

# **Wrestling with the Unseen**

*Strategies in Living a Victorious Life in Christ*



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I  
have told  
you these things,  
so that in me you may have peace.  
In this world you will have trouble.  
But take heart!  
I have  
overcome  
the  
world.

(Jesus, John 16:33)

## Introduction

### **Blind Faith**

Oddly enough, there is an invisible world that is more tangible, more real, more lasting, more defined than anything in the world in which we now exist.

While this world will one day pass, the unseen kingdom will not. It is more permanent than all we know. It has its own “laws of nature”, its own geography, its own living creatures. It is a land that is both alien and familiar, friend and foe; it is eternal. It is not bound by boundaries of birth and death. It always has been, and will always be. While it is sometimes revealed, to most of us it remains hidden until the day our souls depart for eternity.

This unseen realm is a place - or a kingdom - of intense, spiritual activity. There are battles between good creatures, and bad creatures. There are thrones, angels, demons, heaven and hell – all “at home” in this unseen world. Since we are, by make-up, spiritual beings, created in the image of God (who is a Spirit), we have a built in resonance with the unseen world. It is our home, our final resting place, a place that fascinates and fears us. Not everything in the spirit world is good, God has warned us not to penetrate various aspects

of this world. But there are times when there is a blending of the worlds, times with the mist of the between "here and the not yet" blends into life.

Why does this happen? Why does God permit this to happen?

During the next five weeks, we will first be looking at what Scripture has to say about the heavenly realms (what goes on, what it looks like, and so on). Our major emphasis will center around the activities of a particular creature: Lucifer (or, "lighted one), who has a particular mission, which includes us. But have no fear. God wins in the end and our victory is sure!

*They **triumphed over him** by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony. Revelation 12:11*

# I

## Discarding Our Worldviews for His Kingdomview

**O**ur worldview has everything to do with how life is interpreted and done. Worldview can be defined as *a set of presuppositions about the world that motivates the individual to act in such and such a manner.*

By expanding our worldview, we will discover glimpses of the beyond and forced to believe what we cannot logically conclude.

### It's Just A Spirit Thing

God is a Spirit (John 4:24). He lives in a spiritual place (Isaiah 6; Revelation 4). And he is invisible.

*But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is **unseen**. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.*

*... that it will not be obvious to men that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is **unseen**; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. Matthew 6: 6 and 18*

*Now to the King eternal, immortal, **invisible**, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen. 1 Timothy 1:17*

The "invisible" world may be invisible to us, but it is more significant than we could ever imagine. (1 Corinthians 2:9) As God has created everything seen, he has also created things unseen, too, where numerous creatures exist, each with its own individual role and function.

*He [Jesus] is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, **visible and invisible**, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. Colossians 1:15-16*

The stuff of heaven is laced within the fabric of our material existence. In other words, our world is a parable of what heaven is like. As we have been made in the image of God, so has creation been made in the image of heaven.

*For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities--his eternal power and divine nature--have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse. Romans 1:18-20*

As Anglicans, we are incarnationalists. We believe that "matter" matters - so much so that Jesus became "matter" (*ie. human*) and entered creation, incarnating himself. He became known through the very stuff he created, even to the point of flesh and blood, Matter to matter. He entered fully into

humanity as God, and did life as *human*. Additionally, we believe that he is still using "matter" to reveal himself today.

That being said, that is not the last word. This world is not our home. We are destined to exist far beyond what we can see into a world we cannot see.

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

*Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. **So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen.** For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal. 2 Corinthians 4:16-18*

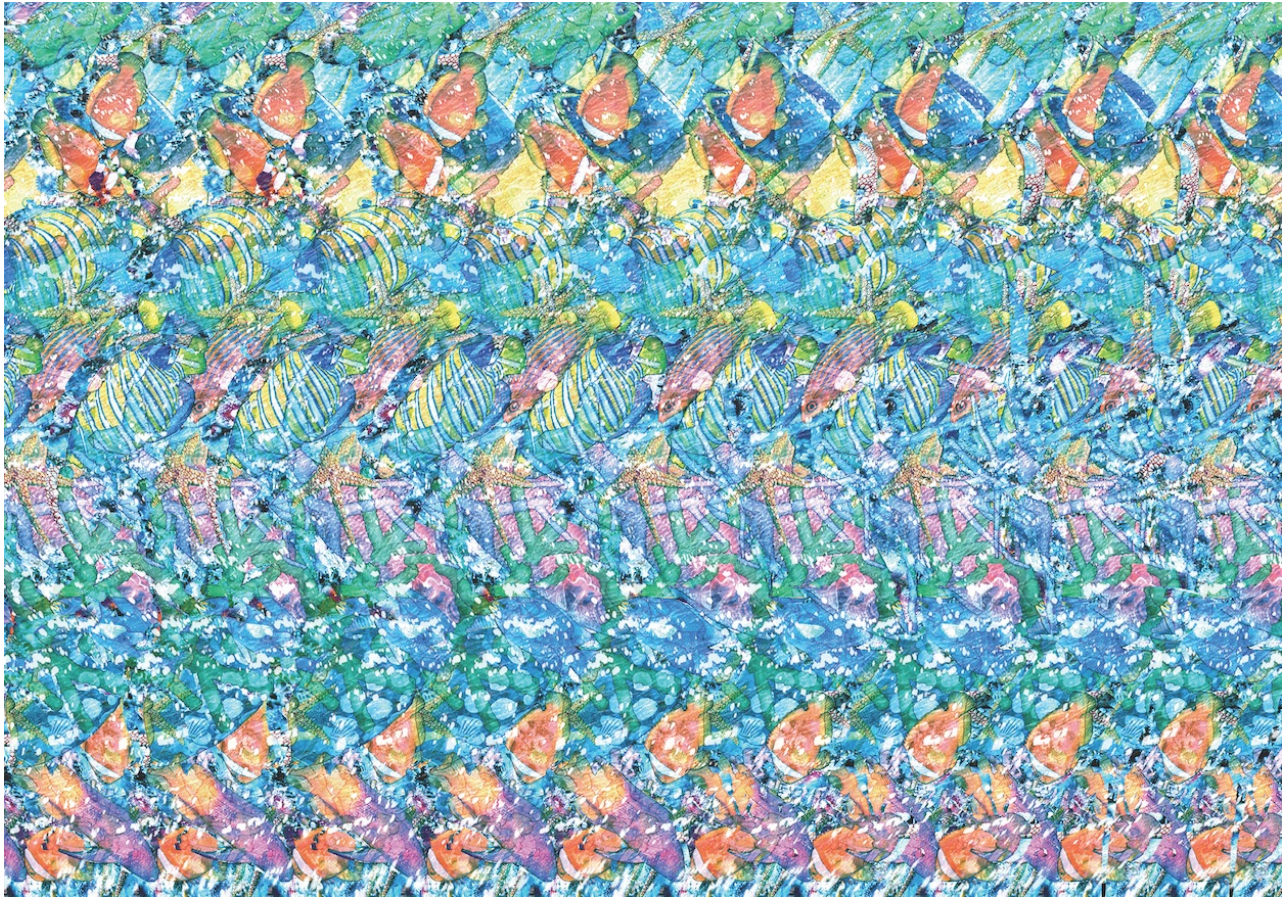
Take a look at the examples on the following pages. Seeing is believing, but believing may be not exactly what is seen.



**WORLDVIEWS CAN BE MISLEADING**



For the eye that wants to see deeper, consider this:



### I Only Have Eyes for You

The Kingdom is all about us. Some see it. Others simply believe it. Still others can't believe it because they don't see it. Regardless, how we believe is irrelevant. It is here, seen or not.

Everything we are must flow from this “realized worldview” – our faith, our behavior, and our future hopes of the Greater life. Everything takes on a new meaning as our worldviews become “heavenized” and shift kingdom views.

True faith must embody a “heavenized” worldview, or move from worldview to Kingdomview.<sup>1</sup>

***Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see. Hebrews 1:1***

***He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the hearts of men; yet they cannot fathom what God has done from beginning to end. Ecclesiastes 3:11***

Living life is already hectic enough without having to think, or be mindful, of eternal realities. It takes time (and real discipline) to morph into a Biblical understanding of the spirit world. Yet, as we begin to see through what is seen into that which is unseen - believe it, rely upon it, and act if it's really there - we mature in Christ, with an understanding of "something more" out there. And this understanding works its way into practically everything we do, say, think, and imagine.

Moving from worldview to kingdom view is a process. As we faithfully embrace spiritual truths and realities, we become deep soil, carrying a certain understanding of seasons and times, circumstances and repercussions of decisions, and successes and failures which witness Christ to others in deep and profound ways.

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<sup>1</sup> This isn't to elevate us into a place where we are so heavenly minded we are no earthly good - as the Kingdom of God is made known in the stuff of earth. It simply means integrating , making space for, a greater Kingdomview to be a player in all we understand to be true.

## Points to Ponder

- Take a moment and think about your relationship with Christ.
- How have you how adopted and grown into certain understandings that you would have never even realized before you came to Christ.
- What are some of those things?
- Ask: Do I live - do I do life - with the realized understanding that I am glory bound? Do I make decisions about vocation, money, where I live with the understanding of "heaven in my future?"
- Jot down a few notes and share them with your neighbor.



## **Everything You Ever Wanted to Know about Angels But Were Afraid to Ask**

**A**ngels. The thought of angels in itself brings a certain excitement and curious wonder to our minds. We've seen them on Hallmark cards, in movies, and as cute figurines. Often they are portrayed as cute, winged, and loving.

