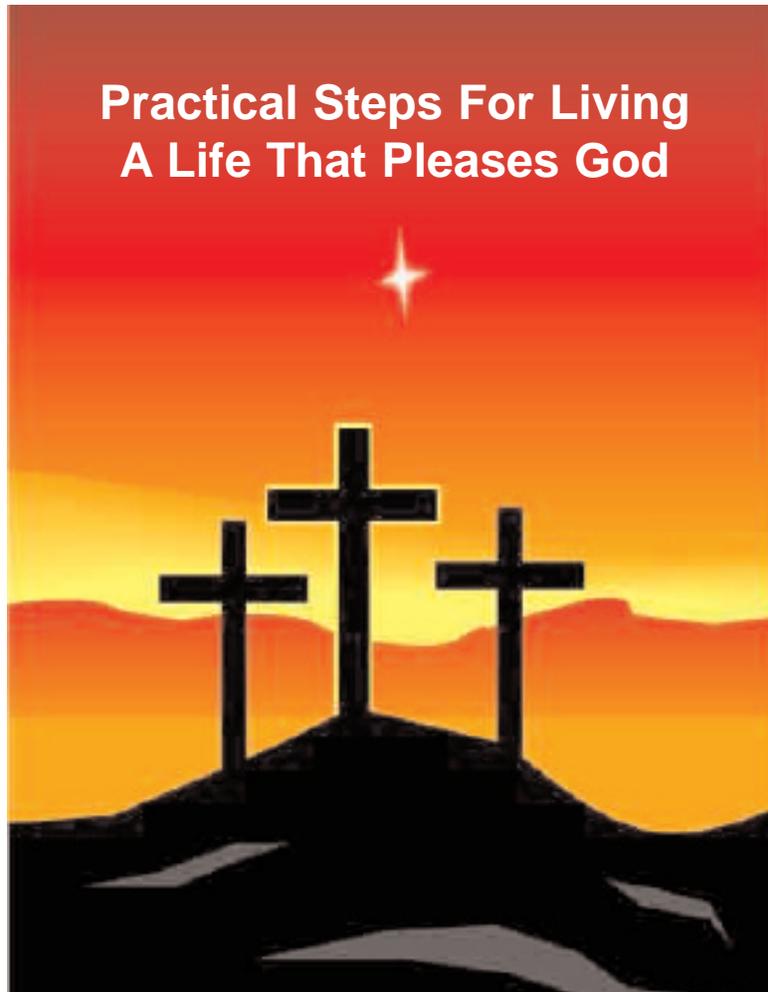


Lifebytes

14. Freedom In Jesus Video Series (Part 1) Certain Of What We Do Not See

Satan's Hierarchy



[For the video or audio of this series, go to our website or call 888-229-3041]



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Satan's Hierarchy

In this segment we're going to discuss the evil side of the invisible reality that surrounds mankind. The apostle Paul warns us of formidable spiritual adversaries: a demonic hierarchy of rulers, authorities, powers in this dark world system, and spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

First, let's review Satan's location and the whereabouts of his dominion. Many wrongly think Satan operates from a home base in hell. But that misperception deceives many Christians into dropping their spiritual guard!

Satan and his hoards AREN'T confined to hell. We can learn a lot about Satan's base of operations from Revelation, chapter 12. We're told that there was war in heaven. The archangel Michael led other angels from God's armies against Satan and his nefarious allies.

The enemy army was overcome, and cast down from heaven. Satan and his rebellious angels were HURLED TO THE EARTH. This is where he now leads the whole world astray through his fiendish demonic spirits.

The apostle John records this heavenly warning: "*Woe to the **earth and the sea**, because the devil has **gone down to you!** He is filled with fury, because he knows that his time is short*" (Revelation 12:12).

And what is Satan's particular mission on earth? To MAKE WAR against those who obey God's commandments and hold to the testimony of Jesus (Revelation 12:17). (See Newsletter 1997-09 "Church At War")

Satan is hunting down the followers of Jesus to DESTROY them. We'll come back to this topic again in a later segment.

The governments of this world are under Satan's domination. This reality is revealed during Satan's temptation of Jesus:

The devil led him up to a high place and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. And he said to him, 'I will give you all their authority and splendor, for IT HAS BEEN GIVEN TO ME, and I can give it to anyone I want to. So if you worship me, it will all be yours' (Luke 4:5-7).

