

Satan (Part 1)

An Unseen Influence

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We're going to be dealing with a subject today that we are very familiar with, and on the other hand, frequently, woefully ignorant of. The original motivation for this sermon came from an article by Mr. Herbert Armstrong, which appeared in the August 28, 1978 issue of *The Good News Magazine*. It was entitled "What You May Not Know."

It covers some principles that we need from time to time to review, or in some cases, cover for the very first time. The article was about Satan and his deceptions. Humanly, we have a tendency to go to extremes about him. Either we blame him for everything (Flip Wilson and "The devil made me do it"), thus absolving ourselves, or the other extreme is to ignore him, and thus become easy prey for him.

It does seem the more carnally educated a person becomes, the less attention one gives to Satan. It also seems the less educated, the more superstitious, and the more Satan is blamed for everything.

The answer is somewhere in between, with Satan assuredly being the unseen influence responsible for a major portion of man's troubles, not because he made us do things, but because we are ignorant of or careless in regard to him and we thus do his bidding.

Of major concern to us is that baptism and the receiving of God's Holy Spirit do not exclude us from Satan's influence. Indeed it may intensify it (and probably does so) because he then pays a great deal more attention to us. I want us to understand, as we lay the foundation here, that when I say Satan, I am usually also including his vast army of demons as well.

One of Satan's masterful strokes of deception has been to succeed in getting most of the world educated to believe that he doesn't even exist—that he is merely used in the Bible as a symbol or a figurative emblem to explain the presence of evil. But the Bible, on the other hand, shows him not only to exist, but also to be the chief of a huge army bent on destroying God's plan.

So in this first sermon in this series, we're going to lay a foundation from the scriptures so that we will understand more of what we are dealing with in our pilgrimage toward the Kingdom of God.

Let's begin by going to Revelation 12.

Revelation 12:3-4 And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great, fiery red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems on his heads. His tail drew a third of the stars [notice stars] of heaven and threw them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was ready to give birth, to devour her Child as soon as it was born.

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

In verse 4, the word "stars" is used—a symbol of angels—and we find that the angels were cast out with him and the devil and his angels were cast to the earth. We have insight here of a major battle that took place in heaven and that Satan and his angels lost it, and they were cast to the earth. Unfortunately, that's where we live.

Revelation 12:12-13 "Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and you who dwell in them! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea! For the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has a short time." Now when the dragon saw that he had been cast to the earth, he persecuted the woman who gave birth to the male Child.

Revelation 1:20 "The mystery of the seven stars which you saw in My right hand, and the seven golden lampstands: The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands which you saw are the seven churches."

That very clearly identifies the symbolism of an angel and a star. The star is a symbol for an angel.

Revelation 9:1-2 Then the fifth angel sounded: and I saw a star fallen from heaven to the earth. To him was given the key to the bottomless pit. And he opened the bottomless pit, and smoke arose out of the pit like the smoke of a great furnace. So the sun and the air were darkened because of the smoke of the pit.

We have there a star falling from heaven and that star identified, generally in symbolism in chapter 1, as being an angel. That angel then opens the bottomless pit.

II Peter 2:4 For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment.

Here we continue on our explanation of what has occurred on this earth long before us. Another step is clarified in regard to the positions that the angels (or demons, if we want to call them that) are holding at this time.

"Hell" here in the English versions comes from the Greek *tataroo* and it means "a place of restraint." God did not spare the angels, but He cast them down to a place of restraint. We might call it a prison.

It's interesting that in Greek mythology, Tartarus was the lowest hell. It is described as being so far below Hades that it was as far below Hades as heaven is high above the earth. So, at least in Greek mythology, we can understand that these angels were cast so far down—you might say they would be out of sight. They would be in a place of restraint from which you would think they would never be able to crawl out. Again in mythology, Tartarus was the place where the Titans (who rebelled against Zeus) were restrained.

What God is trying to get across here is that the angels have been cast down—cast down from heaven, down to the earth, as Revelation 12 very clearly shows. We find that the earth is a place of restraint for them—that it is a prison. To add to that imagery, you see the words in the New King James "chains of darkness." This just emphasizes or amplifies the thought that Peter is getting across to us. The demons are in a place of restraint.

