

STAY SHARP: TRUE SPIRITUAL WARFARE

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INTRODUCTION



- ▶ As followers of Jesus, we know that we are engaged in a daily battle with powerful yet invisible opponents. At Stay Sharp 2025, we plan to remind ourselves of what we believe about how we fight our infernal enemies with the truth.
- ▶ We will learn about the powerful resources God has supplied to each one of us for the fight of our lives. "With God's Word, the Spirit's power, and fervent prayer in Christ's name, we are to combat the spiritual forces of evil" (Article 8, EFCA Statement of Faith).
 - What are the spiritual forces of evil arrayed against us?
 - What are "principalities and powers?"
 - Who is Satan, and what are his chief strategies to defeat us?
 - What are unique and contemporary ways Satan is trying to deceive us in this day?
- ▶ We will encourage each other with sound Christian teaching "... in order that Satan might not outwit us. For we are not unaware of his schemes" (2 Cor. 2:11).

- ▶ Although VE-Day was not until May 8, 1945, in a very real sense the war in Europe was over on June 6, 1944 — D-Day. In “Operation Overlord” some 1,000 ships — the largest armada ever to set sail — carried some 200,000 soldiers across the English Channel to France where they stormed the coasts of Normandy. It was only the beginning of a military buildup that Germany could never have stopped.
- ▶ Oscar Cullman, *Christ and Time* (1950), used this *historical reality* to illustrate the *redemptive reality* of Jesus Christ’s death, burial, resurrection, and session, while we await his return. Cullman argued that the cross and resurrection are to D-Day what the end of history is to VE-Day.

Fred Zaspel, [D-Day and VE-Day](#) (September 13, 2013).

- ▶ There is something about all this that has close resemblance to Christian experience. God himself has invaded history. He came as one of us to our rescue and has fought the decisive battle of the war. In his death and resurrection Christ has “obtained eternal redemption for us” (Heb. 9:12). Final victory has been secured. He has made full and final satisfaction for our sins, and having successfully completed the work that saves he has triumphed over Satan. “Now is the ruler of this world cast out” (John 12:31), the works of the devil are destroyed (1John 3:8; cf. Heb. 2:14), and Christ has forever secured his elect people for eternal life (John 6:38-39).

- ▶ But then again it does not always seem that way. We are caught up in a real battle. Our adversary walks about like a hungry lion trying to eat us (1Pet. 5:8), and our constant struggles are struggles against him (Eph. 6:12). He takes people captive, and he is powerfully deceptive, masquerading even as an angel of light. Satan is alive and well. Like Hitler, knowing his time was all but up yet launching his last great hurrah at the cost of so many of his soldiers, Satan, knowing his time is short, is on a furious rampage against the people of Christ (Rev. 12) seeking to do what damage he can. And we, the people of Christ, safe though we are in Christ, feel it. And there are casualties. From the perspective of the trenches, the war is still on. Sin, temptation, suffering, injustice, sickness, death, loneliness, disappointment, failure. There are injuries and casualties of all kinds. “Satan hinders us,” and so does the world. And so does our own flesh.
- ▶ And in the trenches, if we are not careful, we can lose perspective. We must never lose sight of the fact that *we struggle in hope and in certainty of final victory*. Redemption has been accomplished. It may not yet have been fully applied. There may be many skirmishes still. But it is heartening indeed as we recall that D-Day is behind us. And we are assured by it that VE-Day is ahead. The redemption that Christ accomplished for us will yet be ours in full experience, with him.

- ▶ Each time we gather to observe the Lord's Supper we “proclaim Christ death — until he comes.” These are the two reference points of the Christian life, and this ordinance is given us to keep perspective — Christ has come, and he is coming again. Redemption has been secured, and it will be fully enjoyed. And in the meantime we are encouraged, as we gather, to “remember” him as we wait eagerly for him.
- ▶ It is this gospel-informed confidence that shores us up throughout the conflict. Our Redeemer has come, and he has won. And one day he will come again, and the redemption he accomplished for us all will then be brought to full realization. No more Satan. No more sin. No more suffering. No more curse. The church militant becomes the church triumphant.

- ▶ [According to Barna](#) (2016), 84% of Americans believe the “highest goal of life is to enjoy it as much as possible,” 86% believe that to be fulfilled requires you to “pursue the things you desire most,” while 91% affirm that “the best way to find yourself is by looking within yourself.”

- ▶ [Our Epidemic of Loneliness and Isolation](#): The U.S. Surgeon General's Advisory on the Healing Effects of Social Connection and Community (2023)

- ▶ [Parents Under Pressure](#): The U.S. Surgeon General's Advisory on the Mental Health and Well-Being of Parents (2024)

Casey McCall, [iPhones, Idolatry, and Evil Spirits](#) (January 13, 2025).

- ▶ And yet, despite mountains of evidence suggesting that widespread addiction to smartphones and other digital technologies may be wreaking havoc on human relationships, mental health, and attention spans—perhaps even altering the very structure of our brains—our reliance on these devices doesn't seem to be slowing down. In fact, with the proliferation of AI, we're likely heading toward even greater reliance on digital technologies.
- ▶ What's going on? Why are we so hooked? Why do we often admit that our phones are not good for us and yet continue our voluntary enslavement anyways? The question I'm really asking is: Is there something spiritual going on? In the constant pull toward our screens, could supernatural forces be involved?

Michael Horton, *Christless Christianity: The Alternative Gospel of the American Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008), 15: (emphasis mine)

- ▶ “What would things look like if Satan really took control of a city? Over half a century ago, Presbyterian minister Donald Grey Barnhouse offered his own scenario in his weekly sermon that was also broadcast nationwide on CBS radio. Barnhouse speculated that if Satan took over Philadelphia, all of the bars would be closed, pornography banished, and pristine streets would be filled with tidy pedestrians who smiled at each other. There would be no swearing. The children would say, “Yes, sir” and “No ma’am,” and the churches would be full every Sunday...*where Christ is not preached.*”

Rudolf Bultmann, *New Testament and Mythology & Other Basic Writings* (Fortress Press, 1984), 4:

- ▶ We cannot use electric lights and radios and, in the event of illness, avail ourselves of modern medical and clinical means and at the same time believe in the spirit and wonder world of the New Testament.

C.S. Lewis, *The Screwtape Letters*

- ▶ 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, and hail a materialist or magician with the same delight.

The Collected Letters of C.S. Lewis, Vol. III, Narnia, Cambridge and Joy, 1950-1963, edited by Walter Hooper, HarperSanFrancisco, 2007, p. 111.

In a 1951 letter to Dom Bede Griffiths, he relates that only by appreciating things in their proper order (i.e. subordinate to their Creator) can they be truly enjoyed. A keen insight into the nature of idolatry.

- ▶ it seems to me, the subordination of Nature is demanded if only in the interests of Nature herself. All the beauty of nature withers when we try to make it absolute. Put first things first and we get second things thrown in: put second things first & we lose both first and second things. We never get, say, even the sensual pleasure of food at its best when we are being greedy.

J.C. Ryle, “Evangelical Religion,” in *Knots Untied* (1877), provides insightful, enduring discernment regarding serious threats to the gospel. His fourth threat of five is fitting for this study (emphasis mine):

- ▶ You may spoil the gospel *by disproportion*. You have only to attach an exaggerated importance to the secondary things of Christianity, and a diminished importance to the first things, and the mischief is done. Once alter the proportion of the parts of truth, and truth soon becomes downright error! Do this, either directly or indirectly, and your religion ceases to be Evangelical.

