been involved in Satan worship?*

**AREAS OF OCCULT INVOLVEMENT**

1. ***The entertainment culture of our day has shifted to wholehearted endorsement of the occult.*** In the never ending search for something new, the entertainment world keeps pushing the boundaries further and further into the forbidden. A few years ago, we saw Satanic inroads through pornography, rock music and Eastern religion/medicine. Those mediums seemed to be more on the fringe. Now writers of even the books written for children openly involve the paranormal as if it was reality. Children read and develop attachment to the personalities of witches or werewolves. Children’s stories entice children into “out of the body experiences,” dabbling in potents and spells and communicating with the dead. This attack may be found in not only occult sections of the library, but in the general reading of adults and children. It is in magazines designed not only for adults, but also for youth and children. The stories are found on television, but also on DVD movies aimed at children. Electronic and arcade games carry the same themes.
2. ***As parents and youth we are called to protect the souls of our children and youth.*** One of the ways parents can protect themselves and their children is to fill their homes with truth and good influences as well as erect barriers against the evil. We simply do not need to permit our children to sit at the feet of magicians speaking through games, videos or books such as the Harry Potter series. We dare not permit them access to online sources. If we sense there is some growing allurements or exposure we need to confront it lovingly and honestly. It may not be overlooked.
3. ***Let us beware “modern” theories of treating illnesses or disorders that are occult practices in disguise.*** The ancient Eastern Religions believed in many gods and taught men how to open their spirits to the world of the occult. A simple caution is to guard against any philosophy that teaches one to open his mind, or float around in his head as a means of meditation or prayer. Another guideline is to eschew any philosophy that does not harmonize with Biblical directives in child training or health practices.
4. ***The best protection is to be filled with the Spirit of God and the fruit He brings into our lives and homes.*** When a father and mother are filled with love, joy, peace, etc it will flow out in everyday experience. When church leaders are possessed with the Holy Spirit their administration will be marked with a sweet reasonableness that will make even the most difficult discipline sweet with heaven’s blessing. In this environment the evil one has almost no opportunity to break through the God-given hedge. However, when leaders, parents, youth compromise and begin to serve Baal, protections are broken down. When there is a vacuum of inspiration and our homes are dead and lifeless or echo with angry resentments, we become prime candidates of another spirit.
5. ***In the tribulation of the last days men will persist in worshiping false gods and in using mood-altering substances.*** One of the truths that is sometimes concealed

in the translation of *sorceries* is that it is chemically induced. The Greek word is *pharmakeia* and is the root word for our common word *pharmacy*. Strong's informs us *pharmakeia* means “the use or administering of drugs.” Obviously there is a strong link in altered states of consciousness and demonic activity.

#### **OCCULT INVOLVEMENT ILLUSTRATED**

##### **6. Being involved with demonic activity will bring God’s judgment on a nation.**

Many of us in our generation have witnessed unparalleled advances in medicine, technology and material goods. It seems each generation has been able to start up where the last left off. The depression era with its concerns about saving and/or “making do” has been replaced over and over again. Surely we will never see plagues or holocausts such as were witnessed in the past! Think again. There is a principle of Divine judgment that applies when a land becomes polluted with blood and occult involvement. Many of us who live in the West find it easy to think this will never happen. But God will not be mocked. He will not need to apologize to Sodom and the Caananites. The judgment He brought upon them will be repeated, likely in our life time. One has to remember the words of our Lord Jesus when He said, “Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man” (Luke 21:36).

**7. The first step in turning to Satan’s power begins in choosing to disobey the Lord’s command.** King Saul is a tragic example of the slippery slope of disobedience. One day he took a godly stance against witchcraft.<sup>56</sup> He would not permit its cancerous presence among the Israelites. So how did Satan take him from that position to the place where he sought the advice of a witch? Where later he took a sword to commit suicide?

You know the journey. It started by compromising with the direction of God for the benefit of personal gain. King Saul apparently craved the acceptance of the people. He wanted to be considered a balanced leader. He likely wanted the affluence and the comfort of a “partial-obedience” life style. After he allowed disobedience in his life, he rejected the path of godly sorrow and repentance. As the Holy Spirit withdrew His convicting presence, He also withdrew the blessing of Holy fellowship. Saul became a shell of a man, filled with envy, fear, and finally with satanic influence.