Yet Biblical angels lean away from these portraits and describe angels as sometimes bizarre beings with physical characteristics that would rattle the frame of any science fiction buff: multi-winged, multi-eyed, huge in stature, brilliant in glory; able to morph into human form, able to stand in the presence of Almighty God and not perish, you know, that sort of thing. Some angels do nothing but worship God; others do nothing but fight bad angels. All angels are created by God and ultimately serve him and the advancement of his Kingdom.

The Greek word for angel is *aggelos* and translates "messenger, announcer, and reporter of the good news." It is mostly spoken in terms of the masculine and the same word includes good angels (Matthew 24:36, Mark 13:32) and bad angels (Matthew 25:41, 1 Corinthians 6:3)

Here's a little fun quiz you can take that will both educate and humor you on the subject of angels. Mark your answers true or false.

## DON'T CALL ME ANGEL OF THE MORNING

Here's a little quirky quiz you can take that will both educate and humor you on the subject of angels.

Mark your answers true or false.

T/F Angels are not people. (Psalm 89:5,7)

T/F Angels are created beings and quite numerous. (Psalm 148:2 & 5, Revelation 5:11)

T/F Angels can disguise themselves to look like ordinary people like you and me. (Hebrews 13:2)

T/F Angels could never dream of being transgendered, as they are regarded as gender-neutral spirit beings. (Mark 12:25 and Hebrews 1:14)

T/F Angels have roles and responsibility, like oversight of countries and even churches. (Rev 2:1, 2:8, 2:12, 2:18; Dan. 10:13)

T/F It is appropriate to seek out, speak with, pray to, and worship angels. (Revelation 19:10)

T/F Angels have free will. (Revelation 12)

T/F Angels know the timing of the Second Coming of Christ. (Matthew 24:31)

T/F Donald Trump is no angel.

T/F Angels have been known to encourage and guide believers by appearing to them in dreams, and even in person. (Luke 4:10, Matthew 1:20 and Mark 16:5-6)

T/F In the OT the term "angel of the Lord" may refer to God, or the pre-incarnate Jesus. (Genesis 12)

T/F Angels are not able to fight for believers. (Psalm 34:7)

T/F Angels sing. (Job 38:7)

T/F Since angels are created spirits, there is no such thing as a baby angel.

T/F When a person comes to Christ angels could care less. (Luke 15:10)

T/F When Christians die, they become angels. When non-Christians die, they do not. (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17)

- T/F Humans, and in particular, the mystery of salvation, are of great curiosity to angels. (1 Peter 1:10-12)
- T/F Angels have personality, intelligence, and even emotions. (Mark 16:5-6, Luke 2:13-14)
- T/F If an angel appears to us and preaches something different than what's in the Bible, we should hear him out and consider it. (Galatians 1:8)
- T/F Angels - and baby cherubs in particular - were created by the geniuses at Hallmark Greeting cards. (Matthew 18:10)
- T/F Angels have names, which most likely describe some attribute of their personality or character. (Daniel 9:21, Luke 1:19, Jude 1:9, Revelation 12:7)
- T/F Angels do not have wills, rather they are like spirit robots, or marionettes, with God as their controller. (2 Chronicles 18:21-22)
- T/F The Bible depicts some angels as warriors, fully decked out and deployed for war, guarding and fighting for believers like you and me. (Psalm 34:7, Revelation 12:7)
- T/F Angels carry answers to our prayers (Acts 12:5-8). Some even try to hinder our prayers from being answered. (Daniel 10:12-14)
- T/F Though most people can't see them (except for Alice Grover) angels are hanging around Andover Community Church. (1 Corinthians 11:10, and as guardian angels)
- T/F All angels are good. (Revelations 12:9, 12:7, 2 Peter 2:4)
- T/F Satan is an angel, as all we call "demons" are too.
- T/F Satan and God are on speaking terms. (Job 1:7ff)
- T/F Angel(s) will attend us at our time of death. (Luke 16:22)

*"Are not all angels spirits in the divine service, sent to service for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation?"*

*Hebrews 1:14*



## Angels in the Life of Jesus

Angelic activity really ramped up around the birth of Jesus. There must have been much excitement in heaven around the events that were lining up! Here are a few "angelic reveals" found before, during, and after the life of Christ.

### *Pre-birth and Birth*

- An angel appeared to Zachariah, foretelling the birth of his son, John the Baptist, even though he and his wife were quite aged. (Luke 1:5-23)
- An angel appeared to Mary announcing that she would bear a Son. (Luke 1:26-38)
- A "host" (angelic army) revealed themselves to shepherds in the sky at the birth of Jesus. They even sang songs that we sing today in our liturgy. (Luke 2:8-13)
- An angel appeared in a dream to Joseph, telling him to marry Mary - even telling him what the name of their Son would be. Joseph heard and heeded the angel's words. (Matthew 1:20f)
- Again, an angel (the same angel?) appeared to Joseph in Egypt, telling them it was okay to go back to Israel. (Matthew 2:19)

### *During His Life*

- Angels ministered to Jesus after his baptism and at the end of a 40 day fast. (Matthew 4:11; Mark 1:13)
- Jesus spoke of the reality of angels, especially with regard to their care for children. (Matthew 18:10)
- They ministered again to him as he entered into his passion. (Luke 22:39-44)
- Angels were spotted in the empty tomb after Christ's resurrection and even had a conversation with Mary (Matthew 28:2, John 20:12)

### *At His Return*

- Jesus speaks many times about his return being accompanied by angels. (Matthew 16:27, 24:31, Mark 13:27)

### **Points to Ponder**

- How does it make you feel knowing there are angels about God's creation? Safe? Scared?
- When you go to the store, play with children, or even come to church do you ever have the thought that angels could be there, too?
- Have you ever sensed or even seen something that you knew was other-worldly? How did that make you feel?
- Share.



## Lucifer 101: His Existence and Mission

People have a variety of reactions when speaking of the devil. (For the purpose of this study I use the word "devil," to define both him as an entity, his demons, and his ways.)

Some of us, when thinking of the dark side, completely write it off as nonsense and deny its existence. Others become fascinated with the concept, even to the point of seeking to communicate or invoking his presence into their lives. For Christians who are grounded in the Scriptures, the devil is a reality. He is cunning, dangerous, and the Lier of All Liers. He should neither be denied nor sought after - only understood as our enemy.

From the onset, it's imperative to understand that the devil is a defeated foe, completely destined for hell at the end of the age. His defeat happened at the Cross and through Jesus's conquering death at his resurrection. No one could say it any better than the Apostle Paul writing to the church at Colossi.

*“Having disarmed principalities and powers, [Jesus] made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in [the cross].” **He is defeated.** He is dying a slow death. Jesus gave him the deathblow at the cross. Colossians 2:15*

Lucifer (or, “Light Bearer”) and his minions are key players in the redemptive plan of the expanding Kingdom of God. Even in their perverse, horrific, and most detestable schemes, God has figured out a way to use him - yes, even the devil himself - to fulfill his redemptive plan for humankind.

*And we know that **in all things** God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. Romans 8:28*

It's quite wonderful really, that when dealing with the devil, God is always in a "win-win" situation, and the devil is always in a "lose-lose" situation. It's equally confounding that the devil knows this, and yet continues on in his hell-bent behavior all the same!

## Foundations

Satan is adamantly opposed to everything God is doing. Indeed, he is everywhere God is, sniffing, snarling, seeing how he can leverage any given situation away from God and onto himself. We need to be aware of that. Jesus took the devil seriously and so should we.

As we move along it's essential to remember that the devil is *God's* devil – meaning that, although the devil is ruthless and horrid, he (and his activities) are limited, managed, and monitored by the sovereign mercy of a God who is love. (1 John 4:16). Ours is a God who shepherds us (John 10: 11-14). God has

removed the sting of death from the bite of Eden and continues to engineer the entirety of our life's for his good purpose.

Additionally, it's imperative to understand that the devil is *a defeated foe*, completely destined for hell at the end of the age. The initial blow happened at as Jesus died at the cross and overcame death at the resurrection. This assured all who believe in him a clear shot at eternal life. (John 3:16-17).

This is what I mean when I say, "The devil is God's devil." It means we have nothing to fear. We are in good hands. Everything that comes our way is orchestrated with purpose, plan, and design with *love* being the Prime Directive through it all.

Our disposition towards the demonic should be like the attitude of English evangelist Smith Wigglesworth (1859-1947) as told by Pastor Carl W. Mann II:

*Smith Wigglesworth spent approximately 36 hours in continuous preaching and praying in one meeting. Because of this, he was physically exhausted and sent everyone home for a few hours, so he could get some rest. He went to bed, and fell asleep quickly. Approximately 30 minutes after he had fallen into a very deep sleep, he was awakened by the sensation of someone shaking his bed. He opened his eyes and saw an evil spirit that had manifested itself seating on the foot of his bed. After he cleared his eyes, it is reported that he said, "Oh, it's only you!" Smith Wigglesworth rolled over and immediately went back to sleep.*

This really puts things in perspective!

The devil knows his time is short. The closer we get to the Last Day, the more fidgety he'll get, doing everything he can to deceive, pervert, destroy and

deafen humankind from hearing the Gospel of Salvation, the Good News of Jesus Christ.

Let's take a closer look at who he is, his origins, and agenda in the world.