T. Desmond Alexander, *From Eden to the New Jerusalem: An Introduction to Biblical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2008), 100:

- ▶ We catch but occasional glimpses of this shadowy opponent. This should not surprise us. As divine revelation, the Bible exists to give us a deeper understanding of God. It is not designed to promote knowledge of the enemy, beyond what is necessary for comprehending the world in which we live and our own experience of it. Consequently, many questions remain unanswered when we collate what the Bible says about the devil or Satan.

Graham A. Cole, *Against the Darkness: The Doctrine of Angels, Satan, and Demons* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2019), p. 241:

- ▶ In the creeds, articles of faith, catechisms, and confessions of the church, both past and present, angels, Satan, and demons feature sparingly compared to passages referring to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as well as to soteriological matters. This should not surprise, given the emphases in Scripture itself.

The Council of Braga, AD 563*

- ▶ Canon 7: If anyone believes that the devil was not at first a (good) angel created by God, and that his nature was not the work of God, but (if he) claims that he emanated from chaos and darkness and had no author of his being, but that he is himself the principle and substance of evil, as stated by Manes and Priscillian,** let him be anathema.
- ▶ *The doctrine was commonly held and well established. This teaching is not an isolated text but summarizes the teaching of the 4th and 5th centuries.
- ▶ **The Priscillianists taught a Gnostic doctrine of dualism, a belief in the existence of two kingdoms, one of Light and one of Darkness.

[Lausanne Covenant](#) (1974): 12. SPIRITUAL CONFLICT: We believe that we are engaged in constant spiritual warfare with the principalities and powers of evil, who are seeking to overthrow the Church and frustrate its task of world evangelization. We know our need to equip ourselves with God's armour and to fight this battle with the spiritual weapons of truth and prayer. For we detect the activity of our enemy, not only in false ideologies outside the Church, but also inside it in false gospels which twist Scripture and put people in the place of God. We need both watchfulness and discernment to safeguard the biblical gospel. We acknowledge that we ourselves are not immune to worldliness of thought and action, that is, to a surrender to secularism. For example, although careful studies of church growth, both numerical and spiritual, are right and valuable, we have sometimes neglected them. At other times, desirous to ensure a response to the gospel, we have compromised our message, manipulated our hearers through pressure techniques, and become unduly preoccupied with statistics or even dishonest in our use of them. All this is worldly. The Church must be in the world; the world must not be in the Church. (Ephesians 6:12; 2 Corinthians 4:3,4; Ephesians 6:11,13-18; 2 Corinthians 10:3-5; 1 John 2:18-26; 4:1-3; Galatians 1:6-9; 2 Corinthians 2:17; 4:2; John 17:15)

INTRODUCTORY QUESTIONS



Graham A. Cole, *Against the Darkness: The Doctrine of Angels, Satan, and Demons* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2019), pp 25-26 (40 questions to be considered”):

- ▶ Who are angels?
- ▶ What is their nature?
- ▶ Are there different kinds of angels?
- ▶ Does the category of “angel” cover every kind of spiritual beings?
- ▶ Where do angels fit in the scheme of God’s creation?
- ▶ What roles do angels perform?
- ▶ Are angels active in our world today?
- ▶ Are there guardian angels?
- ▶ Is it wrong to pray to angels?
- ▶ Do angels have wings?
- ▶ Should we expect to encounter them in today’s world?

- ▶ What is “angelism” and what danger does it pose?
- ▶ If some angels have never fallen, in what sense is it right to speak of a “fallen creation”?
- ▶ How did disorder in the angelic realm come about?
- ▶ What and what is Satan?
- ▶ How did Satan fall?
- ▶ What was Satan’s sin?
- ▶ What role does he play in disordering creation?
- ▶ Who and what are demons?
- ▶ What role do they play in disordering creation?
- ▶ Who and what are demons?
- ▶ What role do they play in disordering creation?
- ▶ Are there exorcisms today?

- ▶ Can the Christian believer be influenced by demons?
- ▶ Can the Christian believer be tempted by demons?
- ▶ Can the Christian believer be oppressed by demons?
- ▶ Can the Christian believer ever be demon-possessed?
- ▶ How do demons relate to Satan?
- ▶ Is Michael the archangel the restrainer of 2 Thessalonians 2:6-7?
- ▶ How does the Antichrist relate to Satan?
- ▶ How are Satan and demons related to the problem of evil?
- ▶ Is there a relation between some mental illness and the demonic?
- ▶ How are Satan and demons defeated?
- ▶ What is the future of the angelic order?
- ▶ How have angels, Satan, and demons been understood down through the ages?

- ▶ How are angels, Satan, and demons to be understood in relation to other religions?
- ▶ How important doctrinally are angels, Satan, and demons?
- ▶ How important existentially are angels, Satan, and demons to the life of the Christian?
- ▶ What place to angels, Satan, and demons play in an understanding of spiritual warfare?
- ▶ What is an apocalyptic imagination and why is it important?

THE WORLD, THE FLESH, AND THE DEVIL



1 John 2:15-17: Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world-- the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life-- is not from the Father but is from the world. And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.

Clinton E. Arnold, *3 Crucial Questions about Spiritual Warfare* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011), pp, 34-35 (cf. William F. Cook III and Chuck Lawless, *Spiritual Warfare in the Storyline of Scripture: A Biblical, Theological, and Practical Approach* (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2019), p. 208.)

- ▶ It is extraordinarily difficult, if not impossible, for us to make sharp distinctions among the three in trying to understand our own personal struggles and those of other people.”
- ▶ **The flesh** is “the inner propensity or inclination to do evil.” It is our penchant for turning from our Creator and placing ourselves on the throne.
- ▶ **The world** is “the unhealthy social environment in which we live . . . The prevailing worldview assumptions of the day that stand contrary to the biblical understanding of reality and biblical values.
- ▶ **The devil** is “an intelligent, powerful spirit-being that is thoroughly evil and is directly involved in perpetrating evil in the lives of individuals as well as on a much larger scale.” He is the opponent of God and his people, the one Francis Foulkes has called “the enemy of souls.”

SPIRITUAL WARFARE: BELIEFS AND STRATEGIES



- ▶ Some refer to the use of this term to the 1970s, when Michael Harper used the term as a title of his book on the Christian's struggle in daily life: *Spiritual Warfare* (in this work, he rejected “deliverance ministry” along with the notion that someone should specialize in such a ministry).
- ▶ An awareness and response to biblical worldview, the reality of the spiritual world, and spiritual warfare ebbs and flows. It was big in the 1980s with Frank Peretti and his novels, *This Present Darkness* (1986) and *Piercing the Darkness* (1989), which many read as truth from the Scriptures. Over 15 million copies of his books have been sold worldwide.

- ▶ Graham Cole, *Against the Darkness*, pp. 172-196, identifies seven different approaches to spiritual warfare, and then articulates his own approach.
- ▶ John R. Gilhooly, *40 Questions About Angels, Demons, and Spiritual Warfare* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic, 2018), “What is spiritual warfare?,” pp. 23-26, classifies them into two categories, “high-level” and “low-level” strategies.

