



ANGELS (cont.)

What do angels do?

We've looked at who angels are. Now I want us to think, for a moment, about what angels do and how angels relate to us. What does this have to do with our lives? So, we'll pick up with that question. What do angels do? First and foremost, angels glorify God's name. They minister directly to God by glorifying Him. *"Praise him all his angels, praise him, all his heavenly host,"* (Psalm 148:2). They glorify God for His greatness. This is a picture of those seraphim in Isaiah 6 crying out, *"Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory."* So, they glorify God for His greatness and for His goodness. They glorify God as they see the plan of salvation unfolding. When Christ is born, they sing. The Savior comes, and they sing, *"Glory to God in the highest,"* (Luke 2:13-14). Then, we already saw, when people are saved, Luke 15, they rejoice. This is the picture. They glorify God for His greatness and His goodness. So, they glorify God's name.

Second, they obey God's will. Listen to Psalm 103. *"Praise the Lord, you his angels, you mighty ones who do his bidding, who obey his word. Praise the Lord, all his heavenly hosts, you his servants who do his will."* They obey His will. They do that in a variety of different ways. They carry out God's plans. There are times in Scripture when we see angels administering God's judgment. 2 Samuel 24, right in the middle there, *"When the angel stretched out his hand to destroy Jerusalem, the Lord was grieved because of the calamity and said to the angel who was afflicting the people, 'Enough! Withdraw your hand.'"* 2 Kings 19, *"That night the angel of the Lord went out and put to death a hundred and eighty-five thousand men in the Assyrian camp."* You do not want to mess with that angel. They administer the judgment of God. They serve as God's representatives. Zechariah 1 talks about the ones the Lord has sent to go out throughout the earth. They accomplish God's work. Matthew 28, *"Angel of the Lord came down from heaven and, going to the tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it."* So, angels again, powerful. Rolled back the stone. Sat on it. They accomplish God's work.

They influence God's creation. *"Then I saw another angel coming up from the east, having the seal of the living God. He called out in a loud voice to the four angels who had been given power to harm the land and the sea: 'Do not harm the land or the sea or the trees until we put a seal on the forehead of the servants of our God.'"* So, we see angels interacting with creation, and then one day, and we already talked about this, they will announce Christ's return. *"The Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with a voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God."* 1 Thessalonians 4.

How do they relate to us?

So, these are just some of the things that angels do. The question is how does that relate to us? Okay, angels are doing all of these things in the heavenly realms, but does our knowledge of angels, our awareness of angels, really have any kind of effect on our lives? I want you to think about how it does. I want you to think about how – and I pray this will be the case – when we walk away from tonight, that even our knowledge of angels will help us think through different facets of our lives differently.

Now, we've got to realize they're different from us in many different ways. First, we reflect God's image. This is Genesis 1:26-27. *"Let us make man in our image."* God created man in His own image. *"...In the image of God has God made man,"* Genesis 9 said. However, this is not the picture with angels. There is a sense in which we are made in the image of God that angels are not, that we are in that sense more like God than even angels. So, we reflect His image.

We can reproduce. We talked about this earlier. Angels cannot bear children. Genesis 5, *"When Adam had lived 130 years,"* – fairly old – *"he had a son in his own likeness, in his own image."* Angels can't do that. We reflect God's image, we can reproduce, and we can be redeemed. We can be saved from sin. Evil fallen angels can not. The Scripture is pretty clear on this one. In Hebrews 2, *"Surely it is not angels he helps, but Abraham's descendants."* 2 Peter 2, *"If God did not spare angels when they sinned, but sent them to hell, putting them into gloomy dungeons to be held for judgment..."* Jude 6, *"The angels who did not keep their positions of authority but abandoned their own homes - these he has kept in darkness, bound with everlasting chains for judgment on the great Day."*

This is huge. I want us to realize in this picture of unredeemable, fallen angels that God could have let every single one of us go on our paths toward self-condemnation. He could have let every single one of us, in our sin, continue on a path to eternal hell, and He would have been completely just in doing so. Completely right in doing so. This is sheer grace, brothers and sisters, that brings us to this room tonight. Sheer grace. As a result of that kind of grace, there are songs we sing that angels do not sing. "Redeemed, how I love to proclaim it! Redeemed by the blood of the Lamb; Redeemed through his infinite mercy; his child forever I am." You will not hear an angel singing that song. It's a song that God has given to us by His grace.

We reflect His image, we can reproduce, we can be redeemed, and we will one day reign. Listen to these pictures from Paul and the author of Hebrews. *"Do you not know that we will judge angels?"* (1 Corinthians 6:3). Paul says. Hebrews 1, *"Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who inherit salvation?"* In some sense, one day God will give us some kind of authority over angels. That picture is in 1 Corinthians 6. Even now, they are ministering spirits sent to serve us.

So, what does this look like? Well, here's the deal. They are all around us. They are all around us. Angels join us in worship. I love this picture in the book of Hebrews. *"You have come to Mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly, to the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven."* When we worship, we come into a heavenly assembly with thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly. Get that picture. They join us. Better yet, we join them in worship. They join us in worship.