**8. Saul and the witch of Endor give us insights into the world of spirits.** The witch of Endor was involved in necromancy, or calling up spirits that mimic the dead person so they could be asked questions. (Does this suggest each living person has a demon who follows him in life that can pose as being the actual person?) However, when the apparition came up, it was not a demon who mimicked Samuel but Samuel himself. This we gather from the genuine fright the witch of Endor experienced. In the conversation, Samuel himself counseled with Saul.

#### **BELIEVERS RELATING TO THE OCCULT**

**9. While we need to confront and confess any involvement in the occult, we cannot make it the center of our focus.** When Peter looked at the waves, his faith disappeared and he began to sink.<sup>57</sup> The lesson he learned on the Sea of Galilee helps us know how we should relate to the stormy winds of our culture. We cannot deny the fact, we are called to walk on water! There is no sure foundation to be found in our culture today, and yet God has placed us here. Cultural norms that once protected us and enabled us to live as the quiet of the land are changed by a liberal media and politicians with an evil agenda. Soon the waves of cultural change will beat upon us with persecution and hardship. All the while, the so called “Pentecostal flavors” of Christianity would have us believe that demons lurk in every bad dream or disappointment we face in life. We are led to believe that demons can bring us sickness or financial reverse. We are told that we should identify these demons, rebuke them and bind them in Jesus’ name. Is this what the New Testament teaches? It is not. Our security is to fill ourselves with Bible promises and live in Christian discipleship.

Regarding the question if demons may contaminate or corrupt an object we have what seems to be two opposing teachings from Scripture. In 1 Corinthians 10:20, we have Paul teaching “But *I say*, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils.” But we also have Paul teaching what seems to be the opposite, “As concerning therefore the eating of those things that are offered in sacrifice unto idols, we know that an idol *is* nothing in the world, and that *there is* none other God but one.” (1 Corinthians 8:4) At one time the idol is a devil. At another time the idol is nothing. What makes the difference? Apparently when the heathen involve an idol in worship, then it is something the devils have an influence in. But, when it is disassociated from worship, and as is the case of meats offered to idols which is now in the service of a Christian, then the idol (or the meat offered to it) is rendered innocent.

**10. Our greatest snare from the evil one comes through our own lusts and enticements, not from any demon oppression.** The entire New Testament resonates with answers for Christians who are looking for spiritual victory. But again and again it identifies where our main enemy lies. The main enemy is our own nature, our own lust!

#### **IN CONCLUSION**

“And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will” (2 Timothy 2:24-26). Simple Bible teaching of the Gospel message sets men free and keeps them free!

# LESSON 10

## PRINCIPLES FOR VICTORY IN SPIRIT WARFARE

The Bible describes the Christian Life as being a warfare. Satan and his forces are on one side, with the Divine Trinity and angelic beings on the other. As Christians we have asked to be translated from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of "His dear Son."<sup>58</sup> Satan and his forces are determined to break down our resolve, and to entice us back into allegiance with the forces of darkness. How can we be victorious in this struggle?

There are some very important principles to remember as we open this lesson to study it.

*Spiritual warfare has an intensity and a reality that surpasses all other conflicts.* Even the grief and sense of loss in carnal warfare is affected by the spiritual dimension. Did the casualties die in the Lord? If not, then the loss in the "ultimate sacrifice" is compounded in unfathomable proportions. Was a victim a true believer? "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord."<sup>59</sup> The victim is a victor!

*Spiritual victory or loss is for eternity.* The Bible presents a model where the warrior fights and never returns when the war is over. Imagine the sense of loss among those who gave into temptation "one more time" until it became eternal! Imagine the joy of those who said "No!" to their besetting sin each time until it gave way to the bliss of the celestial!

*Spiritual warfare is universal.* Each person you know, from the casual acquaintance to the deeply loved one you carry in your heart is fighting a battle. While there may be seasons when the struggle seems to back off in intensity, temptation with its dark force will soon return. We need to be so very careful that we are sensitive to what our loved ones are going through.