- ▶ High-level strategies focus on locating and confronting “territorial spirits” who are conceived to be demonic agents that have control over large areas (cities or even nations. Methods for this strategy involve spiritual mapping and “identificational repentance.” (e.g., Strategic-Level Spiritual Warfare of C. Peter Wagner)
- ▶ There are others who envision a similar high-level strategy, but one that focuses on oppressive and unjust institutions. The reason their focus on institutional and systemic injustices is because they take language about demons and the Devil in the Bible metaphorically. (e.g., World-Systems model of Walter Wink)

- ▶ In contrast to these “high-level” strategies, “low-level” strategies focus on individual encounters with the demon-possessed, or with occult practices that give rise to demonic activity in a particular area. These strategies are likewise associated with members of the Strategic-Level movement as well as the myriad deliverance ministry movements.
- ▶ A contrasting low-level strategy is the model of spiritual warfare that focuses its attention on an individual’s struggle against the flesh, or with the development and spiritual maturity of local churches. The last model is the one best attested to by the injunctions and emphases of the New Testament.
- ▶ Two debates: (1) whether or not Satan and demons are real or just metaphorical; (2) whether certain spiritual warfare practices are justifiable biblically and whether spiritual warfare literature pays undue attention to the Devil rather than the war with the flesh.

ANGELS



Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 4th ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1946), pp. 146-147:

- ▶ **Cherubim.** They guard the entrance of paradise, Gen. 3:24, gaze upon the mercy seat, Ex. 25:18; Ps. 80:1; 99:1; Isa. 37:16; Heb. 9:5, and constitute the chariot on which god descends to the earth 2 Sam. 22:11; Ps. 18:10. In Ezek. 1 and Rev. 4 they are represented as living beings in various forms.
- ▶ **Seraphim.** A related class of angels are the Seraphim, mentioned only in Isa. 6:2, 6.
- ▶ **Principalities, powers, thrones, and dominions.** *archai* and *exousiai* (principalities and powers), Eph. 3:10; Col. 2:10, *thronoi* (thrones), Col. 1:16; *kureotetoi* (dominions), Eph. 1:21; Col. 1:16, and *dunameis* (powers), Eph. 1:21; 1 Pet. 3:22.
- ▶ **Gabriel.** Gabriel appears in Dan. 8:16; 9:21; Luke 1:90-20.
- ▶ **Michael.** Michael is mentioned in Dan. 10:13, 21; Jude 9; Rev. 12:7.
- ▶ **Archangel:** There are two references in Scripture: 1 Thessalonians 4:16 and Jude 9.

Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013), “The Role of Angels,” pp 419-420.

1. It is a comfort and an encouragement to us to realize that powerful and numerous unseen agents are available to help us in our need. The eye of faith will do for the believer what the vision of the angels did for Elisha’s servant (2 Kings 6:17).
2. The angels’ praise and service of God give us an example of how we are to conduct ourselves now and what our activity will be in the life beyond in God’s presence.
3. It sobers us to realize that even angels who were close to God succumbed to temptation and fell. This is a reminder to us: “Be careful that you don’t fall!” (1 Cor. 10:12).

4. Knowledge about evil angels serves to alert us to the danger and the subtlety of temptation that can be expected to come from satanic forces, and gives us insight into some of the devil's ways of working. We need to be on guard against two extremes. We should not take him too lightly lest we disregard the dangers. Nor, on the other hand, should we have too strong an interest in him.
5. We receive confidence from the realization that powerful though Satan and his accomplices are, there are definite limits on what they can do. We can, therefore, by the grace of God, resist him successfully. And we can know that his ultimate defeat is certain.

Kevin DeYoung, *Daily Doctrine: A One-Year Guide to Systematic Theology* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2024), Day 66, Angels, 93-94: There are 17 books in the Old Testament and 17 books in the New Testament that reference angels, with 273 total references. What are angels?

1. Angels are created beings accountable to their Creator. Some angels fell; we call them demons. Those that didn't, we call angels. The present reality of "good" angels and "bad" angels appears to be fixed in that we do not hear of further defections nor of the possibility of redemption.
2. The nature of an angel is spirit. Augustine made the point that "angel" is their office, spirit is their nature. Angels are personal spirits who sometimes appear in bodily form (cf. Heb. 13:1).
3. Angels are intelligent creatures. They speak and act, although they are not made in the image of God. In fact, angels will be judged by believers (1 Cor. 6:3). They are not superhuman as much as they are suprahuman (beyond human beings).

4. Angels have personal names. We know two of those names: Gabriel and Michael. The Apocrypha mentions five others: Raphael, Sariel, Uriel, Raguel, and Remiel (note: the suffix *el* is short of Elohim or God).
5. There are different kinds of angels. Michael is called an archangel in Jude 9. He fights against the devil in Revelation 12:7. Gabriel is the other named angel and is traditionally considered another archangel. Cherubim and seraphim are sometimes called “throne room angels” because they are associated with guarding God’s presence in the tabernacle and in the temple.
6. Angels are more glorious than human beings in some ways (Ps. 8:5, but their glory should not be exaggerated. Angels are wise and powerful, but they are neither omniscient nor omnipotent.

DeYoung, What do angels do? (cf. Graham A. Cole, *Against the Darkness: The Doctrine of Angels, Satan, and Demons* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2019), pp. 52-62. Cole lists 12 tasks of angels, while DeYoung's six overlap with Cole's 12):

1. Angels are guardians. They guard Eden, the ark, and God's people.
2. Angels are bridges between two worlds. Think of Jacob's ladder or Jesus' word about seeing the angels ascending and descending on the Son of Man.
3. Angels are intermediaries, like at the giving of the law (Gal. 3:19).
4. Angels are messengers. That's what the word means in Hebrew and in Greek. Angels bring messages to Joseph, to Mary, and to Paul. They interpret divine messages for Daniel.

5. Angels are patrol officers. They walk the earth (Zech 1) and serve as agents of divine justice (2 Sam. 24; Acts 12:2).
6. Angels are servants. They guide God's people (Acts 8:26) and care for God's people (1 Kings 19:5-6). They also ministered to Christ. Angels attended Jesus at every key moment of his life and ministry: they were there at his conception, his birth, his temptation in the wilderness, his trial in the garden, and at the empty tomb.

If one danger is to make angels (role players in the Bible) into the stars of the show, the other danger is that we ignore angels altogether, smiling at their part in the Christmas pageant each year, but other than that hardly thinking about them. This too would be a mistake.

Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 3rd. e.d., pp. 413-414

1. Angels continually praise and glorify God (Job 38:7; Pss. 103:20; 148:2; Rev. 5:11-12; 7:11; 8:1-4).
2. Angels reveal and communicate God's message to humans: as mediators of the law (Acts 7:53; Gal. 3:19; Heb. 2:2); as bearing messages from God, e.g., Gabriel to Zechariah (Luke 1:13-20) and to Mary (Luke 1:26-38); angels spoke to Philip (Acts 8:26), Cornelius (Acts 10:3-7), Peter (Acts 11:13; 12:7-11), and Paul (Acts 27:23).
3. Angels minister to believers. This includes protecting believers from harm, e.g., the apostles (Acts 5:19) and Peter (Acts 12:6-11). . . Their major ministry is to spiritual needs, however. Angels take a great interest in the spiritual welfare of believers, rejoicing at their conversion (Luke 15:10) and serving them in their needs (Heb. 1:14). Angels are spectators of our lives (1 Cor. 4:9; 1 Tim. 5:21), and are present within the church (1 Cor. 11:10). At the death of believers, they convey them to the place of blessedness (Luke 16:22).