## Who Is Lucifer?

Lucifer (and his followers whom we call "fallen angels" and "demons") are actually part of God's creation. He *made* Lucifer. Along with all that is seen and unseen, God created the devil, too.

*For by [God] all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; **all things were created by him and for him.** Colossians 1:16*

Lucifer remains a high-ranking angel, accountable to God. Tradition holds he is an archangel, with special privilege to speak with the One on the Throne.

*One day the angels came to present themselves before the LORD, and **Satan also came with them.** The LORD said to Satan, "Where have you come from?" Satan answered the LORD, "From roaming through the earth and going back and forth in it." Then the LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered my servant Job? There is no one on earth like him; he is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil." "Does Job fear God for nothing?" Satan replied. "Have you not put a hedge around him and his household and everything he has? You have blessed the work of his hands, so that his flocks and herds are spread throughout the land. But stretch out your hand and strike everything he has, and he will surely curse you to your face." The LORD said to Satan, "Very well, then, everything he has is in your hands, but on the man himself do not lay a finger." Job 1:6-12*

Lucifer (and his cohorts) is what we call, a "Fallen Angel(s)". Originally created as "good," he flipped to the dark side, taking about a third of created angels with him.

*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. Isaiah 14:12-15.*

*The great dragon was hurled down--that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. **He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him.** Revelation 12:9*

*He replied, **"I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of***

*the enemy; nothing will harm you. However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.” Luke 10:18-20<sup>2</sup>*

While some have experienced Satan in a variety of disguises - a sensuous body, a bag of money, drink, addictive attitudes of pride, flesh, lust, and so on - behind it all, he is a warrior; strategic and cunning, and heads a demonic army which is hell-bent on taking us down. No surprise here. One's own experience of simply doing life can attest to the swell of hell rising in our culture. This is no accident, nor is it the simply the way the world is turning. It is strategically and intentionally planned and implemented by demonic troops, led by the most unGodly being we could never imagine.

## Characteristics of Satan

There are many - probably more than here - but this is what we know.

He is:

- A **murderer**, a liar – void of all truth (John 8:44)
- A **deceiver, doubter, and spin doctor of the word of God**.<sup>3</sup>

*Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden'?" The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat fruit from*

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<sup>2</sup> Here Jesus is actually saying that before he became a man, that is when he was seated with God at the foundations of the earth in his pre-incarnate state, he saw the the devil fall out of heaven - and is now sharing this event *before becoming human*, as a man now, with to his disciples.

<sup>3</sup> Satan can never create anything new. He works with what he's got. He will never come up with a "good idea," or produce something out of the blue. Creation is something only God does. Satan can and does, however, takes what God has created and flips it, distorts it, perverts and ruins it until it is barely recognizable.



*the trees in the garden, but God did say, 'You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.' "*  
*"You will not surely die," the serpent said to the woman. "For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." Genesis 3:1-4*

- A **sinner**. (1 John 3:8)
- **Predestined for eternal fire**, along with "his angels" (Matthew 25:41)

## Biblically Speaking

### **Q. Does Satan have a mission statement?**

A. Yes. His mission is to discover what God is doing and then to seek to abort, thwart, taint, pervert, deceive, procrastinate, destroy, mess with it, and war against it – he'll do anything he can to mar the image of God, be it God's handiwork or his redemptive plan for the salvation of humankind.

### **Q. Where is Satan?**

A. Everywhere that God is moving, you will find him there. His hellish stench seeps into God's Word from Genesis to Revelation. He arrives early on in the Garden and slithers his way through Scripture until he is judged, condemned, and eternally enflamed at the Last Day.

Consider these events:

- **Creation**
  - He is there tempting humankind in the infamous words, "Did God really say?" (Genesis 3)
- At the **Birth** of Christ

- Here he tries to kill Jesus by rousing Herod to kill all the children under two years old in Bethlehem. (Matthew 2:16) This event is prophetically tied to Revelation 12:1-9.
- The **Temptation**
  - As the Holy Spirit led Jesus into the Wilderness to be tested the unholy spirit was already there (as in Eden) taunting, tempting, and seeking to tantalize Jesus into compromising the Plan for his life. (Mark 1:12)
- At the **Last Supper** when the New Covenant was inaugurated. (John 13:27)

**Q. Did Jesus ever encounter Satan?**

A. All the time. Encounters with demons and their futile efforts were a normative part of Jesus's live and definitive part his ministry. He came to destroy the works of the devil.

*The one who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. **The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work.** 1 John 3:8*

In essence, Jesus was out to undue all the devil did at the Fall. His anointing from the Father was precisely defined to combat and win back the ground of our enemy.

*"The Spirit of the Lord is on me,  
because he has anointed me  
to preach good news to the poor.  
He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners  
and recovery of sight for the blind,*

*to release the oppressed,  
to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." Luke 4:18-19  
(Mark's Gospel is most descriptive of these encounters.)*

### **Q. What Good is the Devil?**

A. He isn't good in himself, but even his most wicked movements turn out for God's glory and our own good. Remember -- the devil is *God's devil*. He can do nothing without the all-seeing nod of heaven. Concerning God's watchful eyes, Paul writes:

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

Knowing that God is love, and that you and I are objects of that love, really puts things in perspective, and lessens the rub when we feel like we are up against the gates of hell. Regardless of the temptation, pride, sin, and addiction we're facing we can be assured that the power of his grace is sufficient for us and that in his infinite wisdom he has allowed these things to happen with the intent of flipping all around to perfect his purposes in our hearts.

### **Q How does God make the evil purposes of the devil work for our own good?**

A. Here are three ways God flips the purposes of the devil to fulfill the promises of the Holy One.

#### **1. We are refined through repentance.**

God uses Satan to refine us more so into his image.

When we get slimed, we repent. This brokenness of heart invokes God presence in ways we would never know otherwise. When we repent for acting out we know Jesus understands and gets it.

## **2. We are humbled through pride.**

Satan seeks to provoke us into a reflection of himself.

When we are either intentionally straying, or under spiritual oppression, we tend to become "puffed up" with pride, arrogance, rebellion, and the like, which is the character of our enemy.

When God sees these things stirring in the hearts of his children, he steps in. This disciplines (Hebrews 12:5-7) humbles us and prunes us (John 15) and actually produces greater Godliness in our life.

In a strange paradox, afterward we are broken, humbled, and back to walking in the fear of the Lord, we are actually better off than before we got slimed in the first place! The Psalmist reminds us that God is close to the brokenhearted - healing and binding our wounds. (Psalm 34:18 and 147:3)

## **3. We become acutely aware of the unstoppable, unrelenting, mercy of God.**

Without the devil we would have no experience of the love of God, poured out for all the world to see.

Is there addiction? God's rushes in with freedom. Is there deception? God's truth wins out. Is there despair? Heaven's hope is revealed? Even in death, resurrection rules.

## True Perspective

*No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that **neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.** Romans 8:37-39*

Make no mistake, the devil is a real and created creature. He has a mind. He thinks. He is a military strategist. He intentionally leads demonic armies in a fruitless plan to derail not only the purposes of God, but the people of God (as it is the people of God who bring forth the purposes of God as anointed by the Holy Spirit).

Through it all - and in spite of his angelic magnificence - he is completely defeated. And he knows this, which make him fidget, squirm, and fight all the more. He is a desperately drowning loser, seeking take us with him as he barrels into the Pit of hell.

Do we take him seriously? Of course. Anyone who hates us we should take seriously.

Do we preoccupy our lives with him? No. We have a life to live, a call to complete, a Lord to serve.

When we encounter struggles and resistance in life, when we are anxious, despondent, depressed, sinning, or faithless should we consider that Satan

may be somehow invested in that. Yes. He needs to be a part of our kingdom view.<sup>4</sup>

Jesus most likely considered spiritual warfare as an ongoing “occupational hazard” of doing the will of his Father. Demons didn’t rattle him. They were something that he just came across from time to time, something he observed, dealt with, and moved on with.

### Points to Ponder

- What "aha" moments have you had as you've engaged this material?
- How has your "kingdom-view " of the devil changed or been challenged or affirmed?
- Does your understanding of this material give you peace, or does it breed fear? How so?

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<sup>4</sup> But we can get into mischief pretty well on our own without any "outside" encouragement from the devil. See Appendix ii.

## IV

# Getting to Know You Getting to Know All About You

C.S. Lewis writes:

“There are two equal and opposite errors into which our race can fall about the devils. One is to disbelieve in their existence. The other is to believe, and feel an excessive and unhealthy interest in them. They themselves are equally pleased by both errors, and hail a materialist or a magician with the same delight.” C.S. Lewis, *The Screwtape Letters*

In the previous chapters, we've learned that:

- The devil is real.
- He is God's devil, like a ferocious pit bull on a a leash.
- He is ruthless in his agenda.
- God uses and manages him for his own glory and our spiritual maturity.

- We become more like Jesus in our interactions with the devil.
- As spiritual warfare increases, so does our reliance on Jesus - which is a good thing.
- As Bob the Tomato (of *Veggie Tales* fame) sings, "God is bigger than the boogie man."

### **This Ain't No Party, This Ain't No Disco, This Ain't No Messing Around**

The fact that God is Love (1 John 4:8) and is managing the wiles of the devil should produce comforting peace and faithful understanding in the life of a saint.

What parent would allow anything to happen to a child that would destroy them? No, our Father sees ahead of the thing and takes delight in who we will be at the end of the thing. This may be why (contrary to the way *we* would do things) he has intentionally allowed the devil and his schemes to remain in the mix until the final Day. (See also the "Parable of the Weeds" in Matthew 13:24-30.)

