

Satan

Before God created man and woman, He had created spiritual beings, angels. They were spiritual beings but they were not created in the image of God. Angels were created to serve God and they would later perform tasks such as ministering and guarding believers, as well as, being messengers from God to people.

One of the most powerful angels was called Lucifer. The Bible tells us that due to Lucifer's pride he rebelled against God and wanted to be like God. God therefore cast him down to earth. Other less powerful angels who also rebelled with him (one-third of the angels) were also cast away by God.

Ezekiel 28 vs 11 ` Thus says the Lord God: " You were the seal of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. 13 You were in Eden, the garden of God; 15 You were perfect in your ways from the day you were created, till iniquity was found in you. 16 " By the abundance of your trading you became filled with violence within, and you sinned; therefore I cast you as a profane thing out of the mountain of God; and I destroyed you, ... 17 " Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty; you corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendor; I cast you to the ground, ... 19 All who knew you among the peoples are astonished at you; you have become a horror, and shall be no more forever. " ' "

Isaiah 14 vs 12 " How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground, you who weakened the nations! 13 For you have said in your heart: ` I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation on the farthest sides of the north; 14 I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High. ' 15 Yet you shall be brought down to Sheol, to the lowest depths of the Pit."

Revelation 12 vs 9 So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

Lucifer is also referred to in the Bible as Satan, the Devil, Beelzebub, the adversary, the serpent, the ruler of this world, the evil or wicked one, the red dragon, the tempter, the enemy of God, the prince of the power of the air and the god of this age. Unlike God, Satan and his evil spirits are not omnipresent, omniscient nor omnipotent.

Although God's creation of the world and the angelic beings was completely satisfying to Him, when He created people, He created a start of a family for Himself with whom He could share Himself and His creation. People are God's special creation and it is important for us to know and see ourselves as God sees us. We are considered by Him to be special.

Physical and Spiritual Dominion

When the Bible states that believers should be set apart from the world it refers to the current world system with its values, priorities, loves and spiritual separation from God. If we do not see anything wrong with the world, believers will never accept the

need to turn from its ways. Therefore, in order to make a commitment to set ourselves apart from the world, we must clearly understand how God sees the world and why He wants believers to be set apart for Himself.

God intended at creation that He would be the supreme spiritual ruler over the earth with people living in physical bodies and having physical dominion over the earth. In doing this, God permitted people to determine the course of life on earth through their physical rule.

Genesis1vs28 Then God blessed them, and God said to them, " Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth. "

Psalms115vs16 The heaven, even the heavens, are the Lord's; but the earth He has given to the children of men.

Psalms8vs3 When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars, which You have ordained, 4 What is man that You are mindful of him, and the son of man that You visit him? 5 For You have made him a little lower than the angels, and You have crowned him with glory and honor. 6 You have made him to have dominion over the works of Your hands; You have put all things under his feet,

Even though God created the earth, is God of heaven and earth (Deuteronomy4vs39) and owns all that is in heaven and on earth, the initial separation of people from God and the spiritual laws put in place by God has meant that God has allowed Satan to be the spiritual ruler of this world. People as spiritual beings in physical bodies, have always had free will and live according to the daily decisions we make but the spiritual rule means that our thoughts are significantly influenced by evil spirits. This evil spiritual influence is offset by the God-given conscience and the conviction of the Holy Spirit.

Because the physical dominion of people was not lost through our original separation from God, it means that spirits must use physical bodies to do their work upon the earth. Therefore God and evil spirits can only impact a person's life by planting thoughts into our mind but it is only with our consent that these thoughts stay in our life and impact it, never against our consent. God spiritually guides people to complete His will upon the earth by them reconciling themselves to Him and then yielding to the spiritual influence of the Holy Spirit. In this way individuals are instruments that God uses to accomplish His will upon this earth, but in a similar way, Satan and his evil spirits can also influence people to accomplish their evil will upon the earth. In this way the spiritual world around us is limited to what individual people will allow through their life.

