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B0534 – August 28, 2005 – Major Bible Themes
Chapter 23 – Satan: His Personality and Power

I. THE MINISTRY OF HOLY ANGELS

A. They Sang at Creation

Job 38:7 When the morning stars sang together And all the sons of God shouted for joy? (cf v 4)

B. They Were Witnesses on Numerous Occasions

1. At Mt. Sinai
2. At Messiah's Birth
3. At Messiah's Temptation
4. In the Garden
5. At Messiah's Resurrection
6. At Messiah's Ascension
7. At Messiah's Second Coming
8. They Are Spectators of Things on the Earth

C. They Minister to the Heirs of Salvation

Hebrews 1:14 Are they not all ministering spirits, sent out to render service for the sake of those who will inherit salvation?

We are not privy to exactly how they minister to us but it is true that they do repeatedly minister to us when occasion calls for it. The holy angels are your servants; the fallen angels are your enemies. They want you to serve them.

D. They Dispense the Tribulation Judgments

Rev 7:2; 8:5; 9:14

E. They Learn of the Manifold Wisdom of God through the Church

Ephesians 3:10 so that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the church to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly *places*.

Throughout the ages good angels have tried to figure out the plan of God (1 Pt 1:12). The mystery church is now the medium through which God reveals His manifold wisdom to the rulers (*arche*) and the authorities (*exousia*) in the heavenlies. The fallen angels would likely see it as revelatory of God's power while the holy angels would see it as revelatory of God's wisdom.

In conclusion, angels are given a prominent role in Scripture. To understand the whole of God's revelation and His providential rule over creation and history it is necessary to have a proper doctrine of angels both holy and fallen.

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 to feel an excessive and unhealthy interest in them. They themselves are equally pleased by both errors....ⁱ

What Satan does not want is for his true nature and works to be exposed. Dr Barnhouse said,

“One of Satan's greatest stratagems has been the attempt to keep men in ignorance of the real nature of his being and the fraudulent dimensions of his pretensions.”ⁱⁱ

II. THE PERSONALITY OF SATAN

A. His Creation

1. The Fact of His Creation

Colossians 1:16 For by Him all things were created, *both* in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities--all things have been created through Him and for Him.

It must always be remembered that Satan is a creation and not on par with the power of God, the Creator.

2. The Time of His Creation

There are two basic views as to the time of the creation of angels and the fall of 1/3 of the angels: 1) Before creation week and between Gen 1:1-2 or 2) during creation week and between Gen 2-3. If the angels were created before creation week and fell between Gen 1:1-2 then there are several difficulties. 1) Two flood judgments; a *universal* flood between Gen 1:1 and 1:2 and a *local* flood in Gen 6-8. 2) Two Eden'sⁱⁱⁱ; a primal Eden before creation week and the Eden of creation week. 3) The introduction of sin and death before the end of creation week even though God looked at all that He created and said, "it was very good" (Gen 1:31). All three of these difficulties are extremely difficult to support exegetically.

The second view claims that angels were created during creation week and fell sometime between Gen 2-3. This view claims that angels were created on either day one or four. In favor of day one (which began in Gen 1:1) is the fact that Gen 1:2-2:4 is specifically interested in the earth. Thus, the angels are associated with heaven and were created in Gen 1:1. In favor of day four is the creation of the heavenly bodies which the angels are often associated with (Gen 1:14-19).

3. His Original Characteristics

Lucifer was originally created as the apex of God's creation. In him was the "seal of perfection". He was "full of wisdom and perfect in beauty". "The clear inference is that all divine creative power is represented in this being in the spheres of **wisdom** and **beauty**."^{iv} He was "the highest of all God's created beings."^v He belonged to the order of

cherubim (Ezek 28:14). He was placed on the holy mountain of God, apparently the high point in the land of Eden west of the garden of Eden. This was the most honored position a creature could hold.