They observe our obedience. When Paul is stressing a command to Timothy in 1 Timothy 5, listen to what he says, *"I charge you, in the sight of God and Christ Jesus and the elect angels, to keep these instructions."* The picture is that Timothy's actions, his obedience or lack of obedience to these instructions, will be carried out in the presence of angels. If angels see his obedience, they will glorify God. If angels see his disobedience, they will be grieved. This is the implication. Just feel this for a second. Even when we think our sins are done in secret, obviously, clearly God knows, but it is very likely that angels are observing our disobedience and are grieving over our sin. In the same way, when you are walking through a difficult time, and you are attempting to walk faithfully before God, and it seems like it is tough, and you are alone just remember this picture. Yes, no doubt, God is with

you, and at the same time, the same time, angels are looking upon that obedience and glorifying God for it. What a picture. This is what Paul says amid struggle in 1 Corinthians 4. So, our lives are on display before angels. They observe our obedience.

They administer God's protection. In Daniel 6, it was angels who shut the mouths of lions. In Psalm 91, *"He will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways."* Now, how does this look in our lives? We really don't know. We really don't know exactly how this looks in our lives. When, maybe, we find ourselves in a dangerous or distressful situation, maybe we're driving down the road, and a car's about to hit us and immediately swerves, or something here or there happens to protect us from this or that, do we know if it's an angel involved in that or not? It's possible. It's possible. Now, we could drive ourselves crazy when it comes to conjecture, but it's certainly possible. We know that God uses a variety of different ways and means, including angels, to administer His protection.

They administer His protection, and they deliver God's plans. God sent an angel to Cornelius here in Acts 10. An angel to Paul in prison to give him a message. So, they deliver God's messages, God's plans.

They deliver God's plans, and they give God's provision. 1 Kings 19, when Elijah is running from Jezebel, it is an angel who comes and touches him and says, *"Get up and eat,"* and he gives him food and drink. *"The angel of the Lord came back a second time and touched him and said, 'Get up and eat, for the journey is too much for you.'"* This is a picture of the angel of God. An angel of God bringing nourishment to the prophet of God. It's an incredible picture.

They serve God's people. We already saw this in Hebrews. This is exactly what the angels did after Jesus was tempted in Matthew 4:11, then finally, angels bring God's deliverance. They bring God's deliverance. Check out how it happens when the apostles are arrested by the high priest.

"Then the high priest and all his associates, who were members of the party of the Sadducees, were filled with jealousy. They arrested the apostles and put them in the public jail. But during the night an angel of the Lord opened the doors of the jail and brought them out. 'Go, stand in the temple courts,' he said, 'and tell the people the full message of this new life.'"

The angels delivered them.

In Acts 12, check out Peter. I love this story. Now, you remember, James had just been beheaded, and that's exactly what was about to happen to Peter the very next morning. *"The night before Herod was to bring him to trial, Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains, and sentries stood guard at the entrance."* Which, even there, I love this. Peter, the night before he's about to get beheaded, not devising a jail break; not got a plan to get out of here. He's supposed to die the next day, and so he decides to get a good night's sleep in preparation. *"Suddenly an angel of the Lord appeared and a light shone in the cell."* Now, notice, Peter's still asleep here. Imagine the scene. It's movie-like. Angel comes into the cell. This brilliant heavenly light, Peter, not even paying attention, snoring. So, the angel *"struck Peter on the side and woke him up. 'Quick, get up!' he said, and the chains fell off Peter's wrists."*

Peter groggily stretches, comes to his senses, and *"the angel said to him, 'Put on your clothes and sandals.'"* He felt the need to remind Peter not to run out of prison naked – I love this! – so, Peter did so. *"Wrap your cloak around you and follow me," the angel told*

him." Can you just picture the angel rolling his eyes? "This guy doesn't get it. Put your cloak on. Let's go." Peter followed him out of the prison, but he had no idea that what the angel was doing was really happening. He thought he was seeing a vision. *"They passed the first and second guards and came to the iron gate leading to the city. It opened for them by itself, and they went through it. When they had walked the length of one street, suddenly the angel left him. Then Peter came to himself"* – that's my favorite phrase. That's why I love Peter. He is so slow. It took a shining light, an angel to poke him in the side, tell him to get dressed, lead him out of the city past guards, past gates, and then he realizes, "Hmm, I think I've been rescued." Then, he says, *"Now I know without a doubt that the Lord sent his angel and rescued me."* So, even when we're slow, angels bring God's deliverance.

They supply God's guidance. Genesis 31, *"In breeding season..."* This story's a little weird. I probably could have picked a better one, but this is where we come to the romantic part of Secret Church for all of you who are using this as a date night. *"...I once had a dream in which I looked up and saw..."* – anyway, we won't – you can continue on. They supply God's guidance. Sometimes in unusual ways, they bring God's guidance. Sorry. Angels.

Finally, moving on, moving on. Just want to make the date – anyway, they will gather together God's people. Matthew 24 says, *"They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky with power and great glory, and he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds from one end of the heavens to the other."* Just get that picture. Angels all around us joining us in worship, observing our obedience, administering God's protection, delivering God's plans, giving God's provision, serving God's people, bringing God's deliverance, supplying God's guidance, and one day, they're going to gather us together from the four winds. Just think about how this understanding really does impact our lives. Just think about if we believe this.