4. Angels executive judgement on the enemies of God (Ex. 14:19-20; 2 Sam. 24:16; 2 Kgs. 19:35; Acts 12:23). The book of Revelation is full of prophecies regarding the judgment to be administered by angels (8:6-9:21; 16:1-17; 19:11-14).
5. The angels will be involved in the second coming. They will accompany the Lord at his return (Matt. 25:31), just as they were present at other significant events of Jesus' life, including his birth, temptation, and resurrection. They will separate the wheat from the weeds (Matt. 13:39-42). Christ will send forth his angels with a loud trumpet call to gather the elect from the four winds (Matt. 24:31; cf. 1 Thess. 4:16-17).

DEMONS



Graham A. Cole, *Against the Darkness: The Doctrine of Angels, Satan, and Demons* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2019), 108-109:

- ▶ Satan's origins are mysterious, and although there are hints in the biblical testimony, caution is in order. In canonical perspective, Satan makes a first appearance as the seductive serpent of Genesis 3. In that guise the Satanic *modus operandi* is laid bare. The serpent is revealed as the enemy of the word of God, the enemy of the integrity of God, and the enemy of the people of God. At times, this spiritual being of immense power and cunning works his mischief as an angel of light. Other times he is like a ravenous lion on the prowl. He is a spoiler. He is a disuniter. He is the enemy of the interpersonal. Temptation is his specialty from the beginning. Christians need to have a worldview that takes the devil seriously in its awareness of evil.

Kevin DeYoung, *Daily Doctrine*, “Day 67, Demons,” p. 95:

- ▶ We can't be sure how and why the devil fell, but several texts suggest there was an angelic rebellion (prior to man's sin) motivated by pride. First Timothy 3:6 hints that the devil was condemned for being “puffed up with conceit.” Likewise, Jude 6 says that “angels who did not stay within their own position of authority, but left their proper dwelling, he has kept in eternal chains under gloomy darkness until the judgment of the great day.” And if the exalted description of the king of Tyre in Ezekiel 28:11-19 can be taken as an allusion to the devil (“an anointed guardian cherub”), then we have further evidence that the devil sinned because his heart was proud and vainglorious.
- ▶ The devil assaults the people of God in two main ways: he is a deceiver and an accuser. Those two words describe his identity and his weapons. The devil lies, and he slanders. Revelation 12 calls him “the deceiver of the whole world (v. 9) and “the accuser of our brothers” (v. 10). Zechariah 3 presents a striking picture of the Lord rebuking Satan for accusing Joshua the high priest, who, despite his filthy garments, was saved by God as a brand plucked from the fire.

Genesis 3

Genesis: 6:1-4

Isaiah 14:3-23

Ezekiel 28:2-19

Luke 10:17-20: The seventy-two returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name!" And he said to them, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall hurt you. Nevertheless, do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven."

1 Timothy 3:6: He must not be a recent convert, or he may become puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil.

2 Peter 2:4: For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to chains of gloomy darkness to be kept until the judgment;

Jude 6: And the angels who did not stay within their own position of authority, but left their proper dwelling, he has kept in eternal chains under gloomy darkness until the judgment of the great day--

Revelation 12:7-9: Now war arose in heaven, Michael and his angels fighting against the dragon. And the dragon and his angels fought back, but he was defeated, and there was no longer any place for them in heaven. And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world-- he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.

Revelation 20:10: and the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

C. Fred Dickason, *Angels: Elect & Evil* (Chicago: Moody 1975), “Names of Satan”:

Names Describing Position

- ▶ Anointed cherub who covers (Ezek. 28:14).
- ▶ The prince of this world (Jn. 12:31; 16:11).
- ▶ The prince of the power of the air (Eph. 2:2).
- ▶ The god of this age (2 Cor. 4:4).
- ▶ The prince of demons (Mt. 12:24; Lk. 11:15).

Names Reflecting Character

- ▶ Lucifer (Is. 14:12).
- ▶ Satan (Zech. 3:1; Rev. 12:9).
- ▶ Devil (Lk. 4:2, 13; Rev. 12:9).
- ▶ Old serpent (Rev. 12:9).
- ▶ Great dragon (Rev. 12:3, 7, 9)
- ▶ The evil one (Jn. 17:15; 1 Jn. 5:18).
- ▶ Destroyer (Rev. 9:11).

Names Indicating Activity

- ▶ Tempter (Mt. 4:3; 1 Thess. 3:5).
- ▶ Accuser (Rev. 12:10).
- ▶ Deceiver (Rev. 12:9; 20:3).
- ▶ The spirit that now works in the sons of disobedience (Eph. 2:2).

Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2020), “Satan and Demons,” pp. 412-433: **The Activity of Satan and Demons**

1. Satan was the originator of sin.
2. Demons oppose and try to destroy every good work of God.
3. Yet Demons are limited by God’s control and have limited power.
4. There have been differing stages of demonic activity in the history of redemption: (a) in the Old Testament; (b) during the ministry of Jesus; (c) during the new covenant age; (d) during the millennium; (e) at the final judgement.

Our Relationship to Demons

1. Demons are active in the world today.
2. Not all evil and sin is from Satan and Demons, but some is.
3. Although Christians cannot be demon-possessed, they can be influenced/impacted/attacked by demons or what is referred to as demonized.
4. There are ways to recognize demonic influences.
5. Jesus gives all believers authority over demons in his authority.
6. There is appropriate use of the Christian's spiritual authority in ministry to others.
7. We should expect the gospel to come in power to triumph over the works of the Devil.
[Remembering the “gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (Matt. 16:18). And we should also expect that Satan will do all he can “to steal and kill and destroy” (Jn. 10:10) its advancement”]

Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013), p. 417:

- ▶ The devil is the name given in Scripture to the chief of these fallen angels.
- ▶ He is also known as Satan. The Hebrew name *satan* . . . Means to be or act as an adversary. Hence he is the opponent, the one who opposes the cause of God and of the people of God. . .
- ▶ The most common Greek word for him is *diabolos* (devil, adversary, accuser). . .

- ▶ Several other terms are used of him less frequently. All these convey something of the character and activity of the devil.
 - tempter (Matt. 4:3; 1 Thess. 3:5),
 - Beelzebul (Matt. 12:24, 27; Mark 3:22; Luke 11:15, 19),
 - enemy (Matt. 13:39),
 - evil one (Matt. 13:19, 38; 1 John 2:13; 3:13; 5:18),
 - Belial (2 Cor. 6:15),
 - adversary (1 Peter 5:8),
 - deceiver (Rev. 12:9),
 - great dragon (Rev. 12:3),
 - father of lies (John 8:44),
 - murderer (John 8:44),
 - sinner (1 John 3:8).

- ▶ The devil is, as his name indicates, engaged in opposing God and the work of Christ. He does this especially by tempting man. This is shown in the temptation of Jesus, the parable of the weeds (Matt. 13:24-30), and the sin of Judas (Luke 22:3). (See also Acts 5:3; 1 Cor. 7:5; 2 Cor. 2:11; Eph. 6:11; 2 Tim. 2:26.)