Nowhere does Jesus deny Satan's assertion of ownership over the governments on earth. Nor does Jesus refute Satan's claim that he could give that governing authority to whomever he wanted. So keep this in mind as you consider the world you see around you.

Satan is alive on planet earth, and he's permitted BY GOD to influence the governments of this world through his demonic hierarchy.

The Apostle Paul takes pains to warn the followers of Jesus in Ephesus about the reality of this satanic hierarchy:

*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).

Our struggle is NOT against any other human being who is made in the image of God, and for whom Jesus died. Our Father desires that we graciously REPRESENT Him to other people, not fight AGAINST them!

Paul clearly defines our opponents in this spiritual struggle:

- Satan
- Rulers and Principalities
- Authorities
- Powers of This Dark World
- Spiritual Forces of Evil

The terms “**Rulers and Principalities**” imply authority over large areas of the earth.

Our struggle is also against “**Authorities**”. These are powerful spirit beings which are given their position by the rulers.

The “**Powers of This Dark World**” are spirit beings who exercise control over earthly domains.

Lastly, Paul informs us of “**Spiritual Forces of Evil**” in the heavenlies. These are demonic armies in the unseen realm carrying out satanic orders.

Keep in mind that the Bible tells us that one-third of the angelic hosts were thrown out of heaven with Satan down to earth. Only God knows the precise number, but they ARE here on earth all around us in the unseen reality.

You may not want to be reminded of this, but each of us who now follows Jesus was once a slave to demonic rule! Your fleshly desires cooperated with demonic rule to make you a slave to sin.

As Paul reminds the Ephesians and us as well,

*As for you, **you** were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the **ruler** of the kingdom of the air, the **spirit** who is **now at work** in those who are disobedient (Ephesians 2:1,2).*

NOT ONE of us was “good” to begin with! Paul’s admonition to the Ephesians reminds us that OUR lives

BEFORE we repented and responded to Jesus were as foul as theirs were.

WE deserved nothing but God’s wrath either.

***All of us** also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. **Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath.** But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved” (Ephesians 2:3-5).*

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Your fleshly desires cooperated with demonic rule to make you a slave to sin.

The Lesson of Daniel 10

We can gain some insight into demonic principalities by examining Daniel chapter 10. A Ruler or Spirit Prince over a territory is shown in action here opposing God’s messenger to Daniel.

- You may want to pause here and read Daniel Chapter 10 to refresh your memory!

Through a vision, Daniel had been given a message about a great war to come. The prophet was sickened by what he saw, and sought God earnestly for the meaning of that vision.

Three weeks after his initial prayer, Daniel was along the bank of the Tigris River. A supernatural messenger of God appeared to him and told him,

*Since the **first day** that you set your mind to gain understanding and to humble yourself before your God, your words*

were heard, and I have come **in response to them**. But the prince of the Persian kingdom resisted me twenty-one days. Then Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, because I was detained there with the king of Persia. Now I have come to explain to you what will happen to your people in the future, for the vision concerns a time yet to come” (Daniel 10:12-14).

Let’s consider what’s happening here.

- As Daniel sought God in earnest, humble prayer, he was heard in heaven IMMEDIATELY.
- Yet it took three weeks for the angel to break through the principality of Persia against someONE or something who had sufficient power to detain him.
- Only when the angelic prince, Michael, helped him was the angel able to complete his assignment and deliver God’s message to Daniel.

Do you recognize the angelic and demonic hierarchy in operation here? You certainly get a clearer picture of what’s going on in the invisible realm around you!

Principalities and powers try to hinder and thwart God’s angelic agents so that we’ll give up interceding in prayer. These evil beings intend for us to doubt that our Father even CARES about our situation.

Let this lesson encourage you: While the prayers of a righteous person ARE effective, there may be a time lag until the angelic messenger battles through the demonic opposition. Stay repentant, and don’t give up praying!

From the tenth chapter in Daniel we get deeper insight into the INTERNATIONAL extent of the spiritual warfare being waged. Listen to the words of God’s messenger:

Soon I will return to fight against the prince of Persia, and when I go, the prince of Greece will come; but first I will tell you what is written in the Book of Truth. No one supports me against them except Michael, your prince (Daniel 10:20,21)

God’s messenger wasn’t referring to earthly kings here, for no mere man could stand against a mighty angel.