Angels are an example for us. Don't miss that. Angels remind us of the wonder of worship. Revelation 19 is one of the most majestic pictures of the glory of God in all the Scriptures. *"After this I heard what sounded like the roar of a great multitude in heaven shouting, 'Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God, for true and just are his judgments...' 'Again, they shouted: 'Hallelujah!...' And they cried, 'Amen, Hallelujah!...' 'Praise our God, all you his servants, you who fear him, small and great!' Then I heard what sounded like a great multitude, like the roar of rushing waters and like..."* – just imagine the sound – *"...like loud peals of thunder, shouting: 'Hallelujah! For our Lord God Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory!'"*

Think about it, if angels find their highest joy in giving continuous praise to God, should we not also absolutely delight in giving our God praise? If this is the picture that surrounds the throne room of God, then how can we stand at His assembly together and worship with our arms crossed and a bored look on our faces? We are worshiping the great God and King and majestic ruler of all creation. Give Him the affection and honor and the glory and praise He is due.

Angels remind us worship is not boring, and they remind us of the importance of obedience. In light of what we just looked at, just listen to the Lord's Prayer. *"Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven,"* (Matthew 6:9-10). Angels who are constantly and perfectly doing His bidding to perfection. Humble servants before God day and night, day and night, who live to obey God. They live to obey God. God, may your will be done in my life. God, may your will be done in this church and among people like that.

Three cautions with angels...

Now, three cautions with angels. First, we need to avoid being tempted to worship angels. This is actually something Paul was confronting at Colossae. In the book of Colossians, some people were teaching that you should worship them, and so he addresses that in Colossians 2:18-19. Then, even in that picture in Revelation 19 that we looked at just a second ago, John, the Apostle John, sees this astounding majestic scene and fell at his feet, the feet of an angel, to worship him. The angel said to him, *"Do not do it. I am a fellow servant with you and your brothers who hold to the testimony of Jesus."* Angels are great, but we need to realize that angels are great, but they are not God. We must avoid being tempted to worship angels.

We must avoid being tempted to pray to angels. Never in Scripture are we told to pray to angels. We pray to God. He is omnipotent. He is omniscient. He is the one who is able to hear and respond to our prayers. We do not pray, "Angel, please come and protect me," because as soon as we do that, we are attributing to an angel that which is reserved only for God. We pray to God and let Him decide when it's best to send an angel. Pray to God and trust His wisdom to administer His protection and give His plans the way He wants to. *"There is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus,"* (1 Timothy 2:5). So, we don't pray to angels.

Third, we must avoid being deceived by angels. Don't miss this. 2 Corinthians 11, *"Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light."* The danger – follow this with me before you turn the page, and we move on. The danger, especially when we start talking about angels as messengers from God, angels speaking in visions delivering God's plans, is that Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light in that way. You know that Mormons claim an angel named Moroni spoke to Joseph Smith and revealed to him the basis for the Mormon religion, a cult that runs totally contrary to the teaching of Scripture when it comes to the Trinity and the person of Christ and salvation, among other things. Is it not possible that angels would appear to people today to carry out some of the same deception that they've done throughout history? Absolutely.

Now, it's possible that angels could appear and bring true messages from God. Certainly, that's possible, but we need to be extremely cautious. Extremely cautious to avoid being deceived by angels. Let this Word continue to be our authority, especially when Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light, which leads us to demons.

DEMONS

What are demons?

Okay, what are demons? Demons are evil angels who sinned against God and now continually work out evil in the world. Evil angels. They were created good by Genesis 1:31. Get to the end of creation. *"God saw all that he had made, and it was very good."* Then, they had become evil by Genesis 3:1 when the serpent comes into the garden and tempts. So, something happened between Genesis 1:31 and Genesis 3:1 when a number of angels and the devil rebelled against God. Scripture leaves a gap here. It talks a little bit about it in a couple passages in the Old Testament, which we'll look at in a minute. In the New Testament, 2 Peter 2:4 and Jude 6, both passages we've read, talk about how these angels sinned with their moral capacity and were thrust down. So, demons are evil angels who sinned against God and who now continually work out evil in the world.

Who is Satan?

Now, who is Satan? Satan – and we're going to unpack this definition – an angel created by God who served as a cherub until he rebelled against God, and now opposes God in every way. Let me be clear, he is not a guy dressed in a red suit with a pitchfork. He's absolutely not that. Get that image out of your mind. Satan is an angel. Matthew 25:41, *"the devil and his angels."* So, the qualities that we mentioned earlier. He's spiritual. Not a physical body like us. Personal, moral, intellectual, emotional capacities. Powerful. Limited, though, in space and in knowledge. Single, immortal, versatile. All of these things that we talked about with angels applying here. He's an angel.

Just like the holy angel, Satan was created by God. Colossians 1, *"By him, all things were created."* He served as a cherub. Most scholars think Ezekiel 28 is a reference to Satan,

"You were anointed as a guardian cherub, for so I ordained you. You were on the holy mount of God; you walked among the fiery stones. You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created till wickedness was found in you. Through your widespread trade you were filled with violence, and you sinned. So I drove you in disgrace from the mount of God, and I expelled you, O guardian cherub, from among the fiery stones."