*Our victories and our defeats are contagious.* We have an influence through our lives. We may be tempted to think that others do not even know about our personal defeats. We keep our failures to ourselves. But that is not the way it works. When a person pretends victory but lives in defeat, there is a hollow ring to his victory. A false Christianity comes into his life. This false Christianity is devoid of the fruit of the Spirit. It is inevitable that more than just the failing hypocrite is affected.

This lesson outlines principles for Christian victory in the spiritual struggle.

### **TRANSLATED INTO JESUS' KINGDOM**

**Co 1:12** Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: **13** Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: **14** In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins: **15** Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: **16** For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him:

**He 4:14** Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast *our* profession. **15** For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as *we are*, yet without sin. **16** Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

### **LEARNING TO OBEY GOD'S SPIRIT**

**Ro 8:1** *There is* therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. **2** For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. **3** For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: **4** That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit... **11** But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you. **12** Therefore,

brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. **13** For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.

**Ga 5:16** *This* I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. **17** For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.

### **CASTING DOWN STRONG HOLDS**

**2Co 10:4** (For the weapons of our warfare *are* not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) **5** Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;

### **PREPARING FOR SPIRITUAL CONFLICT**

**Ep 6:10** Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. **11** Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. **12** For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. **13** Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. **14** Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; **15** And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; **16** Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. **17** And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: **18** Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;

**QUESTIONS FOR THOUGHT AND DISCUSSION**

1. How does recognizing the attributes of Christ contribute to our spiritual victory?
2. Explain how the contrast between “light” and “darkness” illustrates the difference between the kingdoms of Christ and Satan.
3. Explain the process how a person may find grace to go through every hardship this life may bring him.
4. What would Jesus have been unable to do if He had remained in the spirit world and never become flesh and blood?
5. In what way is Satan’s power already destroyed?
6. What was wrong with the Old Testament law and a “law” approach to New Testament church life?
7. How does a person who is walking after the Spirit act differently than one who is walking after the flesh?
8. If you recognized that the emotional struggles of your close friend mostly came because of falsehoods in his thinking, how would you help him overcome in his struggle?
9. Is it ever right to blame your circumstances when you have fallen into sin?
10. Explain how daily Bible reading and prayer contribute to personal victory.
11. How do you know personal victory over sinful temptations is not accomplished by merely rebuking a devil and going forth with perfect deliverance?

**TRANSLATED INTO JESUS’ KINGDOM**

**1. Jesus is our captain, and He is devoting His resources to our spiritual survival.** We are not in this conflict alone. It seems like we are alone because our struggles are within; so personal. When we look at others, it seems like they might not even have struggles. But we know we have ours. These verses highlight the tremendous deliverance that has been performed for us. Through our relationship with Jesus we are made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. Jesus is the one who made the entire spirit world. He has all power over them. He makes it His personal project to deliver us from their powers of darkness and to see us victorious all the way to eternal triumph.

**2. Our Captain understands the world of human emotions.** Even though Jesus did not have a fallen human nature and have its bent to do wrong, we are told and shown that he did live with the same tricky emotions that we have. Two experiences near the cross portray this to us. In eternity past, when God and Christ discussed the incarnation and plan of redemption, Jesus said “I delight to do thy will Oh God!”<sup>60</sup> But as He lived in a human body and had human emotions He cried out, “Oh Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me!” The other is related to Jesus’ cry from the cross, “My God, My God, Why hast thou forsaken me?”<sup>61</sup> Less than 24 hours before Jesus had told His disciples, “Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me.”<sup>62</sup> Jesus understands very well what it is like to know something for fact in your head and feel something very different in your emotions.

The promise is “grace to help in time of need.” The word picture here is colorful. The Greek word translated “to help” is “boetheia” and it means “aid, specially a rope or chain for frapping a vessel.” The other place this word is used is in Acts 27:17 where sailors tied the ship together so it would not fall apart during shipwreck. Jesus, our Captain, makes sure we have sufficient aid so we do not fall apart when it seems our lives are being wrecked.