A Critical Insight From Daniel 10: Prayer is Spiritual Warfare

We mentioned earlier about staying repentant and keeping on praying! Let’s delve into this matter a little deeper. From Daniel chapter 10 we can glean some discernment about the nature of your prayers, and the spiritual warfare that surrounds you receiving God’s answer.

First, the apostle Peter repeats from Psalm 34 the heart condition of someone whose prayer God is willing to answer:

*For the eyes of the Lord are **on the righteous** and his ears are attentive to their prayer, but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil* (1 Peter 3:12).

James continues the theme that connects a clean heart with answered prayer, “*The prayer of a **righteous** man is powerful and effective*” (James 5:16b).

The righteousness that brings about answered prayers can be seen from two

Prayer is Spiritual Warfare

perspectives. Most importantly, is the imputed righteousness of our sinless Lord Jesus. That righteousness becomes ours through our repentance and loving trust in His substitutionary death on our behalf.

Second, we LIVE in righteous responsiveness when we choose the path of obedient trust, walking according to God's Spirit and His Word.

When we DO miss the mark of holy living and choose to sin, our Lord has given us the means to restoring full fellowship with Him. Our lives must be PURIFIED from the pollution of our sin. Confession makes this possible.

*If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from **all** unrighteousness”(1 John 1:9).*

If you've confessed your sins and are walking in the righteousness of obedient trust in Jesus, then God hears your prayers the moment you call out to Him. But the angelic messenger who is delivering God's answer must fight through a host of demonic forces. And this may take some time.

This is why our Lord Jesus encourages us with the parable of the widow who continually goes to the judge to seek justice (Luke 18:1-6). Jesus is urging us to keep on praying until the answer is received from on high.

(See Newsletter: 1997-05 "Taking A City"; *Restoring The Early Church*, Chapter 11: The Home Fellowship, Promoting Righteousness)

When we are cleansed from "*all unrighteousness*" because we have con-

fessed our sins, and THEN we pray, we become effective participants in the spiritual battle that's raging around us in the unseen reality. In essence, through prayer you're engaging Satan's hierarchy. And, those unclean spirits will do everything they can to keep you from grateful testimony to our Father's glory.

Remember, your life purpose as a follower of Jesus is to bring glory and praise to our Father. And, that goal is where the spiritual battle line is drawn.

The hierarchy of Satan is ferocious in its schemes to make sure you stumble and fall by enticing you into sin. They stir up the coals of your old sin nature so that its desires overcome your resistance to temptation. The demonic goal is that your life reflects NOTHING of Jesus, and that you have no testimony to our Father's glory.

YOUR part in this battle is your determination to LIVE RIGHTEOUSLY and PRAY UNCEASINGLY.

Whenever we sin, we must confess so that we're restored in righteous fellowship before God. Then we know that He WILL hear and answer our prayers according to His will and purpose.

Righteous responsiveness and *unceasing prayer* are the means for us to receive our Father's answer. Remember these two components and make them your way of life. They'll ignite your joyful effectiveness in bringing glory to our Father!

Righteousness and unceasing prayer are the means for us to receive our Father's answer.

The demons recognize all too well the kind of life that pleases our Lord and brings about answered prayer. It's grievous, however, that so many BELIEVERS don't live to please our Father.

Through prayer you're engaging Satan's hierarchy. And, they'll do everything they can to keep you from grateful testimony to our Father's glory.

The demons love to agitate you so that you doubt that God will answer. Then you begin living with unconfessed sin as you make choices from the flesh rather than the spirit, and you give up praying.

Don't forget: If you fail to repent when you sin, you're CHOOSING unrighteousness. And the answer you're seeking in prayer doesn't arrive.

Not only does unrepentance keep you out of fellowship with our Father and His Son, Jesus. You've made yourself more vulnerable to Satan's hierarchy.

Light has no fellowship with darkness. The apostle John was writing to believers when he warned that you're either light or darkness — and unconfessed sin leaves you in darkness.

We ask you to seriously consider the unseen battle going on around you. Examine with care the condition of your heart as you seek our Father for answered prayer. Make sure there is no unconfessed sin of which you haven't repented.