Served as a cherub until he rebelled against God.

The other major Old Testament passages, Isaiah 14:12-15. This is talking about God's judgment on the King of Babylon, an earthly human king here in Isaiah 14, but Isaiah, through the Word of God, uses language that seems to refer to the heavenly rebellion of Satan.

"How you have fallen from heaven, O morning star, son of the dawn! You have been cast down to the earth, you who once laid low the nations! You said in your heart, 'I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly, on the utmost heights of the sacred mountain. I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.' But you are brought down to the grave, to the depths of the pit."

Now, listen. The occasion of Satan's sin was power, and the nature of his sin was pride. I want you to notice, in that passage, five "I will" statements. You might even underline them. *"I will ascend to heaven."* He wanted equal recognition with the Creator. *"I will raise my throne above the stars of God."* He wanted the greatest allegiance in all of creation. *"I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly."* He wanted the highest position of authority. *"I will ascend above the heights of the clouds."* He wanted the glory that is only due to God. *"I will make myself like the Most High."* Satan's ultimate goal was to replace God, and in his desire to become glorious like God, Satan became the epitome of that which is ungodly. Let me say that one more time, because I don't want you to miss this. In his desire to become glorious like God, Satan became the epitome of that which is ungodly. The reason I want to emphasize that is because this is where Satan tempts you and me. He is familiar with pride, and so the core of sin is pride.

What was the temptation in Genesis 3? "You will not die if you eat this fruit," Satan said, "for God knows that when you eat of it, your eyes will be open and you will be like God." It's the core of sin. We aspire to be the god of our own lives. Satan tempts us in this. When we play that out, we give ourselves to that which is most ungodly. Geoffrey Grogan said, "It is a strange paradox that nothing makes a being less like God than the urge to be his equal."

Satan rebelled against God and now opposes God in every way. Zechariah 3 is one example of that.

Now, Satan's names reveal his tactics. The devil's names reveal his tactics. He is Satan the adversary. That's what this word means, his title means. The personal name of the head of the demons mentioned in Job 1. In Hebrew, this literally means adversary. It's carried over into the New Testament there in 1 Thessalonians 2. He is the adversary who opposed God's agenda. Works against God's plan. Violates God's character. Assaults God's people. He is the adversary.

He is the devil, which means the slanderer. It's the picture of him prowling around there in 1 Peter 5. He's a slanderer. He is Lucifer, son of the morning. Isaiah 14, "*O morning star, son of the dawn!*" This means Satan is not going to come to you ugly and scary, but he will come to you beautiful and enticing, winsome. You will be attracted to his agenda because he will dress it up and seduce you with it. That's why we've got to get this pitchfork picture out of our minds. He's Beelzebub, Lord of the Flies. Beelzebub was a pagan idol. It was supposed to protect you from a swarm of flies, and Jews understood Beelzebub as the god of filth, which is an apt description for Satan. He's Belial, a false god, directing the worship of God towards idols. "*He is the evil one*," 1 John 5 said. This is the word for absolute corruption. He will influence anything he can to make it corrupt.

He is the tempter. Satan takes perfectly good, God-given desires in us and entices us to fill them with artificial means. That's what temptation is. Think about all the good gifts God gives – food and rest and sex and ambition and work – all the good gifts and good desires that God puts in us, and the tempter comes and entices us to fulfill those desires through artificial means that go against God. This is the picture of tempting in 1 Thessalonians 3:5. He is the prince of this world. "*The prince of this world will be driven out*," John 12 says. He is a master of false systems. He crafts entire schools of thought that can suck us in and destroy us. You know he is working hard in our day to convince teenage girls that if they do not look like the cover of a *Seventeen* or *Cosmopolitan* magazines, that they are not worth anything. He is convincing teenage guys that they need to put forth a certain persona in order to be accepted. He is convincing college students, men and women across this room, that if we do not have the right clothes, or the right car, or live in the nice house, or have the beach or vacation lake house to go to, then we are not successful, and we are buying into it all. He's a master of false systems, the prince of this world who rules the ways of this world.

He is the accuser, Revelation 12, the accuser of our brothers. Satan delights in condemnation. He will accuse you, condemn you, and point out your sins that have been confessed and covered by the blood of Christ. He will constantly accuse you with them.

He's represented as a serpent in Genesis 3, a dragon in Revelation 12. "*The great dragon was hurled down*." An angel of light in 2 Corinthians 11.

How do Satan and demons relate to God?

Now, how do Satan and demons relate to God? I want us to make clear on some contrasts here. God is the Creator; Satan is the destroyer. God is the Creator, Genesis 1; Satan is the destroyer, that is his name, Revelation 9, destroyer. Satan delights in destroying everything God has made. He's the destroyer, but don't miss this, it's the good news. God is the Almighty; Satan is limited by God. Genesis 17, "*I am God Almighty*," Job 1, "*Very well, then, everything he has*," talking about Job, "*is in your hands but on the man himself do not lay a finger*." Then Satan went out from the presence of the Lord. Satan is limited by God because he is less than God. We have to be very careful not to attribute the

characteristics of God to Satan, to the devil. Satan is not omnipotent. He is not omniscient. He does not know everything. He does not know all of our thoughts. He's not omnipresent. Satan is not everywhere at once. He is limited by God, and he only works under the permission of God. Satan is on a leash. God is Almighty; Satan is not almighty. I will come back to that later.