Graham A. Cole, [10 Things You Should Know about Demons and Satan](#) (November 20, 2019).

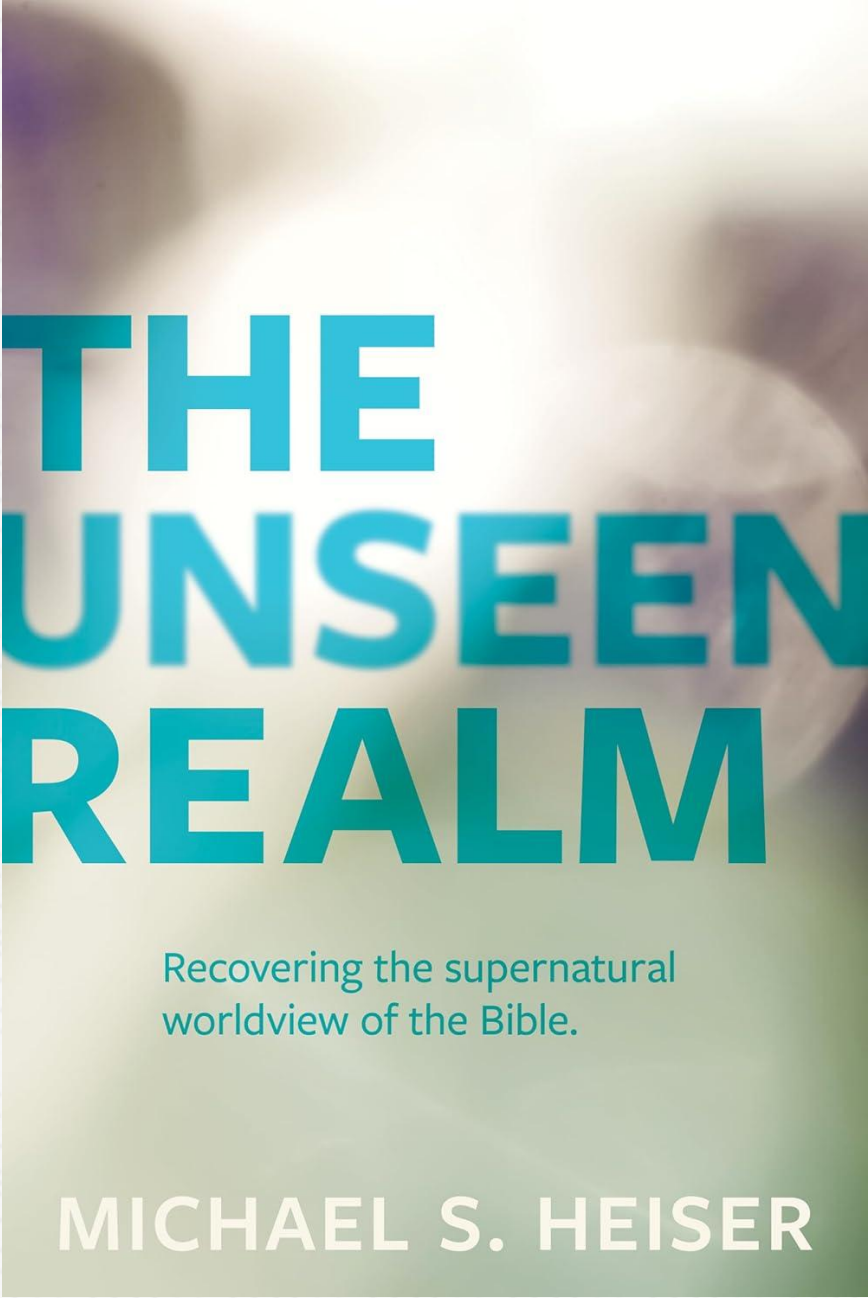
1. Demons are fallen angels.
2. Demons have a leader.
3. Satan and his demonic entourage have limitations.
4. The diabolic aim is worship.
5. There are two important diabolic guises.
6. Christ is the victor over Satan.
7. Demon inhabitation is real.
8. Believers cannot be demon inhabited.
9. The devil and demons have no future with God.
10. We may have a blind spot.

Thomas Brooks, *Precious Remedies Against Satan's Devices* (1652), p. 4:

- ▶ Beloved, Satan being fallen from light to darkness, from felicity to misery, from heaven to hell, from angel to devil, is so full of malice and envy that he will leave no means unattempted, whereby he may make all others ternally miserable with himself; he being shut out of heaven, and shut up “under the chains of darkness until the judgment of the great day” (Jude 6), makes use of all his power and skill to bring all the sons of men into the same condition and condemnation with himself.

RESPONDING TO A FEW QUESTIONS





THE UNSEEN REALM

Recovering the supernatural
worldview of the Bible.

MICHAEL S. HEISER

Michael S. Heiser, *The Unseen Realm: Recovering the Supernatural Worldview of the Bible* (Lexham, 2019).

- ▶ This is his published dissertation.

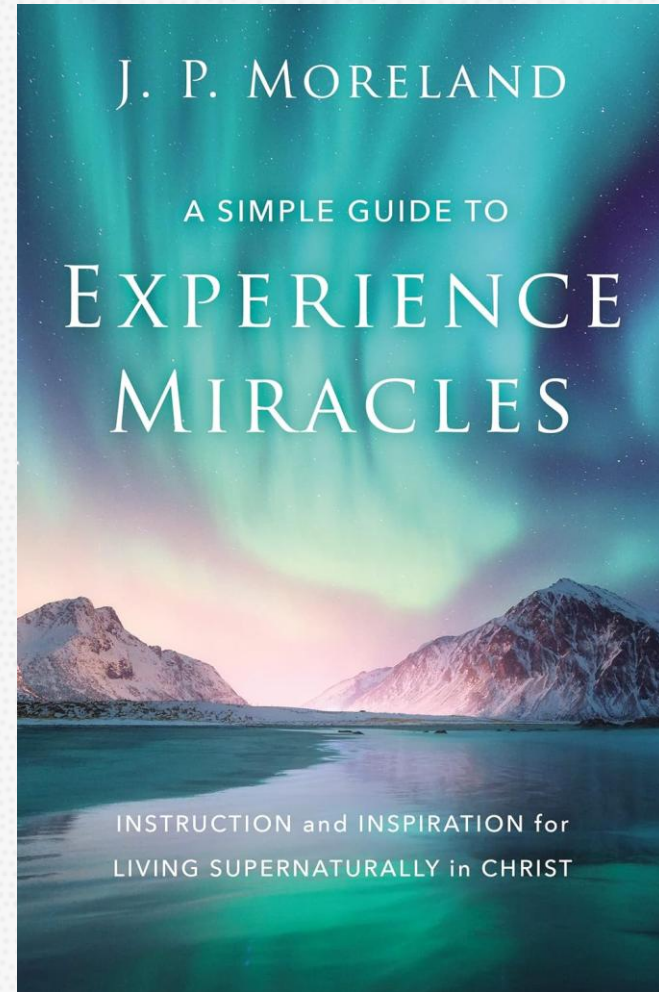
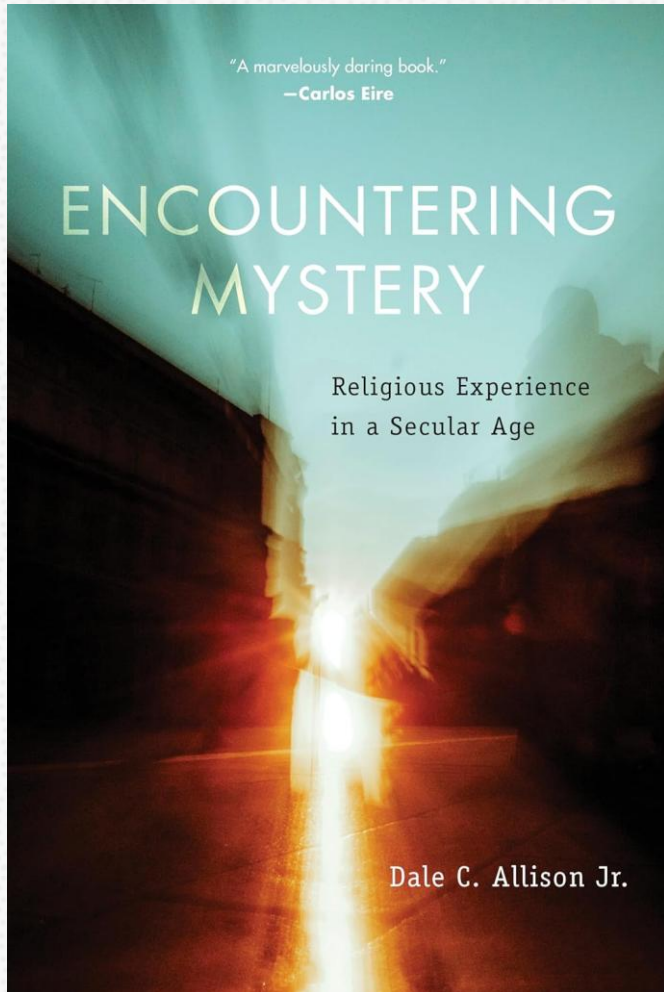
Robert M. Bowman Jr. and J. Ed Komoszewski, *The Incarnate Christ and His Critics: A Biblical Defense* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic, 2024), “Chapter 21: Could Jesus Be One of the Gods?”