B. His Fall

Lucifer was found perfect in all his ways from the day he was created until God peered into his heart and found iniquity within him. Lucifer's sin was a covert sin, a sin hidden in the heart (Ps 90:8). This sin is described in

Isaiah 14:13-14 "But you said in your heart, 'I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God, And I will sit on the mount of assembly In the recesses of the north. ¹⁴ I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.'

Unger said, "Sin itself began in heaven with "Lucifer, son of the morning," the highest and most exalted of heaven's created beings, who became Satan when he led a celestial revolt that spread to myriads of the angelic beings (Isa. 14:12-20)."^{vi} The actual sin of Lucifer was "rebellion and pride". This sin is encapsulated by the five "I will" statements of Isa 14:13-14

1. I will ascend to heaven
2. I will raise my throne above the stars of God
3. I will sit on the mount of assembly in the recesses of the north
4. I will ascend above the heights of the clouds
5. I will make myself like the Most High

From these five statements several things can be inferred. 1) Lucifer was not in the 3rd heaven but was on the holy mountain of God west of the garden in Eden. 2) Lucifer was given a throne. 3) Lucifer wanted to transgress his creature hood and become the Creator and rule over all the heavens and earth. As a result, the inner being of Lucifer was filled with violence! God called this "sin". The sin of pride is outlined in Ezek 28:17-19. His heart was lifted up because of his beauty. He corrupted his wisdom because of his splendor. This was the formal introduction of sin into a previously sinless universe. Thus, sin did not begin in the human domain with Adam and Eve but in the angelic domain. Sin *entered* into the human domain as per Rom 5:12.

Romans 5:12 Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned--

For something to enter “into the world” it must already be in existence! Thus, sin was already in existence in the angelic domain. However, no matter the origin or location of sin it always results in spiritual death; the separation of the sinner from God. However, as a result of the death of Christ things on earth and in heaven have been reconciled to God (Col 1:20). The application of Christ’s death will be a New Heavens and New Earth (Rev 21-22). “This revelation is made under the king of Tyre because of the very close connection between human government of the fallen world system and Satan and the power of darkness as the superhuman agencies, who are the real actors behind the scenes (cf. Dan 10:13, where “the prince of the kingdom of Persia” is really an evil spirit ruler).”^{vii}

All this to say that Lucifer is a creation of God. He was created sinless but able to sin. He sinned internally while in heaven and then came down to the garden in Eden and tempted Eve who gave also to her husband who was with her and he ate, casting the whole human race under the power and penalty of sin. So, Satan is a real and responsible creature.

C. Serpent

In Gen 3:1-15 Satan gained the title of “Serpent” because it was through the serpent that he beguiled Eve. The serpent’s ability to speak, his craftiness, his deceitfulness, his half-truths, and blatant lies all demonstrate that Satan is a real person. On account of this vile act the serpent as well as Satan are judged (Gen 3:14-15).

D. Satan’s Access

First, even though Satan fell from his holy estate he still maintains access to God in the 3rd heaven where he can accuse the brethren in the heavenly courtroom of God as well as receive permission to carry out temptations and malicious acts (Job 1:6-12; 2:1-13). It’s very important to realize that Satan does not do anything independently of God. His acts always fall under the permissive will of God yet he is more powerful than you can imagine. He will retain access to God until the middle of the Tribulation when he will be kicked out of heaven once for all (Rev 12:9-10).

Second, Satan has access to men. He is one of the “wicked cosmic powers” referred to in Eph 6:10-12 that believer’s need to stand firm against and resist. 1 Pt 5:8 says that the “devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.” His tactics involve three basic techniques

1. Counterfeit
2. Confusion
3. False Doctrine

How should a believer handle Satanic attacks?