God is true; Satan is the father of lies. God is love; Satan is hatred and a murderer. John 8:44 says, *"He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him."* God is righteousness; Satan is evil. God is our Advocate. *"If anyone does sin, we have one that speaks to the Father in our defense - Jesus Christ the Righteous One."* Praise God! Satan is our accuser. Satan is standing at the right side of Joshua, the high priest in Zechariah 3, to accuse him. God is our protection in temptation; Satan is the tempter. God is our ultimate Judge; Satan is ultimately judged by God. God is our Judge, not Satan. Satan is judged by God. So, Satan and God, when you think about these two, remember these contrasts. We will come back to them more in a minute.

How do Satan and the demons relate to us?

How do Satan and the demons relate to us? Some Scriptures we have looked at already. 1 Peter 5, Satan is prowling around. How does he prowl? How does he devour? These are his schemes. We've talked about in 2 Corinthians 2. The question is what are his schemes? Ephesians 6 uses the same language; take your stand against the devil's evil schemes. So, what are their schemes? I've attempted to just give you a catalog, basically, an index almost of what are the schemes of Satan. How does Satan work, and this is not every single thing, but I think a pretty good picture, overview of how Satan works in relation to us.

Satan deceives. He is a master counterfeiter. He attacks in subtly, deadly, indirect ways. He delights in taking truths and twisting it ever so slightly, so that we think we're living according to truth when we are not. This is not obvious here. Deception is not obvious. You do not know that you are deceived. That's the whole point. This is where I think Satan is most dangerous. He deceives through false philosophies. Paul warns, *"See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy,"* (Colossians 2:8). False religions, sacrifices of pagans are offered to demons. When you participate in false religions, you're offering sacrifices to demons. That's what Scripture teaches.

He deceives through false ministers, and this is what was going on in Corinth. People were claiming to be teaching truth, masquerading as servants of righteousness here in 2 Corinthians, yet teaching demonic ways; subtly demonic ways. He deceives through false doctrine, a picture of the Antichrist. *"Even now many antichrists have come,"* 1 John 2. He deceives through false disciples. Matthew 13,

"The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field. But while everyone was sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and went away. When the wheat sprouted and formed heads, then the weeds also appeared. The owner's servants came to him and said, 'Sir, didn't you sow good seed in your field? Where then did the weeds come from?' 'An enemy did this,' he replied. The servants asked him, 'Do you want us to go and pull them up?' 'No,' he answered, 'because while you are pulling the weeds, you may uproot the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest. At that time I will tell the harvesters: First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to be burned; then gather the wheat and bring it into my barn.'"

False disciples in the midst of God's people. Brothers and sisters, this is why we must guard the purity of the church. This is why we cannot be light with what it means to be a part or a member of the church. There is an adversary who delights in filling the community of the kingdom with false disciples and false leaders who are intent on pulling people away from the gospel. So, we've got to be on guard. He deceives through false morals. 2 Thessalonians 2 is the picture of the lawlessness at work. He deceives people into thinking that they are embracing truth when they are embracing lies. Satan deceives.

Second, Satan attacks by directing governments. It's a picture we will look at more in depth in Daniel 10 in a minute. He attacks by bringing sickness. This is what Satan obviously did to Job; struck his flesh and bones. It's what Satan had done to the woman who had been crippled by a spirit for 18 years in Luke 13. Satan had kept her bound for 18 long years.

Directing governments, bringing sickness, and he attacks by destroying lives. "...*Him who holds the power of death, that is the devil,*" that is Hebrews 2. Persecuting the saints. "*The devil will put some of you in prison,*" Jesus says, "*to test you, and you will suffer persecution for ten days.*" The devil will do that, persecuting the saints. Preventing service. Paul says, "*We wanted to come to you - certainly I, Paul, did - again and again - but Satan stopped us.*" In 1 Thessalonians 2, he's preventing service.

Promoting division. "*Watch out,*" Paul says, "*for those who cause division and put obstacles in your way, for such people are not serving our Lord Christ but their own appetites,*" (Romans 16:17-20). He goes on to talk about how "*the God of Peace will soon crush Satan under your feet.*" He attacks by planting doubt. This is the very beginning of sin in Genesis 3. "*He said to the woman, did God really say*" that? Did God really say this? He attacks by producing sex and cults. "*The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons,*" (1 Timothy 4:1). Cults, results of Satan's attacks.

I've got to tell you this story real quick. The other night, we were putting our kids to bed. We had just gotten them out of the bath - three and a half year old, Caleb, and almost two and a half year old, Joshua - and we are getting them dressed, about to get them dressed, and there was a ring of the doorbell. It was late. It was about eight o'clock. So, Caleb, having nothing on, said, "I will go get it," and I said, "Absolutely not, son. You stay right here in your room." He just kind of smiled, and I said, "Buddy, you stay right here."