If you have ongoing testimonies to our Father's faithfulness in response to your prayers, these are His affirmation that you're walking in the light.

Please take the time to earnestly consider this question:

- Can you name several recent answers to prayer that reflect our Father's wonderful intervention?

If you have ongoing testimonies to our Father's faithfulness in response to your prayers, these are His affirmation that you're walking in the light.

Principalities and Powers: *The Queen of Heaven, The Spirit of Jezebel, The Spirit of Anti-Christ, The Spirit of Lawlessness*

The Bible offers several other insights about spiritual principalities and powers. In the book of Jeremiah the prophet soundly chastises the Jewish people who choose to worship the demonic **Queen of Heaven** ALONGSIDE their worship of God (See Jeremiah chapters 7 & 44).

Venerating or praying to ANYONE alongside God is an abomination to Him — one that continues in segments of Christianity today. Our Lord calls Himself a JEALOUS God because He tolerates the worship or adoration of NO ONE or NOTHING besides Himself.

He's returning for a spotless bride, not one who is committing spiritual adultery with demonic lovers.

(See Newsletter: 2001-05 "Jesus versus the Queen of Heaven")

In 1 Kings chapter 19, the great and powerful prophet Elijah is so frightened by the power of **Queen Jezebel's** threats that he flees in terror.

This man of God was so disheartened that he asked God to take his life! The spirit of Jezebel TODAY terrorizes, especially men who yearn to be true to God.

Mike's Testimony

I remember an instance during our time at the retreat center. When we had the opportunity, we'd visit local congregations that used our center.

There was one in particular whose fellowship we really enjoyed, and we visited it when we could. One weekend fol-

lowing a men's retreat at our center, there was a time for sharing. So many men stood up and shared wonderful testimonies about our Father's faithfulness.

About two months later we visited that congregation again. NOT ONE MAN stood up with a testimony. I bowed my head and prayed, "Lord, what's going on here? Why is there no testimony from the men?" I heard the Holy Spirit respond, "Two women with the spirit of Jezebel have come here to inspire fear in the men. Look to your left and you'll see them."

As I looked, about five people away I saw these two women sitting together. "Lord, do I have the power to bind their influence here?" He answered, "Yes, you do." As I prayed in my spirit, binding their influence in the name and authority of Jesus, I turned toward the two women. They were grimacing at me and gnashing their teeth!

After the service I went to the elders of the congregation and told them what had happened. One elder told me that the women had begun attending about three weeks earlier. He then admitted that that was when the testimonies from the men ceased.

The Apostle John warns about a powerful spirit that stands up against Jesus:

*This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming and even now is **already in the world*** (1 John 4:3).

That demonic **anti-Christ spirit** traps many into believing that Jesus is only a great teacher, or that He's one of many created underling "gods". That demon's purpose is to deny the divinity of Jesus and His unique role as Lord of our lives.

Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses, Buddhists, Muslims, and many who call

themselves "Christian" have been seduced by this deceiving spirit.

Another demonic spirit that we'll discuss in a later segment bears mention: the **spirit of lawlessness**. The lawless spirit has deeply penetrated the Christian community in the US today. But that's no surprise. Paul warned us of this long ago:

He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God. For the secret power of lawlessness is already at work... (2 Thessalonians 2:4,7).

Many in mega-congregations and liberal denominations have succumbed to this powerful principality. They're taught that God's laws and commands no longer apply, and that grace covers over their lawlessness. Therefore, sin is never confronted.

But the Apostle John reiterates that, "*Everyone who sins breaks the law; and, sin IS lawlessness*" (1 John 3:4).

Recap:

We hope that what you've gathered so far in this segment is that Satan IS in operation here on earth. He has a hierarchy under him to carry out his evil goals.

For some reason known only to God, Satan has authority over the governments of the world. With the help of the demonic principalities and powers under him, Satan is doing everything he can to hinder or destroy ANYONE who keep God's commands and bears testimony to Jesus.

As we've shown, one demonic tactic is to interfere with God's angelic messengers in their service to followers of Jesus.

Because of the reality of this unseen war, we who've put our trust in Jesus need to recognize Satan's strategies against us. Then we can avoid his traps and resist him.

In the following segments we'll discuss this topic more fully. Please continue on with us!