When Jesus was tempted by Satan just prior to the start of His ministry on earth, Satan showed Jesus all the kingdoms of the world and offered to give them to Him if He would fall down and worship him. Jesus did not deny that Satan had been delivered authority over the earth nor did He deny Satan's authority to give Him the kingdoms but rather replied that He only worshiped and served God.

Luke4vs5 Then the devil, taking Him up on a high mountain, showed Him all the

kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. 6 And the devil said to Him, " All this authority I will give You, and their glory; for this has been delivered to me, and I give it to whomever I wish. 7 Therefore, if You will worship before me, all will be Yours. " 8 And Jesus answered and said to him, " Get behind Me, Satan! For it is written, ` You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only you shall serve. ' "

A few years later when Jesus is just about to be captured and put on trial, He makes the following statements about Satan referring to him as the ruler of this world.

John12vs31 Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out. ...

John 14vs30 I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming, and he has nothing in Me.

Although Satan has spiritual rule over the world, he is a conquered spiritual being who is allowed by God to have this rule until a time appointed by God in the future. He has been and always will be under God's rule. Even when Jesus was being put to death, Satan could only act upon Him in a way that God allowed him to. Jesus died because it was God's will for Him to be put to death. While Jesus lived on earth, Satan and the evil spirits knew that He was the Christ and God's Son. Therefore, they recognized His rule over them by not only speaking of who He was through the people they occupied but also bowing down before Him and immediately obeying Him when He sent them out of people that they lived in.

Luke4vs41 And demons also came out of many, crying out and saying, " You are the Christ, the Son of God! " and He, rebuking them, did not allow them to speak, for they knew that He was the Christ.

Luke4vs 35 But Jesus rebuked him, saying, " Be quiet, and come out of him! " And when the demon had thrown him in their midst, it came out of him and did not hurt him. 36 Then they were all amazed and spoke among themselves, saying, " What a word this is! For with authority and power He commands the unclean spirits, and they come out. "

On one of the occasions that Jesus appeared to His disciples after He rose from the dead, Jesus made it clear that He had been victorious and now all authority in heaven and on earth had been given to Him (Matthew28vs18). Some time later, Jesus appeared to Saul (later called Paul) telling him that he was being sent out into the world to take people away from the power of Satan and bring them under the power of God.

Acts26vs 18 to open their eyes, in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me.

Authority over Satan is with Jesus but this has not changed the spiritual rule that God allows Satan to still have over people's lives in this world. John also stated, after Jesus died and had risen from the dead, that the whole world was under the control of Satan (the wicked one).

1John5vs19 We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one.

As believers, we are able to exercise the authority that Jesus has to prevent Satan's influence on our life. In this way, Paul was sent by Jesus to take authority over Satan in the name of Jesus and so release individuals from Satan's control. When Paul was spreading the message about salvation and new life through faith in Jesus, he stated that many people could not believe the good news he had because Satan (the god of this age) had blinded their minds. This has been the case and currently is the case. Apart from those who are reconciled to God through an authentic faith in Jesus, the rest of the people on this earth have been and currently are under the spiritual control and deception of Satan with their minds blinded to God's light.

Paul tells us that people who are without God (sons of disobedience) in this world live their lives according to the spiritual influence of Satan. In his letter to the Ephesians, he tells the Christians that they once lived their life under the influence of Satan (prince of the power of the air), spiritually dead to God.

Ephesians2vs1 And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, 2 in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, 3 among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.

Again in his letter to the Colossian Christians, Paul states that they have been delivered by God from the domain of darkness and moved into Jesus' kingdom.

Colossians1vs13 He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, ...