So, I go to the door, and I open it, and it's two Mormon girls. They have come, and they introduce themselves, "Sister and sister," and I'm trying to think - I don't really have a lot of time - so, I'm trying to think of a good zinger, you know, a good jab at a false gospel I could throw in there, just real quick, but not do it in a rude way. So, they recognize me as the pastor here, and I was about to go into my explanation, but all of a sudden, I look, and their eyes were huge. I thought, "Oh no," and I turn around, and there is Caleb in the "buff" just waving. He starts turning around and around, and then he runs away. My son mooned the Mormons. It was so much better than anything I could have said. Spiritual warfare.

Satan tempts us too, and this is just a laundry list. He tempts us to anger. He tempts us to pride, 1 Timothy 3. He tempts us to worry. Matthew 13, mark it down brothers and sisters, worry is from Satan and not from God. He tempts us to worldliness, "*the cravings of sinful man,*" everything in the world, "*the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does - comes not from the Father but from the world,*" (1 John 2:16). He tempts us to lying. This is a picture of Ananias and Sapphira saying, "*How is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied,*" Acts 5. He tempts us to immorality. Satan deceives, he attacks and he tempts.

Among other things, he blinds unbelievers. We have seen this in 2 Corinthians 4:4. He blinds them. They're blinded. They're blinded. Satan holds captives. You get to the end of 2 Timothy 2, "*Escape from the trap of the devil, who has taken them captive to do his will.*" Satan misuses Scripture. It's what he's doing in the temptation of Christ in Matthew 4. He's misusing Scripture.

Satan attacks faith, leading us away from sincere and pure devotion to Christ (2 Corinthians 11). "*In some way the tempter might have tempted you,*" (1 Thessalonians 3:5). Finally, Satan thwarts mission.

"They traveled through the whole island until they came to Paphos. There they met a Jewish sorcerer and false prophet named Bar-Jesus, who was an attendant of the proconsul, Sergius Paulus. The proconsul, an intelligent man, sent for Barnabas and Saul because he wanted to hear the word of God."

Don't miss this.

"But Elymas the sorcerer (for that is what his name means) opposed them and tried to turn the proconsul from the faith. Then Saul, who was also called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked straight at Elymas and said, 'You are a child of the devil and an enemy of everything that is right! You are full of all kinds of deceit and trickery. Will you never stop perverting the right ways of the Lord?'" (Acts 13:6-10).

Here's the deal: Satan cannot deprive God of the glory He is due in heaven, but he can work against people ascribing the glory He is due on earth. As a result, Satan will do anything he can to hinder the people of God from declaring the glory of God. That's why I am convinced, in some ways, that Satan is just fine with a Christian, self-centered pursuit of holiness with a church system that spends all of our resources on ourselves where we insulate our lives from the lost-ness of the world around us. That is no threat to the kingdom of darkness. He is hindering mission.

On an individual note, I wonder if there are men and women in this room, who at some point, God by His Spirit was calling you to a certain task, to a certain place, to a certain ministry and, somewhere along the way, you let Satan play the role of the hinderer. I just want to invite you to consider how Satan might have been hindering you, diverting you, distracting you, keeping you from doing what God was telling you to do, and I want to call you to put his hindrances behind. Put his hindrances behind. He wants to thwart mission in your life. Don't let him thwart it.

SPIRITUAL WARFARE

Okay, that's the best overview and quick picture I can do when it comes to Satan and demons. So, we've looked at both, and now the question is, "What happens when they come together, angels, demons and spiritual warfare, in the context of our lives on the earth?"

We're going to look at three different periods of redemptive history: Old Testament, Christ in the Gospels, and then New Testament church. Our challenge is, and don't miss this, our challenge is to think if there are any things that are unique in each of these periods of redemptive history. Are there any things that are distinct or unique in each one, and then,

are there any things that are continual and constant through each one? Just kind of be thinking about that.

The Old Testament and Spiritual Warfare

The world surrounding Israel...

Let's start with the Old Testament and spiritual warfare. You've got to realize that in the world surrounding Israel, three major empires, Canaanite, Egyptian and Babylonian are seen opposite Israel in the Old Testament. They were all dominated by occult beliefs and practices. They were teeming with demon worship, spirits, gods, idols, exorcism, demon possession, phenomena. Demonism and spiritism were rampant. Demonic agents and demonic activities, possession and exorcism. Demonic explanations were prevalent. What I mean by that is it was common for people to explain away actions or events in those cultures, both good and bad, as a consequence of spirits or gods or demons at work. You needed to have favor with local demons, spirits or gods, in order to appease the evil, receive their blessings.

All too often, Israel itself became engrossed in those practices, and what I want you to see is that idolatrous manifestations were pervasive, idolatrous manifestations. I put Deuteronomy 32 here because listen to what it says: *"They made him jealous with their foreign gods and angered him with their detestable idols,"* talking about God. *"They sacrificed to demons, which are not God—gods they had not known, gods that recently appeared, gods your fathers did not fear."* Did you catch that? Demons here in Deuteronomy 32 are equated with false gods, idols, and this is key because, when you read through the Old Testament, you won't see demons mentioned a lot. That doesn't mean the Old Testament was ignoring spiritual warfare. I want you to see that all of the idolatry and all the false gods we see all over the place, this is the work of demons, and the Old Testament specifically makes that connection.