There is some disagreement among the scholars as to whether Peter used the word that is translated here "chains" or "silo." Almost every one of us understands what a silo is. It is a long, cylindrical

object in which grain is stored. To the Greek, a silo was an underground pit—something dug in to the ground in which grain (after the harvest season) was stored. Whether it's a chain or it's a silo it doesn't matter. God is trying to get across to us that the demons have been restrained.

The idea is that they are being restrained because they are facing judgment. Unfortunately for you and me (maybe I shouldn't use the word unfortunately), they are restrained in the place where we live! The earth is the silo. The earth is the storage bin. We are sharing this place with them. And, as they would look on it, we are the intruders into their space. Isn't that interesting? We are the invaders.

Let's go to the book of Jude. Parts of the book of Jude parallel II Peter very closely.

Jude 6 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.

This clarifies something that we only saw a part of in Revelation 12 and II Peter 2. Another piece of the picture is added and we find that the angels did not keep their proper domain. That can also be translated, "*They did not keep their positions of authorities.*" It shows that God assigned them a stipulated responsibility, a set place, but they left it.

Now the pieces are beginning to fall together, and that is, the set place, the stipulated responsibilities were on the earth. They left it. They mounted up an attack against God in heaven. They were defeated; they were cast down and the place that they were originally given, the place of their domain, instead becomes a prison, a place of restraint.

Let's go back to Ezekiel. I think most of you are familiar enough to understand that Ezekiel 28 goes back and forth within its context between the king of Tyre and another personality that is going to be introduced in the sermon in just a bit named the covering cherub, or the anointed cherub.

Ezekiel 28:12-13 "Son of man, take up a lamentation for the king of Tyre, and say to him, 'Thus says the Lord God: "You were the seal of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone was your covering: the sardius, topaz, and diamond, beryl, onyx, and jasper, sapphire, turquoise, and emerald with gold. The workmanship of your timbrels and pipes was prepared for you on the day you were created."

We're dealing with a very unusual being of very great beauty, which was in the Garden of Eden. He had precious stones as part of his covering. I take that to mean they were part of the clothing that adorned him. He was a created being, not one who was born. In addition to that, he was full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. Obviously, God is not speaking of a human being. This personage was the sum total of all that God could create by fiat and put into a living being. In verse 14, He identifies him more clearly.

Ezekiel 28:14 "You were the anointed cherub who covers; I established you; you were on the holy mountain of God; you walked back and forth in the midst of fiery stones. You were perfect in your ways from the day you were created, till iniquity was found in you."

I am sure that you understand that God is talking here about Satan who was the leader of the attack that was mounted against God long before man was created.

Isaiah 14:12-15 "How you are fallen from heaven, O [Helel], son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground, you who weakened the nations! 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; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.' Yet you shall be brought down to Sheol, to the lowest depths of the pit."

Isn't it clear how all of this fits together now, especially with those verses that we saw in Peter and in Jude; how clear it becomes when putting this together with Revelation 12, that what occurred was that God assigned the angels to the earth, that they were under their commander, Helel, who was the sum total of all that God could create by fiat and cram into a created being; that he was perfect in his ways until iniquity was found in him. We see a picture of a being of awesome beauty, of awesome power, of tremendous intelligence, also though a creature of free moral agency.

Something happened to that great being and he began a campaign of deceit. He began to separate from God a number of the angels, undoubtedly using the reasoning that they should have more; that God should treat them better; that God was being unfair; that they didn't have the liberty, the freedom or the power that was due them, because he said, "I will be like the Most High."

There are some commentators who say that what the Hebrew says in reality is, "I will be God;" not just *like* God, but I will *be* God. You can see what he wanted. He wanted to have complete power, authority, and control. He did not want to be under another. He did not want to be submissive. He did not want another being pulling his strings or controlling him.

He wanted to sit, as it were, on the mount of the congregation. So he said, "I will make war. I will ascend into heaven." So they left their first estate. They left the realm of their authority and they mounted up a war and attacked God, but were defeated and they were cast down. Their first domain became a place of restraint, a silo, a pit. They were now chained there, giving an indication that as a result of their rebellion, they no longer had the liberty that they had previously, but were now held in restraint. A great deal of their free moral agency was taken away from them.