1. put on the full armor of God
2. take up the armor that is not worn (shield and sword)
3. stand firm and resist. Christ already won the victory and took the high ground. Believers are called only to hold the ground Christ has already conquered (Col 2:15-16). Upon His taking of the high ground He dispensed every spiritual blessing and spiritual gifts to believers (Eph 4:7-11). Satan uses two methods of attack in the book of Ephesians. First, Satan wants to render us ineffective by thinking we need more spiritual blessings (Eph 1:3). We don't need more spiritual blessings; we need to simply believe that we already have them all. Second, Satan wants to keep believers ignorant of our spiritual gifts (Eph 4:7-16). If he can keep you from knowing what your spiritual gift(s) are then he can keep you from ministering to others which hinders the growth of the body of Christ. Satan is like a virus that covertly slips in to harm the body of Christ.
4. put on armor by way of prayer and petition at all times
5. be alert to this reality

What about temptation? How can you overcome temptation? First, pray that you will not be led into temptation. As Fred says, I can handle anything but temptation. So, pray that you will not be led into temptation. Second, when you are tempted fight it off with Scripture. This is the way Jesus responded to His temptations in the wilderness (Matt 4:1ff; Luke 4:1ff).

Satan's temptations of Christ indicate he is a person. From a comparison of these accounts (Matt 4 and Luke 4) I think that the temptations went on for the entire forty day period and the three we read are representative of all the temptations during that forty day period, probably near the end of the forty days. In all three temptations Jesus was full of the Spirit and responded with Scripture. This gave Him success over the temptations of Satan.

III. THE POWER OF SATAN

Even though Satan is fallen and defeated and judged at the cross this does not mean that he has lost his power. How strong is Satan? His strength cannot be estimated by humans.

A. Power Over Death

Before the cross of Christ Satan had power over death.

Hebrews 2:14 Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil,

“Death is the devil’s realm for he is the author of sin.” Christ rendered death inoperative by defeating it. Those who trust in Christ also defeat death. Resurrection is an absolute law, all will receive it, for Christ died for all. Yet all will not enjoy resurrection life with God.

B. Power to Shake Our Faith

Satan asked for permission to “sift Peter as wheat in a sieve” (Luke 22:31; 1 Cor 5:5). This means Satan wanted to shake Peter’s faith, causing Peter’s faith to fail. But Christ prayed for Peter that his faith would not fail. The answer to overcoming those trials in our life when Satan tries to shake us up and bring doubt about God’s sovereignty is to remain faithful. And faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God (Rom 10:17). And yet how will they hear the word of God if there is no one to preach the word of God (Rom 10:14). Thus, the main purpose of this church’s existence. Someone must preach the word of God so people can hear the word of God so they can have faith in God and overcome Satan when he tries to shake us up and destroy our faith.

C. Power to Blind Men’s Minds

Satan has the power to blind men’s minds from the gospel.

2 Corinthians 4:4 the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

He must have intimate access to the unbeliever’s mind (*noema*) the location of the reasoning processes. The gospel must come into a person’s mind, they must understand the gospel if they are to believe in Christ. Satan has the power to blind the mind so that it does not understand the gospel.

Through the Antichrist, whom He will personally indwell during the second half of the Tribulation^{viii}, his power will make the earth tremble, will shake kingdoms, will make the earth a wilderness, will destroy the cities of the earth, and he will take prisoners and not release them (Isa 14:12-17).

D. Power Through Delegation

Because Satan is not omniscient, omnipotent, and omnipresent, he has demons who travel about and keep him informed about what is going on all over the world. Through this he has the power of a vast amount of knowledge. These demons who travel about the world are capable of indwelling and controlling animals as well as men (Mark 5:2-5, 11-13). It seems that demons desire to indwell a physical body because only through a physical body can they interact with the physical world and can alter the vocal chords of human beings.

E. Power Through Influence and Possession

Demons can influence and possess unbelievers. Demon influence is a weaker form of control but can cause significant measures of control. However, the real desire of demons is to possess (i.e. indwell) the physical bodies of men and control their speech and actions. "Like Satan, they are totally evil and malicious and affect those they control in this way."^{ix}

Demons can and do influence Christians.