So, the idolatry and pagan nations, and the idolatry that infiltrated the Israelite nation was a picture of demonic worship. Satan and his demons were evident in astrologers, soothsayers, priests, mediums, idolaters in all these cultures. The result was moral degradation in these cultures and in the way this influenced Israel. There was sexual perversion through ritual prostitution, Deuteronomy 23. Child sacrifice in Psalm 106, *"They sacrificed their sons and their daughters to demons. They shed innocent blood, the blood of their sons and daughters, whom they sacrificed to the idols of Canaan."*

This was a horrible picture of moral degradation and physical devastation. In 1 Kings 18, we see two pictures: we see worshippers of idols slashing themselves, and then we see, in 1 Kings 18, their absolute slaughter under the judgment of God. So, we're not just looking in the Old Testament for times where you see a demon or angel mentioned. We're looking at the picture of satanic, demonic influence behind all of the idolatry and immorality that we are seeing in the Old Testament.

Individual texts...

So, what I want us to do is I want us to look at six texts here, and I want us to think. I am going to add one more and do seven, but I want us to fly through them. Think through these six texts. I want you to turn to them. We're not going to read through the whole passage of every one, but I want you to turn to each one just so you can reference it. What I'm trying to do here is isolate particular texts and just get us to think through what these texts teach us about spiritual warfare in the Old Testament. There are six of them here, and I am going to add one at the end.

The first is obvious. Genesis 3:1-15, and there are a ton of things we could think through in this passage when it comes to spiritual warfare. What I want us to think about is - this is an overview - obviously, the serpent comes to Eve, and tempts Eve. Then, it relates to Adam. They eat of the fruit, and they are guilty before God. They are hiding from God. God comes to them and says, "What is it you've done?" Adam says she did it, Eve says he made me do it, talking about the serpent, and what we see is God's curse on the serpent, God's curse on Eve, God's curse on Adam, and at the end of the passage, they are banished from the Garden of Eden. That's the overview of Genesis 3:1-24 really.

Now, think about the nature of our adversary according to Genesis 3. What the Old Testament is showing us is very clear here. When it comes to spiritual warfare, God is Creator and Satan is creature. Some of these things are going to seem a little repetitive of what we've seen, but I want them to speak for themselves. Satan is clearly, undoubtedly on the creature side of the Creator creature divide. He is a creature. Not only is he created by God, but Satan is subordinate to God. God is sovereign; Satan is subordinate. From the very first picture of spiritual warfare in the Bible, we could not have a clearer, stronger picture of God's sovereign authority and power over Satan and evil. God is sovereign, and Satan is subject to God.

This is huge. In the cultic worldviews of the surrounding nations, demons and evil forces had equal independent power. That's the way most people think about good and evil. Warring, equal, independent forces going at one another. Good and evil fighting. That's not the case in the biblical worldview. Here evil spirits, the devil himself, is radically subordinate to God. This is not dualism; this is domination. This is not dueling powers in Genesis 3. This is God dominating Satan. Satan is accountable to God, and Satan is cursed by God. So, that's the nature of our adversary. God Creator, Satan creature.

His characteristics. Think about what Genesis 3 teaches us. He can speak. He is smart. He is no fool. He's cunning. He knows right where to attack. He attacks Eve, not Adam, because Eve indirectly had heard this command from God through Adam. He starts with what seems like an innocent question. He uses what seems like not a big deal to go down what is a slippery slope, promising blessings. The evil one is promising good to Eve. Don't believe it Eve! Don't believe it, brother or sister, when he promises good to you. Don't believe him! He's smart. He's not going to confront you, not going to come and say, "Hi, I'm Satan follow me." He's going to entice you and lead you to that which he's claiming is good. He'll use all kinds of different means on your college campus or in your workplace, in your neighborhood or on your TV or on the Internet and your friendships. If you knew it was Satan, you'd be a lot less inclined to say yes, right?

He maligns God's character. You've seen this before. He switches from "Lord God," a name that mentioned the goodness and greatness of God and just refers to God, takes out His goodness in Genesis 3. A very subtle but important shift that happens in Genesis 3:1. He questions God's Word. Temptation entered the world through the words, "*Did God really say?*" Eve should have been, from the very beginning, as soon as he said that, very suspicious. She should have been suspicious when a snake started talking to her, but even beyond that, first thing he says, "Did God really say this?" This is exactly what he is doing, what the adversary's doing all across our culture. "Did God really say that? Is it really truth in the Bible? Come on. God really say these things?" He has an intent. Satan is a malicious liar and murderer. This is a picture of the adversary from the beginning. He is lying and aiming for murder.

That's the nature of our adversary, now what about our warfare? In Genesis 3, we realize the dominant question in spiritual warfare is simply this, "Who will rule our hearts?" Is

Satan going to rule your heart or is God going to rule your heart? See spiritual warfare for what is it. It is a battle for your heart. Who are you going to give your heart to? Whose voice are you going to listen to? Who will we trust and obey? Just let this soak in for a second. The thought that I have chosen to let Satan rule my heart instead of God. That I have chosen to listen to his voice, Satan's voice, instead of God's. That in my sin, I have chosen to trust and obey Satan instead of God. See sin for the filth and wickedness that it is. Don't trust him! Don't obey him! Don't listen to him! Don't let him rule your heart! This is the nature of our warfare.