That being said: We need to be on guard. If you are serious about your walk in Christ, the devil will be serious about you. This truth should increase our intentionality on walking in the light and love of our Savior. The devil understands the spirit world more than you or I will ever get. Our dependence on the Holy Spirit in any engagement with the enemy is essential.

Some, when oppressed, may share a throw-away line to others and humorously make a comment about it. "The devil made me do it," they say and



go on their merry way believing if they ignore it he will go away.<sup>5</sup> Others seek to wart off oppression by producing good thoughts, good works, going to the gym, or bailing out of life in front of the boob-tube until the heat is over.

These stances may take the edge off until the heat blows over, but we can't be fooled. We will never out-smart him, out-think him, out-trick him, or out-wit him, out-ignore him, out *anything* him. This is a spiritual battle.

Paul writes to the Church at Corinth:

*For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. **The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world.** On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. 2 Corinthians 10:3-4*

And again to the Church of the Ephesians:

*Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. **For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.** Ephesian 6:10-12*

## Recognizing Spiritual Authority

Spiritual warfare may not carry the horrific emotional memories, physical injuries, PTSD flashbacks and the like, but it is warfare all the same.

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<sup>5</sup> There is a place to simply "stand" and continue doing life as a form of warfare (seen in a later chapter), but to shrug it off as nothing may be playing into his well-planned deception.

Jesus experienced demonic encounters at just about every turn of the page. Many of these power encounters simply happened when the demons recognized Kingdom authority in the One standing before them. In the case of the demoniac in Mark 5, for example, the demons knew and recognized Jesus as the Son of God before he even said a word.

Demons know their true Lord - Jesus Christ, King of kings and Lord of lords - and they despise him. When Kingdom authority enters the room they impulsively react the way the hair of a cat stands up when a dog walks into the room. They recognized God's Presence and authority in the heart of Jesus, and they recognize the same in the hearts of his believers, too.<sup>6</sup>

#### *Personal Experience*

Once while leading a conference in Perth, Australia, I had just led a 45 minute set of praise and worship music and was feeling spiritually on top of the world. I set my guitar in its stand, walked off the stage, nabbed a cup of coffee, and wandered around the sports arena, watching people praying for one another, comforting and healing each other in the love of Jesus. It was beautiful to watch. Tears, laughter, and the joy of the Kingdom filled the atmosphere.

I was just walking around the rim of the arena, peering into various ministry rooms here and there, and happened to stick my head into a room where two of our team members were praying for a woman. I peered in, smiled, and may have said something - I really can't remember - when the woman being prayed for looked up at me and with lifeless eyes and in a man's voice said, "What is this bloke doing in here?"

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<sup>6</sup> We are the Body of Christ and, by virtue of who we are, walk in the same Kingdom authority as Jesus.

I smiled, nodded my head, and left the room. Quickly.

What was happening here? The demons within the woman weren't reacting to *me*, per sé, but to the elevated Presence of the Spirit in me, highlighted by the previous 45 minutes of praise and worship. They recognized the Spirit in me, because I am a member of the Body of Christ. As with all Christians, the same Spirit that lived/lives in Jesus lives us. The devil recognized heaven's fragrance in me (2 Corinthians 2:16) which reminded him that he remains a defeated foe in the Presence of Almighty God.

This fact alone - that we carry the same authority that Jesus had - means that no Christian is impervious to demonic encounters. Sooner or later we're all bound to encounter warfare, perhaps by merely walking into a room.

### Scriptures to Remember

1. **We are targeted prey.** *Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. (1 Peter 5:8)*
2. **The devil has already been defeated.** *And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he [Christ] made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross. (Colossians 2:15)*
3. **He is a massive Being, seething with horrific glory and hideous might - nobody should dare approach the Beast. Rather leave the real fight to the Lord.** *But even the archangel Michael, when he was disputing with the devil about the body of Moses, did not himself dare to condemn him for slander but said, "The Lord rebuke you!(Jude 9)*
4. **The NAME of Jesus (his power and rightly use of his authority in us) gives us real victory over the demons and all the schemes of the enemy.** *I [Jesus] have given you authority to trample on snakes and*

*scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you. However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven, and, At the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (Luke 10:19-20 and Philippians 2:10-11)*

Bottom line? Lucifer, the devil, his angels are to be respectfully feared, with the understanding of Christ's complete victory over him at Calvary through his death and resurrection.

### Points to Ponder

- How has the devil's interference with your life brought you to a deeper sense of God's presence in your life?
- Can you recall an instance of demonic warfare you encountered, or one you've heard about. Share that with another person.
- What is one positive assurance you've learned when speaking about spiritual warfare? Share this with your neighbor.



## **Arenas of Resistance**

**A**s we have learned, Satan is everywhere. He is well and alive, if only for a short time. (Revelation 12:12) For him this war is real. And he has everything to loose.

Yet he continues to fight, to put up resistance, seeking to thwart the Good things of God in us. We experience this resistance on many levels. These arenas of resistance are multi-faceted, complex, layered, highly strategic, and beyond our human understanding.

Spiritual warfare can be predictable. For example, it's not uncommon for a person to encounter resistance around the time of one's conversion, infilling with the Spirit, personal revival, or other times when we make game-changing leaps towards God. Other times his tactics fiery missiles fly in out of the blue (1 Peter 5:8) and we are at total odds by the timing and rationale behind them. Perhaps the greatest deception lies in the hearts of those who are convinced there is no devil at all and, if there is, would never want anything to do "with me."

No matter. The battle grounds are endless. His most tried and true strategies have to do with taking normal temptations and magnifying them bigger than they really are. If we harbor regret for past decisions he'll rub salt in the wound and say we should have never done that. If we experience Godly guilt for a sin, he'll make sure we feel condemned for the thing (even after we've taken it to the Cross). If we have a conflict with someone at work, or someone in our family, he'll make sure we know it was all our fault and tell us it will never ever change because we're flawed and it will always be this way! During these times of warfare he may even suggest to numb the pain with food, alcohol, or even suicide. He doesn't care. Any way is a bad way for him to deploy his gnarly twists and turns, birthing doubt and confusion in the hearts of God's people as they simply "do life" and seek to follow the Lord.

### **An Ironic Interplay**

Interestingly enough, the devil uses the very things we use to fight him to deceive us. Let's look at a few.

#### *Holy Scripture*

The truth sets us free. We know that the Bible is "living and active." (Hebrews 4:12) When used rightly Scripture has tremendous authority which has the power to mute the devil's voice and send him scurrying back into the shadows.

This was certainly the case when the Christ entered the wilderness. (Matthew 4) The devil came at Jesus with the *very same canon of Scripture* that Jesus used to defeat him! The devil understands the the Word more than most Christians and uses it (convincingly and completely out of context) as a "religious" argument to veer us away from God's purposes. It's a highly cunning form of deceit; using Scripture to justify sin.

A man may sleep with his best friend's wife under the pretense that, since he and his wife haven't renewed their marital covenant through sexual intimacy in years, they are no longer "one." A woman remains in an emotionally and physically abusive relationship for years because she believes, as the Scriptures teach, she must to "submit to her husband as unto the Lord" (Ephesians 5:22).

And the beat goes on.

The devil distorts and misuses God's Holy Word to advance his own twisted agenda by spin-doctoring it completely out of context to deceive the saints. He did it in the garden (Genesis 2), he did it with Jesus, (Matthew 4), and he continues to do it right on through today (Luke 8:44).

### *The Mind*

Frank Zappa sings, "What's the Ugliest Part of Your Body."

*What's the ugliest  
Part of your body?  
What's the ugliest  
Part of your body?  
Some say your nose  
Some say your toes  
(I think it's your mind)  
But I think it's YOUR MIND  
(Your mind)  
I think it's your mind, woo woo*

There may be a bit of truth to that. It has been said that the mind is the devil's battleground. When a person is convinced in her mind and understanding of a thing being true or untrue, all is well with the world. Much of how we believe is considered in our thou life before buying into it hook, line, and singer. Thus, if Satan can get a foothold in our minds, he has won a subtle victory. If that certain deception is implanted early on in life and entertained into adulthood, it could grow into an obsession which can even mature into a self-fulfilling stronghold in one's life.

For example, a young teen seeks out a witch for direction who tells him "such and such" around specifics about who and what he will be when he grows up - detailing his future, vocation, and even down to the physical characteristics of the woman he'll marry. Later in life he becomes a believer and, instead of repenting and getting deliverance from these arrows of deception, he continues to live as if one day he'll see the witchy-woman's words come true in his life. He may even believe that, now that he is walking with Christ, his teen prophecies will come to pass. But they don't. Unbeknownst to him, through the years her words have become a "*stronghold*" in his mind and (if entertained) are bound to present bigger problems requiring real deliverance for him in the future.

Our thoughts can really do a number on us. If gone without checks, we all would be deceived. We hear something that scratches our itchy ears (2 Timothy 4:3) and consider it. Time goes by and we begin to believe it. Then we live for it, as it has become a stronghold in our life. Before long, we bow down to it, worship it, and feed the demon it has become.



### *Personal Experience*

As a child, I was raised in the Episcopal Church. I did the acolyte thing and really revered the Altar, yet hadn't had the grace to hear and accept the Good News of Jesus Christ. Later on in life and at the end of my rope strung out on sex, drugs, and rock and roll, I gave in and surrendered to Jesus, as Lord of my life. I was filled with the Holy Spirit not long thereafter. Through it all I wondered, "Why didn't I learn about this in church?" As I entertained the question I harbored a deep resentment against the church (and specifically against priests) for not telling me how wonderful Jesus was.