Let's go to Luke 10, where Jesus is speaking to the seventy He had sent out. Now they returned with a great deal of joy saying to Him:

Luke 10:17-18 "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name." And He said to them, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven."

Like a great lightning bolt streaking out of the sky, this brilliant angel, shining with all of his glory (glory that had been given to him by God) was cast to the earth. Where did he fall? He fell right where we are and now we have to deal with him.

What are we up against? I hope that when I get done with this next section in this sermon in laying the foundation, that you will not be depressed or frightened. But I think that it's necessary for us to deal with the reality of one aspect of the situation. I don't think that God wants us to hide from these things. Once you begin to see what is arrayed against us, you are going to know that it is by grace that we are saved. If we had to fight Satan and his demons without God being on our side, we would lose in the blink of an eye. It would be that one-sided.

Let's go to the book of Daniel. After watching the awesome vision that Daniel had been given of the four beasts, I am sure that Daniel was pretty much traumatized. So God gave him a peek into something, I am sure in order to encourage him, to bolster him, to help him to understand what was going for Daniel, and (you might say) Daniel's side.

Daniel 7:9-10 "I watched till thrones were put in place, and the Ancient of Days was seated; His garment was white as snow, and the hair of His head was like pure wool. His throne was a fiery flame, its wheels a burning fire [Daniel had a vision right into the very throne room of the universe, where God Himself was seated and ruling everything that He has created.]; a fiery stream issued and came forth from before Him. A thousand thousands ministered to Him; ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him. The court was seated, and the books were opened."

I went to this because I want us to have some sort of an idea of the number of demons that there might be. You will recall that in Revelation 12, the dragon dragged with him one-third of the stars of heaven, that is, he got aligned with him, won the loyalty of, one-third of the angels.

Whether these were one-third that were scattered between earth and heaven, or whether this was the one-third that maybe he had been assigned by God to help him to govern, to develop, to use the earth in the way that God intended, I do not know. I only know the indication is from Revelation 12 that one-third of the angels went with him.

We have a picture here in Daniel 7 of these beings who surround the throne of God. From this we can extrapolate and maybe get some figures that will help us to deal with the number of angels or demons that there might be.

There are two ways that we can go about this: number one is that here in verse 10 where it says, "A thousand thousands ministered to him and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him. The court was seated and the book were opened." I think we need to understand that I don't think God intended these be exact figures. But they are figures that help us to understand that there was one group that was closely associated with the throne of God and a figure is given by Daniel (under the inspiration of God) of a thousand thousands.

That means one thousand times one thousand at least. If we say one thousand times thousands (plural), then maybe it is one thousand times two thousand or one thousand times three thousand. But, let's keep it at a conservative figure—one thousand times one thousand. That is one million that are associated very closely right at the throne of God.

That's not too hard to understand. We have cities on earth where there are millions of people in them. The population of Los Angeles is about six million people; the metropolitan area is about twelve million people. That's a lot of people. Why can't God have that many beings around Him carrying out His bidding all over this universe?

There is another group associated there: "A thousand thousands ministered to Him; ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him." There is a question here. What are we looking at? Why did He separate and stake one group from the other? There are two ways I think we can go with this.

Number one is the second group is also spirit beings, angelic beings. If that is so and just to multiply this out, you will find that ten thousand times ten thousand is one hundred million. That's a sizable figure, is it not? But again, let's ask ourselves, is this too much? There are roughly two hundred and sixty million people in the United States. There are about two hundred and eighty million people in Russia; one hundred twenty million people in Japan; over five billion on earth. What should be so amazing about God having one hundred million spirit beings around Him? It doesn't cause me any trouble.

The second possibility is that what we are looking at in verse 10 actually prefigures the Great White Throne Judgment. Notice how similar the wording is: "Ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him. The court was seated, and the books were opened." Maybe that's a possibility and if that is correct then what we have here is two groups—one consisting roughly of about one million spirit beings who are ministering spirits; the other group being a prefiguring of the Great White Throne Judgment that is coming. These people are standing because the books are open and judgment is about to begin on them.