You see the consequences of our defeat, and the result of sin is temporal suffering. Both man and woman are cursed, banished from the garden. Temporal sufferings, the penalty of sin is eternal death, blocked from the tree of life. Mark it down, brothers and sisters, mark it down. Those who listen to the serpent's voice will feel the serpent's fangs. God help us to feel the horror of Genesis 3. Now, there's a beautiful promise in the middle of it, and I don't want to leave with all bad news. Beautiful promise in the middle of it that we're going to come back to. "Deliverance is coming," God says. So, that's the first text.

Second text, 1 Samuel, now I want you to know this. 1 Samuel 16:13-23. I am trying to figure out how we can go through this without reading every single one of these passages. That one was familiar to you. This one is a little bit different. Listen to what happens. I will read the beginning here. This happens right after Samuel anoints David, the soon coming king over Israel, and in contrast with the Spirit of the Lord with David, which is what verse 13 talks about, verse 14 talks about an evil spirit that begins to torment Saul. Listen to verse 14:

"Now the Spirit of the Lord had departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the Lord tormented him. Saul's attendants said to him, 'See, an evil spirit from God is tormenting you. Let our lord command his servants here to search for someone who can play the lyre. He will play when the evil spirit from God comes on you, and you will feel better.' So Saul said to his attendants, 'Find someone who plays well and bring him to me.' One of the servants answered, 'I have seen a son of Jesse of Bethlehem who knows how to play the lyre. He is a brave man and a warrior. He speaks well and is a fine-looking man. And the Lord is with him.' Then Saul sent messengers to Jesse and said, 'Send me your son David, who is with the sheep.' So Jesse took a donkey loaded with bread, a skin of wine and a young goat and sent them with his son David to Saul. David came to Saul and entered his service. Saul liked him very much, and David became one of his armor-bearers. Then Saul sent word to Jesse, saying, 'Allow David to remain in my service, for I am pleased with him.' Whenever the spirit from God came on Saul, David would take up his lyre and play. Then relief would come to Saul; he would feel better, and the evil spirit would leave him."

Now, we have to be careful not to just come to all kinds of conclusions here. "Okay, if you play some good music, demons will flee." Let's look at this text in its context. Now, this is interesting, circle this, four different times the Bible talks about an evil spirit from the Lord or from God. Verse 14, "*an evil spirit from the Lord*;" verse 15, "*an evil spirit from God*;" verse 16, you might circle it here, "*evil spirit from God*" and in verse 23, "*the spirit from God*." What's that about? An evil spirit from God. The picture is a demon, an evil spirit, who received permission from God to torment Saul. This is the point of the story: why would God allow an evil spirit to torment Saul?

First, because God was judging Saul. God is sending a tormentor, and this is a direct result of Saul's sin. If you go back to 1 Samuel 15:23, Samuel talked about it, in reference to Saul's rebellion, *"His rebellion is like the sin of divination, an arrogance like the evil of idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, he has rejected you as king,"* 1 Samuel 15:23. Saul had rejected God, so the picture is, in 1 Samuel 16, God is judging Saul, and at the same time, God was exalting David as the coming king and allowing David to bless Saul with peace.

So, here are two important principles that we need to take away from this picture. First, the powers of evil are inferior to God. Again, we see that evil spirits are acting only within the divine permission of God. They are subordinate to God. The spirit tormenting Saul is a consequence of his own sin. This is a story about the punishment of sin in Saul's life. The demon is not making Saul sin; the demon is a consequence of his sin.

Okay, next passage; keep turning to the right and you will come to 1 Samuel 28:3-25. This is probably the longest passage showing the occult undecided life. Interesting story to say the least, and we are not going to read through the whole chapter. Here is what happens. Saul had abolished the spiritists and mediums from the land, but then, when he wanted to find out information, he sent for the witch of Endor, a spiritist, a medium. He dressed up and went to the witch, and he said, "Will you bring up Samuel from the dead to talk with me about what is going to happen?" So, that is what happens. She does that, and Samuel pronounces the condemnation of God upon Saul for his disobedience and rebellion against God in many ways, and particularly, in doing this. That's the summary of 1 Samuel 28:3-25.

There is so much in each of these texts, but what I want you to see about spiritual warfare is this: God's sovereignty reigns over all spiritual evil. God controls everything. God is not, in 1 Samuel 28, condoning spiritism anymore than the cross is God condoning murder. Did you catch that? Not condoning spiritism, but He is in control of evil practices including spiritism and mediums. We are going to talk about how God and evil relate when we get to the end of this picture. Even the forbidden and the utterly detestable are still ultimately under the sovereign control of God.

Second, God's sovereignty reigns over all spiritual evil, and God's wrath reigns down on all human rebellion. What we find out is the Lord killed Saul for rebelling against Him and consulting this medium. 1 Chronicles 10, *"Saul died because he was unfaithful to the Lord; he did not keep the word of the Lord and even consulted a medium for guidance, and did not inquire of the Lord. So the Lord put him to death and turned the kingdom over to David son of Jesse."*

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