As time passed I began to sense a call in my life to become - of all things - an Episcopal priest. Others saw it, too. Three different priests in three different churches in three different parts of the country and in three different dioceses all confirm that call independently of one another. Yet each time I was presented to the "powers that be" the process was completely shut down. I cried, "Why Lord?", and was ready to give up.

One day I was traveling from Los Angeles to Denver and the Lord drew my eye to a patch of farmland just outside the window. Half of the farmland was brilliant green, the other half was a desert, dried up and all crusty. There were about 30 cows clustered up a cattle guard, facing the green grass, just to the other side of the road. As I contemplated those steel rods keeping the cattle from the "Promised Land," so to speak, the Lord spoke to me and said, "See that? That is judgement."

As I meditated on that word it I understood that all those years of judging the ordained priesthood had formed in my heart a root of bitterness against the very thing that God was calling me to become. In

essence, he was saying, I have called you to be a priest but there's no way I'm going to let you shepherd my people with that thing in your heart.

A few months later I received ministry and (much to my surprise) this initial root of bitterness that I had harbored through the years had grown into a demonic stronghold of *judgement against the ordained priesthood* which after about 30 minutes of ministry by the leaders in my college group, finally let loose and came out with a scream. I had been freed! My road to ordination became well defined and encouraged by "the powers that be" after that. A few years later, I was ordained a priest, but now with the heart of a shepherd.

Our minds can become places of victory or defeat. Even though we have the mind of Christ (1 Corinthians 2:15-16) we need to be reminded to set our minds on his truth and things above (Colossians 3:1-3) to avoid deception in our minds.

We need to choose to believe that what he says about us is indeed true and can be trusted, and we need to make decisions in doing life in that vein. When thoughts of the past (condemnation, overwhelming regrets for poor choices, or mental torment) slip into our thought life, we have the authority and wherewithal to rebuke the devil in the Name of Jesus and move on.

I've heard it said, "When the devil reminds you of your past, remind him of his future!"

In part, our choice to believe and live into the mind of Christ is how our minds are renewed. (Romans 12:1-2) We need not believe everything that comes into

our minds but need to fact-check what we're hearing in our heads with the Word of God in the Light of his Spirit and the Love of the Father. The straw house of Satan can't stand up to that kind of scrutiny.

### *The Body*

Not all physical ailments are spiritual in nature. But some are. Biblical examples include dumbness (Matthew 9:32-33), blindness (Matthew 12:22), deafness (Mark 9:25), and epilepsy (Mark 9:14ff). Flesh and blood are important to God. Jesus was human and, thus, sanctified our bodies for use to glorify the Father. Is it any wonder that the devil would like to aim his arrows at them?

Some think our bodies are secondary to our souls and spirit. "No big deal." We think, "This thing is just a 'tent' anyway. My eternal body will replace this one."<sup>7</sup> But we believe, *matter matters*.

Have you ever considered that a keeping a healthy diet, engaging in physical exercise, and getting enough sleep can be ways of doing spiritual warfare?

When our bodies are wholly functioning and healthy we can bring much glory to God. Our physical vitality can speak to others in many ways and witness Christ. A better body enables us to participate in more activities, like loving God and loving one's neighbor. Additionally, if we exercise there's a high probability we will live longer - which will bring all the more glory to God because we will live longer. With our bodies we do missions, drive others to church, clap and dance in the Spirit.

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<sup>7</sup> Just another way Satan uses the Word to convince us against God's purposes in our life.

By sitting around night after night eating "Little Debbie's" and watching multiple reruns of *The Office*, our bodies can become significant arenas of physical apathy which the devil can use to wreck the very thing God created to honor, glorify, and expand the kingdom of heaven.

## The Church

Why would the devil want to mess with the Church? One would think that would be the *last* place on earth he'd want to be. The church, they may think, is all-holy, all glorious, and completely impervious to the wiles of the enemy. But the bigger question is, "Why wouldn't the devil want to mess the Church?"

Churches are micro-Bodies of Christ. They are gathered embassies of a greater country, the Kingdom of God - heaven - for all the world to see. It's no wonder why devil would want to get into the mix and ruin her witness to the world.

He seeds us with false doctrine, he brings down priests and pastors we love, he spreads our sins across the nightly news, tempts us to major on the minors, causes division and cliques, distracts us from our call to go into the world and make disciples, and would have us fixated solving drama and "religious arguments" between members - all of which suck our energy and veer us away from the fulfillment of the Great Commission. (Mark 16:15ff)

Unfortunately, we get sucked into the vortex all the time. We hear of Christian "celebrities" going down and hop on the bandwagon, smugly agreeing with the press. "They deserve it," we agree. "They should rot in hell for what they did." Like birds in a trap our attitudes move from prayerfulness to vengeance and revenge. And there we are, playing directly into the schemes of Satan: to soil

the robes of the Bride of Christ by turning on one another in a spirit of judgement and hardened hearts.

The Church is a special target for our enemy. It's easy prey. Satan knows he can promote drama, inflame hurt feelings, tempt us toward one another, cause disunity and chaos - and all this in the most holy moments when the Spirit is present and our hearts are filled with heaven.

The devil is everywhere Jesus is. And Jesus is the Church are one and the same. (See 1 Corinthians 12:27.)

### Marriage, Family, and other Significant Relationships

Marriages are always in the devil's site because they represent the love Christ has for the Church. (Ephesians 5:31-33) The devil abhors this most precious institution and stirs up unforgiveness, mistrust, pride, bitterness, and dissatisfaction whenever he can.

### The World and its Culture

The Apostle John tells us plainly that it doesn't take the devil to get us into mischief. We can do that very easily without any help from the "dark side," thank you very much.

*For everything in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—comes not from the Father but **from the world**. 1 John 2:16*

While the world was created “good” (Genesis 1:31), Scriptures tells us that Lucifer is the prince of this world (John 12:31, 14:30,16:11, 2 Corinthians 4:4,

Ephesians 2:1,2; 1 John 4:4,4:19), indicating that the natural tides of culture have the potential to be influenced by his wicked agenda.

## Material World

The very stuff that helps us live, do life, and get us around - the nuts and bolts of our homes and workplaces - remain valid avenues of spiritual resistance. This includes the "coincidental breakdown" of appliances, automobiles, media screens, and so forth.

Things are always breaking down. Flat tires, lightbulbs blown, lightening strikes on modems, blown electrical systems, etc. on their own warrant are no big shakes. It's the timing and "coincidental clustering" of these things that tend to raise eyebrows.

In my life, these things come to a head when I've been influential (or am about to be influential) in bringing forth a greater witness of Christ in the life of others.

One may wonder, "Why would Satan want to clog my toilet, break a guitar string, or tempt me to delete an app holding over 400 documents?"

The strategy here is less about the specific things breaking, and more about our response to the situations. His intent runs far deeper than the physical damage. He is out for the response. If by making things break down and we get edgy, mad, angry, go into a fit of rage, and "act out", he has done his job. We have lost our "shalom."

### *Personal Experience*

In the writing of this book, I had so many incidences of things going topsy-turvy in my life that I actually journaled them - eight of them to be exact, all within a period of a couple of weeks. Through it all I had grace to understand: it was just the enemy's way to veer me away from the things that really count.

### **Mother Nature**

Finally, storms, winds, earthquakes, and the like often flew in the face of the expanding Kingdom of God as Jesus and the disciples simply went about doing doing what they were called to do.

Some are apprehensive about the spirituality of *nature*. We think it runs independent of anything we do (and often it does). Yet clouds, rain, droughts, and even earthquakes have been influenced by prayers and God's sovereign will.

Elijah prayed for rain and it rained. A powerful storm hit the disciples on the Sea of Galilee just before "Legion" was cast out of a crazed demoniac, and the praises of Paul and Silas rocked the entire city of Jerusalem in a massive earthquake (1 Kings 18:41ff, Mark 5, and Acts 16:16ff).

Maturing from a worldview to Kingdomview makes room for this sort of stuff to happen.

## Points to Ponder

- Looking at the arenas of resistance above - holy Scripture, the mind, the body, the Church, the world and its culture, the material world, and mother nature - consider the one(s) you have experienced resistance in?
- Is there one particular area that seems more consistent than the others?
- Share.



## VI

### **Boots on the Ground: Internal and External Warfare**

**O**ur responses to our enemy's resistance and provocations say everything about our character in Christ. If we run and hide in a corner, waiting for the heat to blow over, it demonstrates a heart of faithlessness and spiritual apathy. On the other hand, if we run full-tilt-boogie into the heat of the battle, this too can be equally self-defeating. It may demonstrate a heart of a dread warrior but, more than not, arrive in the heart of the thing and only then realize the ferocious reality of his enemy and suddenly retreat.

How are we to engage in the battle?

We need to be realistic. While we know that the gates of hell will not prevail (Matthew 16:18), it doesn't give us license (nor the wisdom) to run foolishly into battle, slicing our swords this way and that way because God said we'd have victory in Jesus.

A wise person takes account of weaponry and other factors before going into battle (Proverbs 20:28, Luke 14:28). Resources need to be gathered, counter-offensive strategy needs to be considered. Rather than making light of "attacks" and even mocking them, a seasoned believer understands the dangers behind trivial temptations and assaults. He or she knows that flirting with the enemy is essentially flirting with death.