- ▶ I am grateful and encouraged to read this response to Heiser’s work in this revised and expanded work, *Putting Jesus in His Place*. The authors affirm “Michael Heiser, an *evangelical* Old Testament scholar . . .,” and “Although Heiser is an *evangelical* . . .” (emphasis mine)
- ▶ In highlighting the focus of this section, the authors write, “We want to make it clearly understood that Heiser *denies* that Jesus is “one of the gods” and argues that Christ is indeed the *unique* Son of God. [e.g., Heiser, *Unseen Realm*, 36-37.] Thus, he *espouses an orthodox, Trinitarian theology including an orthodox Christology*. In short, *we are not criticizing Heiser’s doctrinal beliefs. Rather, we argue that even Heiser’s scholarly insights do not warrant concluding that Old Testament references to “gods” are meant in an affirmative sense*. That is, they do not refer to a category of beings positively or approvingly called “gods.”” (second emphasis mine).

- ▶ In the specific text addressed, Psalm 82:6, and how the unorthodox use this text, the authors write, “Psalm 82:6 has been used by advocates of unorthodox Christologies to argue (*as Heiser does not*) that Jesus is not God, but rather one of the gods—a lesser deity subordinate to God the Father.” (emphasis mine)
- ▶ In brief, what we see is that the authors affirm Heiser is an evangelical, that he is orthodox and affirms Jesus is the unique Son of God, and that he is not an advocate of an unorthodox Christology. Those are all accurate and affirming statements of Heiser and his work. But they also take issue with his interpretation and understanding, due to his strong emphasis on ANE, of the expression “gods,” that there are gods other than Yahweh, that they are real, even though inferior, that they refer to incomparability not uniqueness, and that the reference is positive, not negative. I affirm their arguments over against Heiser.

“the satan” and “Satan”

- ▶ In every case in Job and Zechariah, the Hebrew is “hassatan” ,הַשָּׂטָן that is, “the satan.” English translations translate it “Satan,” as if it is a proper name. But here, it is not. It is one serving in a role of adversary.
- ▶ In Job, the satan appears among the angels—which are called “sons of God”—to accuse Job of acting with integrity only because God’s hand protected him. The Lord later allows the satan to afflict Job with those grievous bodily sores. In Zechariah, “Joshua the high priest was standing before the angel of the Lord, and the satan הַשָּׂטָן was standing at his right hand to accuse וְשָׂטָן him” (3:1). The satan was there to satan him, that is, the Accuser was there to accuse him.
- ▶ Whether he is called by what he does (“the satan”) or whether that has morphed into a name (“Satan”), he is still going about the same business of thwarting the ways of God, accusing his children, and wreaking havoc in the community of believers.



- ▶ Don Piper, *90 Minutes in Heaven* (Grand Rapids: Revell, 2004).
- ▶ Bill Wiese, *23 Minutes In Hell: One Man's Story About What He Saw, Heard, and Felt in that Place of Torment* (Lake Mary, Florida: Charisma House, 2006).
- ▶ Erwin W. Lutzer, *One Minute After You Die* (Chicago: Moody 2007).
- ▶ Don Piper, *Daily Devotions Inspired by 90 Minutes in Heaven: 90 Readings for Hope and Healing* (Berkley Trade, 2009).
- ▶ Todd Burpo, *Heaven Is For Real: A Little Boy's Astounding Story of His Trip to Heaven and Back* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2010).
- ▶ Kevin Malarkey, *The Boy Who Came Back from Heaven: A Remarkable Account of Miracles, Angels, and Life beyond This World* (Carol Stream: Tyndale, 2010).

Does each person have a guardian angel?

This notion arises from Matthew 18:10 (and another possible text is Acts 12:15 referencing Peter): “See that you do not despise one of these little ones. For I tell you that in heaven their angels always see the face of my Father who is in heaven.”

Graham Cole concludes (p. 72), “On analysis, the idea that each person has an assigned guardian angel is a text-less doctrine . . . It is quite a stretch to use this Matthean text in constructing a doctrine of guardian angels. . . the accent in the text is not on guardianship but on representation before God.”

EFCA STATEMENT OF FAITH

Article 3: The Human Condition

Article 8: Christian Living



Evangelical Convictions, 2nd ed., "Article 3, The Human Condition," pp. 52-54:

II. The Source of Human Depravity: Our Fall Into Sin

- ▶ Our Statement of Faith follows the biblical story, moving from the glory of Genesis 2 to the guilt of Genesis 3. The man and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame as they enjoyed the blessing of God in the garden he had created for them. But quite suddenly a new character emerges into this idyllic world—a tempter. Though his existence is real, his origin is unknown; he is depicted simply as a serpent, a snake—a mere creature.