**LEARNING TO OBEY GOD’S SPIRIT**

**3. The law was perfect, but it could not be applied in a perfect way because of human flesh. God’s indwelling Spirit is our perfect answer for Christian victory.** According to Jewish reckoning, the law had 613 mitzvot or commandments. According to Psalm 19:7 “the law of the Lord is perfect converting the soul.” In Hebrews 7:19 we learn “the law made nothing perfect.” These 613 perfect commands caused men to see how powerless they were to obey God in all things because the flesh kept getting in the way. In fact, man became quite adept in figuring out how to keep the commandment and yet get what he wanted in other areas. We still need brotherhood agreements, church standards and decisions on a church level. But the thing that keeps our hearts won in allegiance to Christ is the

fact that we know He understands. Now as Christians we keep listening for Holy Spirit promptings. “Lord, what do you want me to do? How do you want me to live for you,” is the heart cry and yearning of the child of God.

**4. When a person opens his heart to hearken to the Holy Spirit the Christian life becomes a joy and a rewarding experience. This joy enables him to live a converted life.** As long as Christian living is a list of do’s and don’ts, there is no joy. When it becomes a passion to live out the will of the Master, then even the darkest hours take on meaning and purpose. The negative side of Spirit walking is that we must say no to our fleshly impulses. Greed, lust, anger, envy, etc. all have to be identified and denied. A person cannot obey both the Spirit of God and his lower nature. Sometimes law or church rules can help a person see his deeper problem, but they will not fix the heart. Only the love of Christ can do that. But when a person truly is filled with the Spirit of Christ, his entire “want to” is changed and he has no interest in wanting to protect his lust and wanting to serve God at the same time. That might work with living under the law, but it is not the norm for walking in the Spirit.

Sometimes people would like to give us the impression that Spirit living means living without any guidelines and rules. Let us know for a certainty that Spirit living is not permissiveness. We cannot walk both after the flesh and after the Spirit. Living after the Spirit means we cannot do the things we “would.”

#### **CASTING DOWN STRONGHOLDS**

**5. For us to have victory in our Christian life we need to base our thinking patterns on truth.** There is a correlation between the things a person tells himself and his personal victory. If we tell ourselves everyone is against us, we will wallow in self-pity. If we tell ourselves that we have a right to gratify our lustful imaginations we will fall into shameful uncleanness. If we tell ourselves we have not had the kind of opportunities that others have we will fall into depression. We need to understand that God is for us, that we are given the resources we need for spiritual victory, that we do not have temptations that are different than anyone else has, and so forth. These lessons of truth come from reading the Word and from hearing the preaching of the Word. “Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” (John 8:31-32).

We have an example of this in Psalm 73. There the Psalmist confesses his inner thoughts which are actually misbeliefs about how much better sinners make out than the righteous. He expresses bitterness toward the struggles of the righteous while the wicked seem to prosper. His thinking patterns almost brought him to spiritual defeat. Then he went to the sanctuary and began to think on eternal truths. As his perspective changed, his mood changed. Instead of resentment toward God, profound thanksgiving began to take root in his heart. This is precisely the type of

stronghold or imagination that needs to be corrected for a Christian to maintain victory in his own life.

#### **PREPARING FOR SPIRITUAL CONFLICT**

**6. Even as the success of a soldier in the day of battle depends upon his weaponry and preparation, even so our spiritual survival depends upon our personal preparation for spiritual conflict.** The Apostle Paul gives a vivid description of the soldier who needs to go face the enemy. Before he goes into battle he carefully prepares every vulnerable area of his life and develops a strategy for survival. We too need to be honest with our weaknesses. What are the areas of our temptations? Do we face extra struggle with telling the truth? With our greed? With pride? Much of our spiritual success depends upon recognizing our weakness and seeking God’s answer for our need.

#### **IN CONCLUSION**

“But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord” (1 Corinthians 15:57-58). Every saint who marches into the celestial city will need to acknowledge it is Jesus who gave the victory. Every saint who faces the daily struggles of life needs to totally rely on the power of Jesus to see him through. We rejoice in His redemption. We hang on every word and follow every precept because we know His word is the power in our lives. Truly every saint who enters heaven is a victory for Jesus.

#### **Endnotes:**

1. “And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:” (Joh 16:8)
2. “(Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth?” (Eph 4:9)
3. “And killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses.” (Ac 3:15)
- 4:“For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name *is* Holy; I dwell in the high and holy *place*, with him also *that is* of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.” (Isa 57:15)
5. “And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness *was* upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.” (Ge 1:2)

6. “Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens.” (Heb 11:34)

7. For an example of Holy Spirit leading read Acts 16:6-9 and of leaders taking improper control over their members see 3 John 1:9-10.