The third possibility is that they are all spirit beings. This leaves us at least to do a little bit of calculating. If the one in which only the one million that are around God's throne is a true figure, if Satan was able to get one-third of them away, they could not have been pictured here. Therefore Satan has somewhere around (again these are just guesses) three hundred and thirty-three thousand demons. How big is the church? How many demons are there for each one of us?

If we take the other figure in which the one hundred million are also angelic beings, one-third of that figure (because we would have to realize then that God must have created somewhere in the neighborhood of one hundred fifty million spirit beings in the beginning) then Satan has at his beck and call fifty million demons.

I think that we can say, regardless of what is correct, we know this: they are invisible; they know of and understand the use of God's laws better than we do; they have been around much, much longer on this earth than we have; they are formidable foes and they are not to be disregarded.

Please remember I said not to get frightened by this. We don't have to be looking for demons behind every bush.

Let's go to Daniel 10 where we're going to read the first thirteen verses so that we get the flavor of the context. We won't be going through it in a great deal of detail, but in the first verse, he gives the time this message came to him.

Daniel 10:2-3 In those days, I Daniel, was mourning three full weeks. I ate no pleasant food, no meat or wine came into my mouth, nor did I anoint myself at all, till three whole weeks were fulfilled.

Then after three full weeks were fulfilled:

Daniel 10:5-6 I lifted my eyes and looked and behold, a certain man clothed in linen, whose waist was girded with gold of Uphaz! His body was like beryl, his face like the appearance of lightning, his eyes like torches of fire, his arms and feet like burnished bronze in color, and the sound of his words like the voice of a multitude.

Obviously, brethren, this was no man. He just looked like a man. The Bible does not name who this was, but he was undoubtedly an angelic creature. The best guess was it was the same angel that Daniel had dealt with before named Gabriel.

Daniel 10:7 And I, Daniel, alone saw the vision, for the men who were with me did not see the vision [but they were aware that something was there]; but a great terror fell upon them, so that they fled to hide themselves.

They didn't see it, but the hair on the back of their heads stood up and they got creepy and crawly all over, and they felt motivated to get out of there. They didn't know why, but something of awesome power was close to them and they were somehow—maybe the spirit of man within them was aware that something was around them, and they fled.

Daniel 10:8-13 Therefore I was left alone when I saw this great vision, and no strength remained in me; for my vigor was turned to frailty in me, and I retained no strength. Yet I heard the sound of his words; and while I heard the sound of his words I was in a deep sleep on my face, with my face to the ground. Suddenly, a hand touched me, which made me tremble on my knees and on the palms of my hands. [Can you imagine the humiliation? Here he was down on his hands and knees like a dog, shaking like a leaf.] And he said to me, "O Daniel, man greatly beloved, understand the words that I speak to you, and stand upright, for I have now been sent to you." While he was speaking this word to me, I stood trembling. Then he said to me, "Do not fear, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart to understand, and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard; and I have come because of your words. But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days; and behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left alone there with the kings of Persia."

I want you to get the picture. This awesome being of power that was so great that men (and I have to think that these were ordinarily strong, valiant men) were so frightened at something they could not see that they got up and ran, and yet something withstood this great being to his face and kept him from getting to Daniel for three full weeks.

Can you even begin to imagine the titanic struggle that went on between (we'll say) Gabriel and whomever this other being was? There must have been an awesome wrestling match like you and I have never been witness to.

I used the term wrestling match because I don't know what it was. But whatever it was that withheld Gabriel from getting there must have been awfully powerful. I want us also to see that this great struggle was going on without Daniel even being aware of it. Somehow or another a malignant demon tried to thwart Daniel's prayer from being answered. But it was answered and it was answered because, in verse 13, "Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left alone there with the kings of Persia."

It wasn't until two of them ganged up on this other—two great, mighty archangels to subdue this other, whatever it was. I think the logical conclusion would almost have to be that the king of Persia that is mentioned here was none other than Satan.

There is really a great deal of encouragement that comes from this section in Daniel 10. You can understand why the Apostle Paul and also the psalmist said that the angels are ministering spirits. They are ministering to the heirs of salvation.

Brethren, they are protecting us! They are standing between very possible annihilation and us! You don't know how many times an angel has intervened to save your life, to deflect you from the power of these malignant beings. I am sure that it's happened over and over again in cases, not just where dramatic interventions took place, but where an intervention took place of which we were not even aware.