The good news is that battle belongs to the Lord (1 Samuel 17:47). He is the final victor. He has graced us with weaponry needed to fight our battles. Ours is a spiritual war, and we fight it on spiritual turf.

*For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and **against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.** (Ephesians 6:12)*

### Types of Weaponry: Interior and Exterior

In this chapter we will look at essential postures - spiritual demeanors through which you will be able to spot and safeguard yourself against the devil's schemes. There are two of them: **Interior** and **Exterior**.

Briefly defined, *interior* strategies of battle are inner ways we engage the enemy. They are initiated on our own, with very little public awareness, and include inner disciplines like questioning what we hear in our heads, increased our thought life, prayers, fasting, eating well, and other spiritual disciplines.

While interior stances represent the actions and activities that we initiate on our own (often without others' assistance), *exterior* strategies include actions and activities that involve physically stepping into places where Kingdom power can be harnessed, and implemented with help of others. Activities such

as communal interaction, participation in Bible studies, attending prayer and praise gatherings, public intercession, and going to church all fall within this level of warfare.

The trick is to utilize both *interior* and *exterior* stances, as needed and as led by the Holy Spirit. There is neither a fully right or fully wrong way to do this thing. Both *interior* and *exterior* weaponry are needed to produce victory in our fight against the enemy.

The following chart provides a helpful graph of weaponry that has proven fruitful in deflecting the arrows of the enemy. (1 Peter 5:8)

## Types of Weaponry

<b>Interior Stances</b> <i>Stuff You Do In You</i>	<b>Exterior Stances</b> <i>Stuff You Do With Others</i>
<p>The Name of Jesus Say the Name of Jesus. Satan knows His Name and hates it. Sometimes he'll tolerate it, but most times he'll turn the other way and run.</p>	<p>Fellowship Unified Christian community - particularly fellowship and accountability relationships with other believers is huge protection against our enemy. (Psalm 133:1)</p>
<p>The Word of God Speak the Word of God. Scripture spoken aloud has a similar effect. That's how Jesus defeated him in the wilderness.</p>	<p>Go to church If the local church is an embassy of heaven (which it is), and the attributes of the Kingdom are made manifest in the gathering of the saints (which they are), then there is no better place to be in the heart of spiritual warfare. (Hebrews 10:25)</p>
<p>Memorize Scripture This makes using God's Word easy. The Holy Spirit can surface memorized Scripture to our minds as needed. (Hebrews 4:12, Philippians 2:10-11)</p>	<p>Ask for prayer Americans are notorious for pulling themselves up by their own boot straps. Yet, our culture is in direct opposition with Biblical precepts. It's difficult to admit struggle, but Jesus shows up when we do. (Deuteronomy 19:15 &amp; Matthew 18:20)</p>

## Interior Stances

### *Stuff You Do In You*

#### Be resolute.

Make a firm decision to take God at his Word (Ephesians 6:13). As a hardened heart can resist the love of God, a heart determined to stand its ground is a wall of resistance.

#### Raw obedience.

A determined lifestyle dedicated to righteousness (2 Corinthians 6:6; James 4:7) creates a holy forcefield which significantly shows Satan (and others) whose you are. You need not "feel the love" for obedience to work. This is purely a decision of the will.

#### Spiritual Disciplines

Prayer, Fasting, personal devotions, Bible Study, etc. all work together for the expansion of God's revelation in the heart of a saint. Reciting the Jesus Prayer, or reading spiritual writings are a must.

#### Do the stuff

Get busy doing social action. This gets your mind away from the battle and gets you engaged in an entirely different level of warfare. (Luke 4:18). Warfare can simply be giving a drink of water in the Name of the Lord. Pressing into charismatic ministry is good here, too. The words and works of Jesus produce joy. (Nehemiah 8:10)

#### Build faith through personal testimony

This can be done by you preaching, teaching, and sharing your testimony to others (Luke 4:19), or by calling a friend and asking them to share what Jesus is doing in their life (Revelation 19:10). Testimony breeds hope, hope breeds faith, and strategic accuracy is perfected through prophetic utterance.

## Exterior Stances

### *Stuff You Do With Others*

#### Keep short accounts of sin (James 5:16)

Unconfessed sin is like a build up of sludge in a septic tank. Go to Jesus and confess to others often, humbly asking forgiveness from God and your church family.

#### Remember the Sacraments

Sacramental rites are avenues of grace given for nurture and spiritual protein. Be strong. Receive communion, get anointed with oil, make choices to remain and live faithfully within the integrity and protection of the Church. Stay faithful in marriage, remain true to your Baptism vows, and choose to be submitted to the loving authority of your priest or pastor.

#### The Blood of Christ

The shed blood of Jesus gives us true freedom from sin and death. When we gather with others and plead his blood to pour through the ages into our gatherings, the devils get spooked and back away.  
(Revelation 4:5).

#### Accountability

An understanding of your own predisposed weaknesses with internal alertness to safeguard those districts with one or two others in a relationship of accountability. Set up a weekly time to hear others, and confess yourself. Accountability isn't a time to share if you've been "good" or "bad," but an invitation to bring others into the battle with you.

#### Pray in tongues with others

Despite abuses, the gift of tongues provides prophetic accuracy in intercession and worship. Every believer has accessibility for every spiritual gift in the Bible merely by the fact that every believer has the Spirit living within them, and in the Spirit all gifts reside - including tongues.  
1 Corinthians 14:9 & Galatians 6:16)

### Interior Stances

*Stuff You Do In You*

Sing a new song

If Satan truly was heaven's worship leader than nothing will deter him more than throwing it back in his face. (1 Chronicles 20, esp. vv.22-28). If you don't sing, put on music. If you do sing, and have a prayer language, do that for a double whammy.

### Exterior Stances

*Stuff You Do With Others*

The full armor of God

Paul writes, "Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes... Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand." (Ephesians 6:10-18)

## A Quick Study: The Full Armor of God

The Apostle Paul knew his enemy. As a pastor of numerous churches he was intentionally keen to protect the flock apportioned by Jesus. As we close out this chapter, be reminded of his words to the church at Ephesus, and his words to us.

*Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.*

*Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then, with the **belt of truth buckled around your waist**<sup>8</sup>, with the*

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<sup>8</sup> Truth: sincerity and honesty protects us against lies and errors

***breastplate of righteousness<sup>9</sup> in place, and with your feet fitted<sup>10</sup> with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace.***

*In addition to all this, take up the **shield of faith<sup>11</sup>**, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the **sword of the Spirit<sup>12</sup>**, which is the word of God. And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people. (Ephesians 6:10-18)*

The devil is God's devil. We are God's children. While we will never be certain of God's purposes in allowing him to test and tempt us, our assurance comes as we stand resolutely in his grace and lift our eyes to him - beyond the idols on the hills - from where our help comes from (Psalm 121:1).

## Points to Ponder

- Review once more the two stances of weaponry in the chart above - *Interior* and *Exterior* ways of warfare. Which one(s) do you tend to gravitate towards?
- Listen to your neighbor sharing his or her preferred stance(s).
- What decisions can you make - wither internally or externally - in standing on your ground in your fight in pursuing God's will?

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<sup>9</sup> Righteousness: personal integrity and moral rectitude can guard our hearts against sinful desires

<sup>10</sup> Feet: our movements are motivated by being alert to walk the talk and talk the walk. This guards against slothfulness and undue procrastination of doing God's will

<sup>11</sup> Shield: faith extinguishes the missiles of unbelief which sucks us into the devil's vortex. (See also 1 John 5:4.)

<sup>12</sup> Sword: Used offensively, a timely prophetic word can piece the motives of the enemy and completely disarm him. Interesting to note: this is the only offensive weapon in the bunch.

# Appendixes

## Appendix i

### "The Angel of the Lord" in Hebrew Scriptures

Often in the Hebrew Scriptures we read the term "The angel of the Lord." Much discussion has gone into just what that phrase means. Does it mean a literal angel? Is it a celestial being speaking in the Name and authority of Yahweh - so much so that it is as if it was Yahweh Himself? Some have maintained, the term, "angel of the Lord" simply means God himself, while other scholars believe these sightings were of the pre-incarnate Christ. Still others believe this encounter (below) is the holy Trinity.

The most well-known encounter with "the angel of the Lord" is found in Genesis, just before the destruction of Sodom. The big question here is, "Who were the three men who appeared to Abraham in Genesis 18?"

*1 **The LORD appeared** to Abraham near the great trees of Mamre while he was sitting at the entrance to his tent in the heat of the day. 2 Abraham looked up and saw **three men** standing nearby. When he saw them, he hurried from the entrance of his tent to meet them and **bowed low to the ground...***

*10 **Then the LORD said**, "I will surely return to you about this time next year, and Sarah your wife will have a son." Now Sarah was listening at the entrance to the tent, which was behind him. 11 Abraham and Sarah were already old and well advanced in years, and Sarah was past the age of childbearing. 12 So Sarah laughed to herself as she thought, "After I am worn out and my master is old, will I now have this pleasure?"*

13 **Then the LORD said** to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh and say, 'Will I really have a child, now that I am old?' 14 Is anything too hard for the LORD? I will return to you at the appointed time next year and Sarah will have a son." 15 Sarah was afraid, so she lied and said, "I did not laugh." But he said, "Yes, you did laugh."

16 When **the men** got up to leave, they looked down toward Sodom, and Abraham walked along with them to see them on their way. 17 **Then the LORD said**, "Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do? ...