1 Timothy 4:1 But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons, ² by means of the hypocrisy of liars seared in their own conscience as with a branding iron, ³ *men* who forbid marriage *and* advocate abstaining from foods which God has created to be gratefully shared in by those who believe and know the truth.

No one is exempt from demon influence. However, the Christian is exempt from demon possession. One of the reasons a Christian cannot be indwelt by a demon is because he is indwelt by the Holy Spirit. The arguments that a Christian can be indwelt by a demon are all based on experience (cf. Unger, *Biblical Demonology*). But what about OT believers who were not permanently indwelt by the Spirit? Could they be demon possessed? If you read the OT you will find that no OT saint is ever said to be indwelt by a demon. Most people wonder about King Saul. However, Saul had a demon come *upon* him and *to* him

but never *in* him (three different Hebrew prepositions). Likewise, in the NT you never find a demon coming *into* or *out of* a Christian (*eis erchomai/ek erchomai*). Apparently, the Christian is a temple of the Holy Spirit, that is, the whole Christian is a *naos*, a word that refers to the holy of holies in the *hierus* (temple and outer courts). If any unsanctified person went into the *naos* they were immediately struck dead. The entire Christian is a *naos* a holy of holies where the Spirit has taken up residence (1 Cor 3:16; 6:19). No demon can therefore enter him.^x

1 Corinthians 3:16 Do you not know that you are a temple of God and *that* the Spirit of God dwells in you?

IV. Victory Through Spirit's Power

Satan is not a person Christians should toy with. His power is more than you can imagine. Thank God that there is victory for the Christian through the power of the Spirit (1 John 4:4).

1 John 4:4 You are from God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world.

ⁱ C.S. Lewis, *The Screwtape Letters* (New York: MacMillan, 1982), 3.

ⁱⁱ Barnhouse, Donald Grey, *The Invisible War* (Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 1965), 156, quoted by R. B. Thieme *Satan and Demonism*, 5.

ⁱⁱⁱ Originally, God created the land of Eden, a region much larger than the garden that was planted "in Eden" (Ezek 28:13). On the western portion of this land was the high point known as the holy mountain of God (Ezek 28:14). God set Lucifer on this mountain. There he walked among the stones of fire and was blameless in all his ways (Ezek 28:15). To the east a garden was planted in the land known as Eden (Gen 2:8). A river flowed downhill from the holy mountain of God in western Eden to water the garden (Gen 2:10). This river then split into four rivers (Gen 2:10-14). The man was originally created outside of this land (Gen 3:23) and then transferred to the garden of Eden to cultivate and keep it (Gen 2:15). After the Fall the Lord God transferred the man back to the place he was originally created to cultivate that ground (Gen 3:23). The cherubim were placed at the east of the garden of Eden to guard the way to the tree of life (Gen 3:24). Cain settled in the land of Nod, east of the land of Eden (4:16).

^{iv} Merrill F. Unger, *Unger's Commentary on the Old Testament* (Chattanooga, TN: AMG, 2002), 1552.

^v Merrill F. Unger, *Unger's Commentary on the Old Testament* (Chattanooga, TN: AMG, 2002), 1553.

^{vi} Merrill F. Unger, *Biblical Demonology*, p. 15.

^{vii} Merrill F. Unger, *Unger's Commentary on the Old Testament* (Chattanooga, TN: AMG, 2002), 1553.

^{viii} It seems that the Antichrist will be mortally killed at the middle of the Tribulation (cf Rev 13). His human spirit will depart and Satan will enter his body and animate him for the second half of the Tribulation. This will appear to be a resurrection but it will not be because, even though it will be the same body it will be a different spirit, not a human spirit but a demonic spirit. This insight was gained from Dr. Tom McCall "School of Tyrannus".

^{ix} Chafer and Walvoord, *Major Bible Themes* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1974), 159.

^x See Robert Dean, Jr., *Demon Possession and the Christian* (<http://deanbible.org/Media/Doctrines/A-G/Demon%20Possession.pdf>)

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