As sinners separated from God, people have been and are under the spiritual captivity of Satan, in his spiritually dark domain, and under his spiritual power. For this reason Jesus said that He came to "set the captives free". The death and resurrection of Jesus was a major victory over Satan's spiritual control of people. Until after Jesus Christ died and rose again from the dead, a choice of spiritual rule was generally not available to all people, they were subjected to the spiritual rule of Satan. However, from that point on, all individuals could choose to receive spiritual freedom and spiritual life through the forgiveness of sin by faith in Jesus Christ or could choose to remain in captivity as had always been the case, subjected to Satan's spiritual control.

In his gospel, John tells believers that the Holy Spirit inside us is greater than Satan who is in the world around us. In this world, we therefore must no longer be under the spiritual captivity, oppression and darkness of Satan. Jesus Christ came to set the captives of Satan free. Free from the bondage of sin that jails a person from coming to God to be reconciled to Him and receive spiritual life. These captives are spiritually bound on this earth and will be eternally bound and punished when they leave this life. Although sinners may think that they have freedom, they are held captive by the

thoughts that Satan places in their minds and which forms and feeds their dark and corrupt heart. They are unable to break free from his influence in their daily life.

This is why the Christian life requires a setting aside of our former life without God and embarking on living a completely new life for God. The truth is revealed by the Holy Spirit spiritually and as we come to know it in our heart and daily live by it, we are freed from the bondage of the flesh and the world. The truth will and does make us free as Jesus promised. As we surrender to God we release ourselves from the bondage that is in the flesh.

Satan's fate and that of his followers has been determined by God and they will eventually be placed under everlasting punishment (Revelation 20vs10). We read in the book of Jude that Satan, since his rebellion against God, has been kept in bonds in a world of darkness. Although He is still active in his spiritual influence on people, it is within a boundary allowed by God.

Jude6 And the angels who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own abode, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day;

God does not tempt people into sin but it is clear that Satan is allowed by God, with certain restrictions, to tempt people by planting thoughts into our mind. The spiritual influences of Satan and his evil spirits entice people to sin and prevent individuals from restoring a relationship with God. Satan is not allowed by God to tempt people who are in a right relationship with Him beyond our ability to resist it. In this way, the faith of believers is tested and hopefully strengthened.

Although Satan has these abilities to affect people, he has always been subject to God's authority. We see this even in one of the oldest books of the Bible, Job. There we read that Satan appeared before God and God tells Satan about Job's blameless and upright life. Satan tells God that Job's life is blessed and protected but argues that if the blessing and protection is taken away, he will turn and curse God. God then gives Satan the power to test Job's strong faith in God but limits Satan's actions to everything other than touching his person (Job1vs6-12).

The apostle Peter in his letter warns Christians to be vigilant because of the attempts by Satan to derail people's walk with God. If we are not careful and alert to temptations we may succumb to them and fall from the spiritual position we have with God.

1Peter5vs8 Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. 9 Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world.

Christian believers would be wise to ensure that, wherever possible, temptation is avoided. If we come upon it and experience it, we are told to resist it and flee from it. For the unbeliever, temptation keeps the person under the captivity of sin. However, for the believer, although we can occasionally be overtaken by it, God helps us to resist it and this resistance to temptation can provide a means by which there is spiritual growth due to the strengthening that can come as a result of it.

Renewal

There are two spiritual kingdoms, a heavenly kingdom under God's rule and an earthly (worldly) kingdom which is under Satan's rule. When a person chooses to become a Christian, it means stepping out of Satan's spiritual kingdom of darkness and the bondage of sin that is within that kingdom, and stepping into God's kingdom of light and separation from sin. It means stepping away from an evil spiritual world that is in general rebellion against God and living in God's spiritual realm where we are obedient to Him.

In his letter to the Colossian church, Paul states that Jesus delivered us out of Satan's spiritual power and enabled us to step into His spiritual kingdom (Colossians 1vs13). Paul again states this in his letter to the church at Galatia when he said that we are able to leave our evil world through the death of Jesus.

Galatians 1vs3 Grace to you and peace from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ, 4 who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father,

The Jews expected a Messiah who would come in power and might to set up a kingdom that would be visible and cover the whole world. However, when Jesus came in poverty and peace, He spoke of a spiritual kingdom that would be invisible and be within people's lives.