20 **Then the LORD said**, "The outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is so great and their sin so grievous 21 that I will go down and see if what they have done is as bad as the outcry that has reached me. If not, I will know." 22 **The men** turned away and went toward Sodom, **but Abraham remained standing before the LORD.** 23 Then Abraham approached him and said: "Will you sweep away the righteous with the wicked?

26 **The LORD said**, "If I find fifty righteous people in the city of Sodom, I will spare the whole place for their sake." 27 Then Abraham spoke up again: "Now that I have been so bold as to speak **to the Lord**, though I am nothing but dust and ashes...

33 **When the LORD** had finished speaking with Abraham, he left, and Abraham returned home.

19: 1 **The two angels** arrived at Sodom in the evening, and Lot was sitting in the gateway of the city. When he saw them, he got up to meet them and **bowed down with his face to the ground.** 2 "My lords," he said, "please turn aside to



*your servant's house. You can wash your feet and spend the night and then go on your way early in the morning."*

These passages may indicate there were two angels assisting God in the story. While we will never know (this side of heaven), as Christians, it isn't entirely off the wall to say "the Lord God" in this story is description of the pre-incarnate Christ. By that we mean, it was Jesus before he took on flesh and born in Bethlehem.

God does have a history of walking about his creation. (See Genesis 3:8) The Holy Spirit is nowhere in bodily form in the Scriptures, only represented as breath, a dove, wind and fire. (Genesis 2:7, Matthew 3:16, and Acts 2:2-4)

While it may be concluded that "the Lord God" was Abraham's future Messiah these ancient texts should not be used to hang one's hat of theophanies and doctrines of angels. The only thing certain here is Abraham speaks with, acknowledging one of the "men" as the Lord God, while the others move on to visit the sinful city of Sodom, where they are regarded as angels, too. (Genesis 19:1ff)

(A similar encounter is in Genesis 17:7ff with Hagar and Ishmael.)

## Appendix ii

### The Relationship between Lucifer and Music

Many believe music has the ability to channel supernatural power - be it good or evil. As a congregational singer/songwriter I have thought much about these things.

There is music that is definitely anointed supernaturally by God. These prophetic songs are usually for a season in the overall life of the church. Back in the day, "Shine, Jesus Shine" was one such song. God anointed that song to nurture what he was doing in the world - wanting the church to rise and be lights. Today, if we were to play the song in church, it may have a sentimental value, but it would spiritually fall flat. "Revelation Song" is another song that was anointed heavily for a time and place. In the future, however - and in cahoots with whatever else God is doing at the time - it will be replaced with another anointed song which will speak the words our the Father needs us to know in that season.

If music can be anointed by the Spirit, it's no surprise that the devil can have his music, too. Sometimes it's evident, other times not so much. Sometimes it's lyrical, other times dark with unearthly form and melody.

Where do we find ourselves? Music is all around us. Are we better off listening to one genre of music over another?

## A Matter of the Heart

The cross-over between secular and sacred music has produced a gray zone that could have hardly been forecasted thirty years ago. In the early days of Christian music (thinking of the Jesus movements of this generation) there was a certain sanctity with Christian music. Music was written intentionally for the promotion on Christian ideals, and for praise and worship. Much of it was created specifically for the Church, edgier music was composed to reach out to the lost. "Altar calls" we a given at the end of any Christian concert, with prayers, and prayer ministers there to meet the needs of the response.

There was a definite line in the sand drawn between Christian and non-Christian music. Secular music was taboo for many evangelicals. Once they became Christian, they left the "world" completely, which included non-Christian music.<sup>13</sup> For many reasons, the two genres of music have blended. Today we see Christians playing so-called secular music and non-Christians sitting in on sacred gigs. The Newsboy's, in their song reflect this blurry season when they sing,

*I dunno... When it's a ministry and when it's a show  
Maybe neither, maybe both, I dunno...<sup>14</sup>*

As the cross-over between sacred and secular will continue to blur, I maintain the power behind most music - be it secular or sacred - may be more about the heart of the listener than the intent of the songwriters.

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<sup>13</sup> Steve Taylor mocks this mentality in his song, "Guilty By Association" when he writes, "And you only drink milk from a Christian cow."

<sup>14</sup> *Your Love is Better Than Life*, Newsboys

For example, if I am a flaming prideful narcissist who listens to Jesus-only music that is all about what he has done for *me*, how he loves *me*, and how he calls *me* his favorite, and so on, is that somehow better than a person who humbly listens to the life lessons portrayed in ballads and secular love songs? Which type of music glorifies God more? Again, the answer today may lie more in the heart of the listener, more than any particular genre.

*Personal Experience*

The season of my personal conversion to Christ lasted nearly three years. During that time, the only exposure I had to a loving God were from people picking me up hitchhiking and wanting to convert me. However, God (still) speaks the language of the people and he used all things secular to reveal his sacred love for me.

One evening a friend of mine put on an Eagle's *vinyl* record (yes, I am that old!) and the Holy Spirit came down on the words of a "secular song" written by a "secular man" and recorded by a "secular band." Not since then have I heard the Lord as powerful as that night.

*You better let somebody love you  
You better let somebody love you  
You better let somebody love you  
Before it's too late.<sup>15</sup>*

At that time in life, I was dancing on the edge of a razor, flirting with death and running away from God's love every waking moment. These words were exactly what the doctor ordered.

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<sup>15</sup> *Desperado*, The Eagles

## The Question in the Question

Yet the larger issue looms. Is it possible that Satan can be entwined in the music industry? Is he a *musician's musician*, an evil entity that actually sings, makes music, and influences the melodies we hear every day?

The answer brings us back to the stealthy Scriptures regarding the origin and description of this fallen creature. As some have asked, does the Bible support the idea that Lucifer was a musical being of some sort, with pipes and percussion “built in” to his very framework, which would have served for the direction of praise and worship before his rebellion? Consider the following:

*Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering, the sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold: the workmanship of thy **tabrets and of thy pipes** was prepared in thee in the day that thou wast created. (Ezekiel 28:13)*

This is an extremely difficult passage to translate. Six Bible translations translate the passage using musical references (like the above King James Version). Numerous others do not. In addition, most serious scholarship tends to shy away from the particulars of this verse (v.13) and emphasize broader section as a whole. (See Ezekiel 28:11-19.)

That said, there is a strong belief among many that point to these verses as being proof that Lucifer was actually a worship leader in heaven before the fall. Additionally, there are hints that he may even have musical instruments woven into the fabric of his being - that he may have the natural ability to make noises, whistles, clicking percussion, and other harmonious sounds

simply because of the way he was naturally made - not unlike whales, parrots, or other animals with vocal cords.

I believe it is within human reason to assume the created framework of Lucifer (and others, for that matter) to include pipes and bodily appendages used for the creation of music and percussion. Creation itself provides us with a portal into God's divine nature (Romans 1:20) – and within in creation we see almost every creature (including some humans!) having built in capabilities to create musical sounds (through wind-pipes/vocal chords/blowholes) and rhythms with percussion-like sounds (hand-clapping, snapping fingers, rapid clicking, croaking, chirping, barking, etc.) It would be “just like God” to create beings, seen and unseen, with these wondrous attributes – all designed to bring glory to Himself.

Contextually, of course - and back to the Scripture at hand - , we need to remember these verses refer to the King of Tyre (Ezekiel 28:12), not the devil, yet it is widely agreed upon this section of Scripture provides a prophetic account of Lucifer's rebellion, just as selected parts of the Old Testament prophetically point to the Future Messiah. (See Psalm 22, Zechariah 12:10, Isaiah 61:1 for example.) It gets dicier when seeking to substantiate Lucifer as being the worship leader in heaven based on these few words alone. Whether he was involved in praise leadership or was just an oddly fashioned high-ranking angel, isn't point here. This section is about rebellion - all rebellion.

## Appendix iii

### Q&A

**Q. How did the devil, Satan, and his demon spirits become they way they are today?**

A. There was a lot of drama involved.

We believe that God created all we can see and all we can't see. This would include creatures, angels, life forms, heaven, hell, the works. With regard to rational creatures he created them with a free will, a mind to choose, to think, and to create, like God.

Angels are like that. They are autonomous and choose to do one thing or another. Lucifer was created as a high ranking angel, with many others under his wing. Some believe he was responsible for music before he fell (see Appendix). There came a day when he decided to break from his role in heaven and leave, taking about a-third of created angels/demons/spirits with him (Revelation 12). Jesus himself (though not human at the time) saw the thing play out from heaven, described in Luke 10:17-19. This most likely happened before Eden.

Ever since then they have been at war with the expanding Kingdom of Light. Even though their fate is doomed, they still seek to harass, deceive, oppress, possess, and destroy all that God loves - including people.

There are stronger demons, and wimpy demons. Some are like bees that buzz and scramble around our heads, others are real problems and need to be handled with Godly authority.

**Q. Does the devil know the Truth?**

A. Yes. He is the master counterfeit of all Truth. He's well versed in counterfeiting and perverting all the good and beautiful things of God. A good working definition of heresy is: A kernel of truth wrapped in a lie. Satan takes the truth of God and distorts it into something it was never intended to be (and God's creative order to do it!).

**Q. Can people be demonized by evil spirits?**

A. Of course. Evil spirits may be at the root of various illnesses and conditions. Christians have the Holy Spirit living within them and cannot be possessed, or severely demonized. Yet they can be oppressed, and tormented by evil spirits.