A. Tempted by Satan

- ▶ But what is the source of this first evil in the cosmos? We are left with a mystery, which reflects the mystery of evil itself. Certainly, this snake, who in the story is the embodiment of Satan himself (cf. Rev. 12:9; 20:2), could not have been created evil, for all that God made was good (Gen. 1:31). Scripture provides hints that may point to a primordial rebellion among the angelic beings that resulted in this evil. [Cf. Isa. 14; Ezek. 28; Jude 6; 2 Pet. 2:4.] But even that does not tell us why evil entered into God's creation in the first place. It just pushes its entrance, and the mystery, still further back. However they originated, the Bible affirms the reality of evil spiritual beings, led by Satan, the tempter and accuser, and a liar and murderer from the beginning (John 8:44). He remains our greatest enemy, though he was defeated by Christ on the cross and will be banished forever when Christ returns in glory, and every enemy is put under his feet and he finally "turns the kingdom over to God" (1 Cor. 15:24). [On the spiritual battle in this present age, see our discussion in Article 8.]

- ▶ The tempter simply appears in the garden, and his role in the story emphasizes that there was nothing *in* man himself to prompt him to rebel against God's rule. There was no natural cause of evil within the human race. There was simply freedom, a freedom reflecting God's own freedom. [Some distinction must be made, however, for the first humans were able to sin (*posse peccare*, to use Augustine's expression), which God is not. Augustine expands this to contend that after the fall human beings are captive to sin—not able not to sin (*non posse non peccare*); as redeemed in Christ, they are able not to sin (*posse non peccare*); and in glory they will, like God, not be able to sin (*non posse peccare*).] And it was toward this freedom that the tempter directed his efforts.

- ▶ In his craftiness, the serpent first casts doubt on the word of God, introducing the first questioning of God's character into the world: "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden?'" (Gen. 3:1). Through misrepresentation, the serpent creates confusion. He turns the word of God on its head, making it say the opposite of what was intended. God's liberal permission and single prohibition (Gen. 2:16-17) now seem to be restrictive and constraining.
- ▶ Then the serpent attacks God's truthfulness: "'You will not certainly die,' the serpent said to the woman" (3:4), suggesting that sin will not be judged. Once the prospect of judgment is cast away, it is relatively easy to open the floodgates of unbelief.

- ▶ Finally, in verse 5 he casts doubt on God's goodness in making this prohibition: "For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."
- ▶ The temptation had its intended effect. "When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it" (v. 6). [Strictly speaking, the story only recounts the temptation of Eve, though Adam was with her (Gen. 3:6). However, the parallel that Paul draws between the experience of Adam and of Jesus (Rom. 5:12-21), suggests the appropriateness of ascribing the temptation to both Adam and Eve.] We must be clear. The temptation of the serpent was not the cause of Eve's choice, simply the occasion for it.

B. The Nature of Sin

- ▶ Even with great freedom and dominion over the earth, Adam and Eve were nevertheless God's creatures. The forbidden fruit of this tree of the knowledge of good and evil was a reminder that they were not God but were responsible to him. The "knowledge" of good and evil refers to deciding or determining what is good and evil, a prerogative that rightfully belongs to God alone. To disobey God and to eat of that tree was a rejection of God's rule and authority. It was nothing less than an act of cosmic treason against the King of the universe.

Christian Living

8. We believe that God's justifying grace must not be separated from His sanctifying power and purpose. God commands us to love Him supremely and others sacrificially, and to live out our faith with care for one another, compassion toward the poor and justice for the oppressed. With God's Word, the Spirit's power, and fervent prayer in Christ's name, we are to combat the spiritual forces of evil. In obedience to Christ's commission, we are to make disciples among all people, always bearing witness to the gospel in word and deed.

1. God's justifying grace must not be separated from his sanctifying power and purpose.
2. God commands us to love him supremely.
3. God commands us to love others sacrificially . . .

“The righteous shall live by faith” (Rom. 1:17).

4. . . . and to live out our faith with care for one another, compassion toward the poor and justice for the oppressed.
5. With God's Word, the Spirit's power, and fervent prayer in Christ's name, we are to combat the spiritual forces of evil.
6. In obedience to Christ's commission, we are to make disciples among all people, always bearing witness to the gospel in word and deed.

“With God’s Word, the Spirit’s power, and fervent prayer in Christ’s name, we are to combat the spiritual forces of evil.”

1. We are to combat . . .
2. The spiritual forces of evil . . .
3. With God’s Word,
4. The Spirit’s power,
5. And fervent prayer in Christ’s name.

Evangelical Convictions, 2nd, ed., "Article 8, Christian Living," pp. 177-181:

III. The Spiritual Battle

- ▶ The gospel gives us solid grounds for great joy in this life, but the Apostle Paul, who himself urges us to “rejoice in the Lord always” (Phil. 4:4), often wrote of the hardships he endured (see esp. 2 Cor. 11:23-29). In describing one experience he lamented, “We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired of life itself” (2 Cor. 1:8). We can never forget that we are called to follow in the footsteps of a *crucified* Messiah.
- ▶ As Paul’s experience illustrates, the Christian life involves struggle and conflict. Jesus promised no less. He told his disciples, “In this world you will have trouble” (John 16:33). Paul urges his young protégé Timothy to “fight the battle well” (1 Tim. 1:18) and to “Join with me in suffering, like a good soldier of Christ Jesus” (2 Tim. 2:3; cf. also Phil. 1:29-30). Being a follower of Jesus means that we will be engaged in a struggle, a fight, a battle.

- ▶ We must be clear—ours is not a political or military battle. We cannot establish a “Christian nation” on this earth, for God’s kingdom cannot be contained by any political party, nor can it be imposed by military force. Jesus was a King, but he commanded no earthly armies, and to Pilate the Roman governor he declared, “My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jewish leaders. But now my kingdom is from another place” (John 18:36). His is a spiritual kingdom, not a political one, and the battle we are called to is a spiritual battle, not a military one. “For our struggle,” Paul writes, “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” (Eph. 6:12). God’s kingdom advances not through force of arms but through the spread of the gospel. God’s rule is manifest where spiritual rebels turn to Jesus Christ in repentance and faith, and God’s glory is exhibited as the gospel flows out in acts of love.

A. Our Duty: To Combat the Spiritual Forces of Evil

- ▶ Our responsibility is clear: we are to combat the spiritual forces of evil in the world. The reality of this spiritual opposition, centered in a personal devil, [On the devil, see Article 3, sec. II.A.] is assumed throughout the Scriptures. Peter urges us, “Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith” (1 Pet. 5:8-9). Jesus spoke of the devil as “a strong man” who must be bound if men and women were to be set free (Matt. 12:25-29). He is a powerful creature who, in his encounter with Jesus in the desert, spoke of all the world’s glory and splendor having been given to him, and Jesus doesn’t contest that claim (Luke 4:5-8). John writes in his first letter, “the whole world is under the control of the evil one” (1 John 5:19). Though Satan’s power is great, as followers of Jesus we must oppose him and all that he stands for.

B. Our Means

- ▶ To fight this battle we must be properly armed. “Put on the full armor of God,” Paul writes, “so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes” (Eph. 6:11). Since this is a spiritual battle, we must use spiritual means— “The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world” (2 Cor. 10:4). Our Statement lists three of the most powerful resources the Lord has put at our disposal.

1. God's Word

- ▶ The devil's primary tactic is deception. Jesus said that "there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies" (John 8:44). From the beginning in the garden, the devil sowed doubt about the truth of what God had said (Gen. 3:1,4). He denies and distorts the truth, so that his lies might appear attractive to us. So to combat the devil's lies, we need God's truth given to us in his Word.
- ▶ Paul's description of our divine armor using the model of the Roman soldier in Ephesians 6 emphasizes this point. His list begins with "the belt of truth" and the following pieces of equipment all relate to God's truth in some way. Finally, the notion of truth again becomes explicit, as Paul speaks of "the sword of the Spirit which is the word of God" (Eph. 6:17). This one offensive weapon repels the spiritual forces of evil like no other, as seen so clearly in Jesus' own confrontation with the devil in the desert (Matt. 4:1-11). The devil is defenseless against the truth of God's Word.