Luke 17vs20 Now when He was asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, He answered them and said, " The kingdom of God does not come with observation; 21 nor will they say, ` See here! ' or ` See there! ' For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you."

When Jesus was asked whether He was King of the Jews, He did not deny it. However, He also said that His kingdom was not of this world (John 18vs36). Jesus said that the kingdom of God was not a kingdom that people were familiar with for it was a spiritual kingdom. Flesh and blood would never be able to inherit or enter the kingdom but people who were spiritual beings would be able to, based on God's conditions. Without becoming spiritually alive to God, people could never enter the kingdom.

This first coming of Jesus into this world was limited to the introduction of God's spiritual kingdom. However, the fullness of God's kingdom on earth, in not only spiritual but full physical rule as well, will not come until Jesus returns from heaven in all His glory to exercise God's physical rule over the earth. In the parable that Jesus spoke about the tenants and landlord, He spoke of people having temporary physical dominion over this world, but one day when Christ returns from heaven, God will take back that physical possession and dominion.

Jesus' life characterized life in God's spiritual kingdom. Even though He lived in the world, He demonstrated His spiritual dominion over it and His ability to influence it and change it. He demonstrated to people around Him, while living in a physical body, what it was like to live in God's spiritual kingdom through His words and

actions. When Jesus during His life on earth preached the good news about God's spiritual kingdom, the miracles, deliverance and changed lives, were evidence of God's kingdom touching this earth through His life.

Living in God's spiritual kingdom means that we must accept Him as Supreme Ruler and must obey His commands in the same way we would if we lived within a kingdom on earth and had to obey the earthly king or queen's commands or suffer the consequences. However there is one great difference between God's kingdom and earthly kingdoms because all believers in God's spiritual kingdom are His sons and daughters and live in a loving relationship with God as His family. God has determined how the people in His kingdom should live and He has given us His moral law through His prophets, Jesus and New Testament writers.

Through Jesus' life, death and resurrection, God provided a means for ordinary people to enter into a spiritual life where the kingdom of God could be established spiritually within us. The kingdom would come through the restoration of relationship with God and the coming of the Holy Spirit into our lives. The power of the kingdom would be demonstrated in the lives that would be transformed and the souls that would be restored to what God had initially intended them to be. Christians are told to go into the world to preach this good news of God's salvation, and as this message is proclaimed, it is done as if God were doing it Himself. Those who reject the good news message reject an offer from God and therefore reject God and His kingdom so determining their own spiritual fate.

Although believers continue to live in the world which is separated from God, under the spiritual rule of Satan and under the physical dominion of people who are generally separated from God, we no longer want to be controlled by the world's influences. Unfortunately many people seem unable to accept the important truth that the world is under the spiritual control of Satan and Christians are told to separate ourselves from its influence. Of course this does not mean that we can no longer live in the world for that is clearly impossible. However it does mean that we are meant to be very different in our thinking, emotions, words and actions from all other people who are not Christians. In this way Christians are in the world but not of it.

John17vs14 I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. 15 I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one. 16 They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. 17 Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth. 18 As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world.

Jesus said that those who love their life in this world will lose eternal life while those who hate it will keep it for eternity (John12vs25). When we love the ways of the world around us more than the spiritual life that God has for us and the life in His kingdom, it may show that we are unable to adequately recognize the evil spiritual rule that the world is under and its separation from God. It may mean that we are unable to see the need to separate ourselves from the world and its ways, and it could also mean that we are unable to truly see our own sinfulness and the great need to take on more of the character of Christ Jesus.

The true church represents God's kingdom upon this earth. The people of the world must see the kingdom of God when they look at and come into the church or meet up with individual Christians. Paul calls us ambassadors who are from God's heavenly kingdom who are living as God's representatives here on earth. We are citizens of another spiritual realm under God's spiritual rule.

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