**Q. What if I believe I'm being oppressed by spirits? What should I do?**

A. Talk to your priest or pastor for clarity and perspective. Remember not all weirdness is a result of spiritual oppression.

**Q. What are "demon magnets?"**

A. Good question. I believe we can engage in activities, behaviors, and interests in the "depths of Satan" (Revelation 2:24) which can attract evil influences in our life. I call these, *demon magnets*.

Activities or thoughts that would face you away from the good things of God have the possibility of being a demon magnet. While one's sinful behavior, whether it be a one shot deal or an entire season of temptation, may be of some interest, *evil spirits are more apt to take special interest in those who are*



*intentionally open and inviting towards them.* They know when they are welcomed and when they are not, when you're dabbling for innocent fun and curiosity, or when you're dead serious about inviting them in.

**Q. Can doing ministry be a "demon magnet?"**

A. Yes. There is a spiritual residue that resides in/on/or around us after we do ministry. The priests in the Tabernacle of Moses were given precise instructions to wash in the brass laver both before and after doing ministry. This is a prophetic illustration detailing the importance of ministers staying clean and spotless before the Lord - as the water in the laver speaks to the Spirit and the Word. (See John 7:37-36 and Ephesians 5:26.)

**Q. Can satan love?**

A. Satan knows love; in the sense that he knows God and God is love. He, however, has chosen not to love.

**Q. What happens when a non-Christian is delivered from an oppressing spirit?**

A. There is a high probability that the unwelcome spirit would be unintentionally welcomed back by the person – and return with greater strength as well (Luke 11:24-26). Most people serious about shaking spirits seek help from many places - from hypnosis to counseling. Only when they come to Jesus will they come to the place of complete deliverance and restoration.

**Q. What are some indications that my temptations and struggles may be more "demonic" than "fleshly?"**

A. Spiritual discernment is the key. When I don't know, I assume it's spiritual - and pray and seek God in the midst of the thing. Recycling, or rotating patterns of temptation could be a an indicator. They could be spirits running

in your family line, or simply stuff you're naturally attracted to. I'd be hesitant to label your soft spots as "demonic" without sitting with your pastor or priest and talking it through.

That being said, in his book, *War on the Saints*, Jessie Penn-Lewis shares some ways you can tell the difference between natural and supernatural temptation.

- When it comes from outside the person, or within the sphere of circumference, and not from the central depth of his spirit, where the Spirit resides.
- When it is imperative and persistent, urging sudden action without time to reason or intelligence weigh the issues.
- When it is confusing or clamorous, so that you're hindered from thinking.

**Q. If I think I'm being harassed, or know someone who is, what can I do?**

A. In Christ, God has given you all you need. They are as easily invited out as they were invited in.

First make sure you are not somehow unconsciously participating in calling upon demons. Many well intentioned Christians play games of occult, dabble in or practice portions of pagan religions, and make decisions on the bases of mediums, horoscopes, ouija boards, etc., without ever realizing these things stand in direct opposition of God's power and intimate friendship. These things are grievous to the Lord and completely cancerous in the life of a saint.

Demons have no legal right over believers. Once the Holy Spirit has revealed the trouble spot, need to be told to leave. Most evil spirits recognize Christ's authority in us and will leave. Others are stickier and will leave when the

“prayer force” is more concentrated. (Mark 9:25-29) Either way, there is no reason why a Christian needs to live under any level of spiritual torment.

**Q. How about spiritual strongholds. What are they and how can I recognize them?**

A. Spiritual strongholds are patterns of belief and worldviews regarding who we are and how we think that oppose the truth and/or worldview of the Gospel. They are so embedded in us that we rarely see them until the Light of the Gospel reveals and breaks them.

The Bible says we are to “take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.” (Read 2 Corinthians 10:3-5.) Strongholds may include poor self worth/esteem, pride, passivity, despondency to sin(s), odd-ball moralities, superstition, religion, bad theology, unreasonable adherences to heretical “Christian teaching,” creating one’s own unique Christian theology, and the like.

Additionally, ongoing rebellion, or intentional persistence to reinforce spiritual strongholds may eventually become demonic magnets, attracting demons of that same persuasion, which spiritually promotes the further deterioration and/or a spiritual callousness to the things of God. For example if I have been raised racist and after being enlightened with the Gospel choose to cling to my racist beliefs, this could bring demonic attention which would serve to solidify this misguided belief with its own “strong hold.”

**Q. Can you say more about spiritual resistance and how that plays out in life?**

A. Much spiritual resistance happens by just doing life. It’s a part of the pilgrimage to Zion, so to speak.

As mentioned earlier, the devil is everywhere God is, seeking to undo anything good God is doing. This means that if God is doing something good in our lives we will always have resistance on some level (and in what Christian is God not doing good in our lives!).

A person may not understand why a refrigerator goes on the blink just before a healing conference, why the car had a flat tire coming home from a praise and worship service, or why lightening struck your modem, blew out your T.V., and wiped out your WIFI the day you began praying God's protection over your family. But as one grows, correlation make sense. Resistance happened in the life of Jesus and will happen to us (again, with the devil being "God's devil," and a sturdy hand on the leash).

For me, timing is everything. If events are random and out of the blue I just chalk it up to "life." If the events are compressed and are known to happen around times when I am being used by God to reveal his Kingdom to others (conference, witnessing or praying with others, introducing new worship songs, or writing a book about spiritual warfare) I don't have to think twice about where it's coming from.

**Q. What is the difference between oppression, and possession?**

A. Oppression is not possession. It is a form of resistance. Christians cannot be possessed, as the Holy Spirit is their true possessor.

I look at it on three levels: spiritual *resistance*, spiritual *oppression*, and spiritual possession. *Resistance* happens simply by doing life. *Oppression* is that blanket of darkness that comes and goes, usually around the same areas of weakness (sexuality, emotional stability, or increased appetites, lethargy, and the like). *Possession* is an entirely different animal. It is complete control over mind,

body, and spirit. Again, a Christian cannot be completely possessed, because the Spirit resides within the heart, but Christians can be demonized on varying levels.

Demons interact with us for a variety of reasons. Perhaps they've been traveling down generational lines so since the days of Columbus. Perhaps they are the residual fallout in a person's heart who has come to Christ and is in the process of being sanctified (like my demon of judgement against the ordained priesthood). Or perhaps God just allows them to test us because he knows we will rise to the occasion and come out all the stronger for it (as in the case of Job).

Yet there are demons that have we have intentionally invited in, times when we have intentionally and willfully said, "Come, Unholy spirit" and really meant it.

#### *Personal Experience*

I was once praying over an ordained deacon serving an Anglican church in Sydney. We had just had a teaching on the Holy Spirit and had asked God to initiate his ministry among us gathered. As we were standing in silence I heard the sound of a man falling to floor. No one was praying for him but, all the same, there he was, jerking uncontrollably on his stomach, right there in the chancel of the church.

I squatted next to him and asked, "What's going on?" He replied, "I have a demon of homosexuality and I want it out."<sup>16</sup> I learned how the demon entered. As a teenager, he and his friends were intentionally and aggressively doing black magic, invoking all kinds of spirits while

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<sup>16</sup> Probably important to say here that nor all homosexual behavior is empowered by demons, but in this case - as we'll see - this was.

performing homosexual acts. He didn't know what they were doing, but Satan took them at their word.

We began to pray. As it turned out, the demon named was the *least* of his worries. After a time of hefty ministry, a demon called "death" left his body. Afterwards, I asked the young deacon afterwards, "How do you feel?" He looked up with the face of an angel and said, "Like I'm going to live forever."

This is a case of severe oppression - not quite possession (as he was a servant of the Lord) - but big all the same. This thing had been with him for so long and it had come to the point where God's ministry was being hindered. And, because of its hideous strength, he needed help to shake the thing. Even as horrific as this example is, this man was only oppressed.

**Q. What about animals? Can they be possessed?**

A. Yes. Pigs were filled and flying with demonic power in Mark 5.

## Appendix iv

### Temptation and Oppression

*For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin.*

*Hebrews 4:15*

As "human", we are **naturally** tempted. Contrary to popular belief, Satan is not to be blamed for our every temptation and consequential falling into sin. We can fall into mischief very easily on our own.

*For everything in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—comes not from the Father but from the world. 1 John 2:16*

If we stub our toe, we don't rebuke the chair. If we are wiggled out and don't have peace because we've consumed a pot of coffee, we don't rebuke the coffee maker or sprinkle holy water on it. We did that ourselves. In other words, though the devil will tempt us, and sideswipe us times, we don't want to give him more credit than he deserves.

James brings it home:

*When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.*  
*James 1:14*

Most temptation (and ensuing sin) is first conceived in our own head. Sin then happens when *we choose to entertain the thing*. That is what most often takes us down. Some believe that temptation itself is sin. It is not. It's what we *do* with the temptation that makes the difference.

It's worth saying that, when we come to Christ we are still able to be tempted and even sin. The difference is that, in the heat of the moment, we now have the *ability to choose* what we do when confronted with compromising situations.

Big difference here.

Before Christ, we were powerless and without hope. Sin whiplashed us this way and that way and many times we just didn't have a choice. In Christ, however, we have a choice whether to engage in the thing or not.

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

Temptation happens. It always will. It's been with us since Eden and won't give up until we are draped in our glorified bodies. It is what we do with the temptation that divides the line between the the spiritually babes and adults (1 Peter 2:2-3, Hebrews 5:12-14).



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