Revelation 9:11 And they had as king over them the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in Hebrew is Abaddon, but in Greek he has the name Apollyon.

That's the great dragon of chapter 12, Satan. He has a number of names, but in each case, he is the king of all the demons, that is Helel who became Satan.

While we're back here, let's go to James 2. We'll begin to add a bit of encouragement to this. We saw in Daniel 7 that there is a possibility that there are a large number of demons. They're out to destroy the heirs of salvation. They want to retain the positions of authority and rule over this earth. They realize that we are the heirs of salvation and that the earth is something that has been promised to Abraham and his children. They know very well that we are going to replace them in terms of rulership over this earth. They are desperately trying to hold onto that. There are a lot of them and they use every means at their disposal to try to thwart the things that occur.

I think we have enough insight from James 2 to recognize, that even though we are the heirs of salvation, that God still allows the demons a great deal of liberty in dealing with us. But He has also appointed angels to go to bat for us; to be on our side; to minister to us, to serve us. Though we may not be aware of it, they are there and they are on the job.

James 2:19 You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble!

They *know* God's awesome power and *they*, unlike man, tremble! Maybe the better English word would be *shudder* before God! They recognize His power. They are terrified at the thought of God. They are thoroughly convicted that God is!

This verse goes a long way toward helping us to understand that saving faith is not the intellectual acceptance of a theological proposition, that is, that God is, but rather a belief that expresses itself outwardly in a changed life.

Do you understand what I said? The demons believe. They tremble in fear, but they will not obey God. We, too, can believe that God is. We give intellectual assent to a theological proposition. "Yes I believe that God is." But we may not even shudder and most assuredly, most of mankind will not submit.

The faith that saves is the faith that not only believes that God is, but changes one's life according to that belief. That's what saving faith is. If we believe that God is, that puts us at least at the same level that the demons are. I don't know whether that's very comforting—maybe not too comforting, but at any rate it gives us a start.

Matthew 12:25-26 But Jesus knew their thoughts, and said to them: "Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and every city or house divided against itself will not stand. If Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then will his kingdom stand?"

Brethren, I am here to tell you that the demons are a kingdom divided against themselves. What Jesus was addressing was a challenge that the demon that he had just cast out of this person had been cast out by Satan. Jesus' argument was, "No, Satan would never cast out Satan." That would be stupid for Satan to cast out Satan. But He is not saying that under every condition that Satan or other demons will not cast out other demons. And indeed that does take place.

They are very capable of doing signs and lying wonders. They can make it look as though somebody has been healed, when God has not done the healing at all, but simply by the removal of one demon by a demon of greater power.

I go through this because I want you to understand that one of the things that saves us (if I can put it that way) is that the demons are divided against themselves. Because they are a kingdom divided against themselves they cannot stand—if I can put it in another way, they cannot get their act together because their character is such that they are always in competition with each other.

We can understand this when we recognize that the governments and most of humanity has been subject to and deceived by demons. Carnal nature, human nature, is a reflection of the nature of Satan and his demons.

What fruit does that produce among men? Can men get along? They can't get along. The other side of the coin is that the beings who inspire (or guide and direct or motivate) men not to get along with one another can't get along with themselves either. The only thing that holds them in line is there is at the head of this organization a demon of such awesome power that he is able to whip them into line from time to time so that they will carry out his bidding. He does it by sheer force. It's not done by love of him.

They are a kingdom divided against themselves. They will fall and that, brethren, is something that is an advantage to us. They are rebellious and therefore they are disorganized. They can't really get their act together. Far more important is they know God exists and they tremble before Him. They are therefore restrained.

All of these factors are beginning to line up here: number one is that there are far more good angels than there are demons, at least 2 to 1. These angels, in one sense, don't have to look over very many people because the church of God has never been very big. They are ministering spirits ministering to the heirs of salvation.

Brethren, we have on our side a tremendous numerical advantage. Remember what Elisha said to his helper? He said, "God, show him that there are more on our side than on their side." (II Kings 6:16-

17) Remember that? That's the way it is. We've got more going for us by far because there's not only this tremendous number of angels, there is God on our side!