8. Compare 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10 with Revelation 19:8 and 14

9. “Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?” (Heb 1:14)  
 “They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.” (Ps 91:12)

10. “Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,” (Heb 12:1)

11. “Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life?” (1Co 6:3)

12. Hebrews 2:5-13

13. “Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether *they be* thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.” (Col 1:15-18)

14. Genesis 2:1; Exodus 20:11; Deuteronomy 4:19; Colossians 1:16

15. Luke 4:33-36

16. 2 Kings 6:13-17

17. Genesis 2:1; Exodus 20:11

18. “And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it.” (Ge 28:12)

19. “Man did eat angels’ food: he sent them meat to the full.” (Ps 78:25)

20. Hebrews 2:9-13; Romans 8:16-21

21. “But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage: Neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection.” (Lu 20:35-36)

22. “For unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak.” (Heb 2:5)

23. “But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (he saith to the sick of the palsy,)” (Mr 2:10)

24. “Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into.” (1Pe 1:12)

25. “But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days: but, lo, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me; and I remained there with the kings of Persia.” (Da 10:13)

26. “Whereas angels, which are greater in power and might, bring not railing accusation against them before the Lord.” (2Pe 2:11)  
 “Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee.” (Jude 1:9)

27. 2 Kings 6:13-20

28. 1 Corinthians 6:10

29. “But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.” (Ga 1:8)

30. “And it came to pass that night, that the angel of the LORD went out, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred fourscore and five thousand: and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they *were* all dead corpses.” (2Ki 19:35)

31. “God judgeth the righteous, and God is angry *with the wicked* every day.” (Ps 7:11)

32. “For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.” (Jas 1:20)

33. “Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.” (Mt 5:43-45)

34. “Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence.” (Joh 18:36)  
 “(For the weapons of our warfare *are* not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;)” (2Co 10:4)

35. “But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children

of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more *than others*? do not even the publicans so? Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.” (Mt 5:44-48)

36. Job 1&2

37. “And he said, Hear thou therefore the word of the LORD: I saw the LORD sitting on his throne, and all the host of heaven standing by him on his right hand and on his left. And the LORD said, Who shall persuade Ahab, that he may go up and fall at Ramothgilead? And one said on this manner, and another said on that manner. And there came forth a spirit, and stood before the LORD, and said, I will persuade him. And the LORD said unto him, Wherewith? And he said, I will go forth, and I will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets. And he said, Thou shalt persuade *him*, and prevail also: go forth, and do so. Now therefore, behold, the LORD hath put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these thy prophets, and the LORD hath spoken evil concerning thee.” (1Ki 22:19-23)

38. “For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether *they be* thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him:” (Col 1:16)

39. “Whereas angels, which are greater in power and might, bring not railing accusation against them before the Lord.” (2Pe 2:11)  
“Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee.” (Jude 1:9)

40. Job 1-2

41. “Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known *it*, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.” (1Co 2:8)

42. “Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into.” (1Pe 1:12)

43. “But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.” (1Co 2:9)

44. “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:” (1Pe 5:8)

45. “Therefore rejoice, *ye* heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.” (Re 12:12)

46. “For all that *is* in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.” (1Jo 2:16)

47. “And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.” (Mt 10:28)

48. “For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better:” (Php 1:23)

49. “And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.” (Lu 16:24)

50. “But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.” (1Jo 2:27)

51. “And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins.” (1Pe 4:8)

52. Acts 16:16-24

53. “When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none.” (Mt 12:43)

54. Luke 11:15-19

55. “Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.” (1Pe 1:23)

56. “Now Samuel was dead...And Saul had put away those that had familiar spirits, and the wizards, out of the land.” (1Sa 28:3)

57. “But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me.” (Mt 14:30)

58. “Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated *us* into the kingdom of his dear Son:” (Col 1:13)

59. “And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed *are* the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.” (Re 14:13)

60. “Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; mine ears hast thou opened: burnt offering and sin offering hast thou not required. Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book *it is* written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law *is* within my heart.” (Ps 40:6-8)

61. "And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Mt 27:46)

62. "Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me." (Joh 16:32)