Maybe these demons aren't really all that much afraid of the other good angels, but they are terrified of God. They know that he has ultimate power. So they are restrained considerably, as we will begin to see.

Job 1:6-12 Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came among them. And the Lord said to Satan, "From where do you come?" So Satan answered the Lord and said, "From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking back and forth on it." Then the Lord said to Satan, "Have you considered My servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, one who fears God and shuns evil?" So Satan answered the Lord and said, "Does Job fear God for nothing? Have You not made a hedge around him, around his household, and around all that he has on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land. But now, stretch out Your hand and touch all that he has, and he will surely curse You to Your face!" And the Lord said to Satan, "Behold, all that he has is in your power; only do not lay a hand on his person." So Satan went out from the presence of the Lord.

Let's analyze this a bit. First of all, let's notice how evasive his very first answer to God was. "What have you been doing Satan? Where did you come from?" I think it would be good if we thought of him speaking in a flippant voice—taunting, like, "Why do you want to know," kind of thing, because what he says here suggests a vagabond. "Oh, I've just been going to and fro." It suggests a wondering, restless vagabond without roots who is (everywhere he goes) an outsider. And he is. He was cast down to earth, but obviously he still has access to God, at least in some way because he came before God with the other sons of God.

Yet, what did he feel like while he was there? He really didn't feel accepted. He felt like an outsider and indeed he was. Think about this, because it has something to do with the way he projects himself on others. There's a great deal to be learned about humanity here because human nature, carnal nature, comes from this being, primarily. He felt like an outsider, like somebody who (in a sense) wanted to be alone.

The next thing I want you to notice is how cynical his next answer was. "Have you considered My servant Job?" God here was in a sense bragging. "Look at this man, how righteous he is." God undoubtedly had something in mind. He understood Satan's mind and he understood Job as well. He was actually creating a situation that Satan just fell right into, but God was about to give Job the test of His life.

We know what it says in I Corinthians 10:13 that God never gives anybody a greater test than He feels that they can endure. Therefore God had absolute confidence in Job that he could defeat Satan even though Job did not know Satan was the one that was doing this! After the second chapter, Satan is never mentioned. He never comes into the story again, but he is used at the beginning to set the stage.

Notice Satan's attitude is cynical. "Well, does Job fear God for nothing? Hey God, he's only obeying you because of what he can get from you." Cynicism, skepticism, doubt. Satan did not think that there could be anybody who was genuinely good. Satan thinks everybody is like he is—cynical.

This is just the opposite of a child-like attitude. Remember that Jesus said, "Unless you become converted and become as a little child you shall in no wise inherit the Kingdom of God"? Cynicism is the evidence of doubt, of unbelief. It's not a good attitude.

Satan believes that everybody is playing the angles in order to take advantage to get the best for oneself. Remember what Paul wrote to Titus, in Titus 1:15? "Unto the pure all things are pure. But unto the defiled and unbelieving nothing is pure."

Brethren, we need to think about this because faith in God's goodness is the very heart and core of the reason for love, for hope, and for joy. Cynicism is its opposite. It is a studied—a meditated upon—disbelief. When it is evident in a human being it is clear evidence that Satan has had a great impact on that mind.

Anybody who is cynical—that kind of a person is very destructive to good relationships, because people impacted by Satan who are cynics will read things into what other people say and do. It destroys the person who thinks this way.

Notice what Satan read into this episode with Job: that Job was obedient to God out of selfish motivations. That's what he read into it. Satan plays the angles. He is cunning and deceitful, like no human being we have ever met. He can use flattery like nobody we ever met can use flattery. He can be charming. But he's always using it to see what he can get for himself, because he always reads into the other person that they are just like he is! It's a terrible curse and it destroys relations.

What he is implying here to God is that Job's godliness was artificial. He was implying it had never been tested. He is saying, "God, you've made it too easy for him." He is saying, "God you bribe him by all of these good things."

The basic questions for the entire book are now set, and that is, is God so good that He can be loved for what He Himself is and not for His gifts and what He can do for us? That's the issue here.

Can a man have faith in God when there are no benefits? Can a man have faith in God when things aren't going well? Can a man have faith in God when things don't turn out the way we thought they should? Can a man have faith in God when God allows the rug to be pulled out from under the person? We are all going to be tested in this way—some in greater measure, some in lesser measure, but we are all going to be tested and I hope we all do as well as Job did.

God's faith in Job was justified. Job's loyalty held. He showed that he was not obedient to God just for what God could do for him. He truly loved God for what He is.

Satan may be the chief mischief-maker in the universe, but we have to understand that compared to God he is still very puny. God sets limits and Satan is able to do only what God permits him to do.

We see in verse 12, "*He is in your hand, only do not lay a hand on his person.*"

Job 2:6 And the Lord said to Satan, "Behold, he is in your hand, but spare his life."

We see here a principle set that the rest of us can take great comfort in that as with Job, God also deals with us. God has set limits on what Satan or the demons are able to do with us. God deals with us according to the measure of our faith, our love, the measure of His Spirit within us. We have to

deal with what He allows to occur by faith, understanding that we love God (He is generous and good), but we love Him for what He is and not because He has given us good things. That's an additional blessing.

We see then that we have the responsibility, and from time to time we are going to have to overcome the demons that God allows to put us into a test.

Ephesians 6:10-12 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.

He tells us in verse 10 to be strong. It actually means to clothe oneself with strength as with a garment. He is saying what we are to do is something that is part of a process. It is not something that we become quickly, anymore than we are clothed with clothing all at once. Rather, we put clothing on one piece at a time. Becoming strong in the Lord is part of a process that takes place in our experience in this relationship with God.

We are to be continually strengthened with Christ's strength—be clothed, be made strong in the Lord.

He tells us then in verse 11, "to put on." That is very interesting because it literally means in English "hide in" as though it is a place of safety. He is telling us that we are to hide in. It is very close to the English word "envelope." An envelope covers a letter.

So the armor of God, that is, being strong in the Lord, will envelope us. It means that every part of our body, from the soles of our feet to the top of our head, is to be covered with the armor of God, which He calls the *panoplia*. It doesn't appear in English, but it is translated "the whole armor of God." It is not just divine equipment, but the *whole divine equipment* that we are to be covered with.

If we were going to say this in modern English and we were the apostle Paul, today we would say, "Brethren, if you are going to do battle with Satan, with the principalities and powers, you better be armed to the teeth!" We have to do this because we have to understand that Satan is going to be coming at us from every direction. He has the powers, the abilities, to be able to do this. We have to be able to deflect all of the cunning art, the deceit, the stratagems that he is going to use and throw at us—all these fiery darts that the apostle Paul says.

He tells us in verse 12 that we are involved in a wrestling match and this is very interesting. It doesn't take a great deal to explain it, but a little bit of background will help us to understand. What he is saying is based on what happened in Greek wrestling matches, which is that very frequently the loser was blinded. He was not put to death, but his eyes were put out.

Now understand how that would incapacitate a person physically. Let's think of it in spiritual terms. A good understanding have all they that do His commands, right (Psalm 111:10)? In other words, a person who is doing the commands of God is going to be able to see spiritually. If we lose the wrestling match with Satan, the loss is going to be in the inability to see spiritual things. We begin to lose it. Isn't that a colorful description? What a metaphor! He is not saying we will die immediately. We simply begin to lose it.

In order to protect ourselves, we have to have on the whole armor of God. We are going against a formidable adversary.

Paul is not trying to frighten us and I am not trying to frighten us. But we have to fight this with understanding. People are not our real enemies! The principalities and powers will use people. He wants us to understand that the real enemies are these supernatural beings who are motivating these people to do their bidding and trying to get the heirs of salvation to be tripped up.

Now know this: Victory is assured because our David, Jesus Christ, has already defeated their Goliath, Satan. He did it and He lives in us! But we will never beat them unless we acknowledge that they are real and that we have confidence that God will defeat them if we give God the chance to do it by being obedient to Him.

What this passage is, is a ringing call to arms. Notice he says, "*Stand!*" You know what he said in the Greek? "Hold your position. Don't back up. Hold your position. Don't give in to his deceitful persuasions in a life of pride, envy, covetousness—those kinds of attitudes and feelings that will lead us to break God's commands."