2. The Spirit's Power

- ▶ Our second resource, closely related to the first, is the Spirit's power. As we have seen already,³⁹⁶ the Holy Spirit gave power to the apostolic preaching to convict the world of its guilt so that hardened hearts might be receptive to the message of the gospel (cf. Acts 2:14-41). Against the enemy and his work of blinding the minds of unbelievers (2 Cor. 4:4), the Spirit opens blind eyes (cf. Acts 9:17-18) and hard hearts (Acts 16:14) to the truth, exposing the devil's lies. He who inspired God's written Word brings that Word to life so that the God who spoke in the past speaks now with power in our hearts (cf. Rom. 10:17; James 1:18; 1 Pet. 1:23). Those so enlightened and softened by the Spirit to see and receive the truth in Christ are transferred from the domain of darkness into the kingdom of the beloved Son (Col. 2:13).
- ▶ To those thus transferred, the Spirit also works to encourage and equip us for this battle. It is important to remember that we do not engage in this battle in the flesh. The weapons of our warfare have divine, Spirit wrought power to destroy strongholds and to take every thought captive to Christ (2 Cor. 10:3-5). Since the works of the devil have been destroyed (1 John 3:8), we, through the Spirit, have the authority to render his power powerless (cf. Luke 10:17-19; Heb. 2:14). Indeed, greater is the one who lives within us than the one who is in the world (1 John 4:4; 5:18). When we do not know how or what to pray as we engage in the battle, the Spirit intercedes on our behalf (Rom. 8:26). Likewise, in our stand against the schemes of the devil, we intercede on behalf of others (Eph. 6:18). He enables us to resist the adversary, standing firm in our faith (James 5:7-8; 1 Pet. 5:8-9). Ultimately it is only through the Spirit that we have the power to overcome (cf. Rev. 12:10-11).

3. Fervent Prayer in Christ's Name

- ▶ As we combat the spiritual forces of evil we are to depend upon the truth of God's Word, we are to draw on the power of the Holy Spirit, and, to round out this Trinitarian arsenal, we engage in fervent prayer in Christ's name.
- ▶ This, in fact, is where Paul is led in his discussion of spiritual armor: "And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests" (Eph. 6:18). Prayer could be another part of the armor, but it may be better to see prayer as the activity that stands behind the entire battle. To use the military analogy, prayer is the supply line as we engage the enemy on the front. In prayer the truth is made personal as we do not merely talk about God; we talk to him.

- ▶ Our faith is activated as we pray, and God acts when we pray. But he acts not because of who we are, for we have no right in ourselves to come before him or to ask anything of him. God acts when we pray because we now come to the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. We come in his authority and under his provision. Six times in the Gospels Jesus urges us to pray in this way: “You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it” (John 14:14); “Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete” (John. 16:24). Because of our union with Christ, we can expect God to act through us in this cosmic battle.

4. We Do Not Fight Alone

It is important to notice the “we” in our Statement— “we are to combat the spiritual forces of evil.” We need each other in this spiritual battle (cf. Heb. 3:13; 10:25), for who wants to be alone behind enemy lines? And in prayer we can supply protective cover for others who may be in the line of fire themselves. Paul concludes his words on spiritual warfare this way: “With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord’s people” (Eph. 6:18). Even Paul requested prayer for courage to go forth in battle (Eph. 6:19-20). “I urge you, brothers and sisters, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to join me in my struggle by praying to God for me” (Rom. 15:30). He encourages the Colossians by informing them that Epaphras “is always wrestling in prayer for you, that you may stand firm in all the will of God, mature and fully assured” (Col. 4:12). We must not fight alone, and we must strengthen others through our prayer, confident that Jesus himself is our Intercessor before the Father (Heb. 7:25; Rom. 8:34) and that the Spirit intercedes for us even when we don’t know how to pray (Rom. 8:26-27).

C. Our Confidence: In Jesus Christ Our Victory Is Assured

- ▶ Although the spiritual battle in which we are engaged is demanding, we should never become discouraged. The gospel declares that our victory is assured, for Jesus has won the decisive battle through his sacrificial death and his glorious resurrection. Satan, the accuser, can accuse us no longer, for “there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus” (Rom. 8:1). God has “disarmed the powers and authorities” and has “made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross” (Col. 2:15). Though not totally destroyed, the devil is a defeated enemy, for Jesus Christ is risen from the dead. “In this world you will have trouble,” Jesus said. “But take heart! I have overcome the world” (John 16:33). As Revelation reminds us, though Satan accuses believers day and night, we overcome by holding fast to the saving blood of the Lamb (Rev. 12:10-11). We have this assurance: greater is he who is in us, than he who is in the world (1 John 4:4).

IV. The Great Commission: We Are To Make Disciples

- ▶ As we fight *against* the spiritual forces of evil, we are also contending *for* the cause of Christ and the kingdom of God. As followers of Christ we have been commissioned to engage the world with the gospel and to make disciples of Jesus Christ among all people.
- ▶ Our marching orders as believers have come from the Lord Jesus himself. His final words to his disciples as recorded in Matthew's Gospel make this clear: "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age" (Matt. 28:18-20). Luke and John record their own versions of this Great Commission (cf. Lk. 24:45-48; Acts 1:8; Jn. 20:21. . . We have been given an assignment of eternal significance, and we stand under a divine command—we are to go and make disciples.

1. We are to Make Disciples Among All People.

2. We are to Make Disciples by Bearing Witness to the Gospel in Word and Deed.

CONCLUSION

- ▶ “[God] has saved us and called us to a holy life—not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace” (2 Tim. 1:9). The same grace of God that takes away our sin also gives us new life—a life that reflects a new desire to love God and love our neighbor, to enter into the spiritual battle and to obey Christ’s Great Commission. God’s gospel, by its very nature, compels us to Christ-like living and witness to the world.

John Piper, *Providence* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2021), p. 239:

- ▶ Setting people free from the “power of Satan” is our calling—whether secular people, who don’t even believe there is such a power, or animistic people, who build their lives around appeasing evil spirits. And God’s “divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness” in helping people escape “from the [demonic] corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire” (2 Pet. 1:3-4).

THE BIBLE'S STORY

Redemptive History



- ▶ **Order of salvation (*ordo salutis*):** “the acts of God and the response of the individual in salvation. God calls us, produces regeneration in us, so that we respond with repentance, faith, and obedience. . . The *ordo salutis* is not concerned with a temporal sequence of events, but with a logical order.”
- ▶ **History of Salvation (*historia salutis*):** “the historical events, in space and time, through which God rescues his people.”
- ▶ **Transformation in Salvation (*transformatio salutis*):** the experiential reality of being in Christ and through the work of the Holy Spirit, who not only applies the finished work of Christ in our lives, by faith, but he also conforms us into the likeness of the Son.

The storyline of the Bible, God's unfolding plan of redemption, or the salvation historical flow, can be summarized in the following way:

- ▶ **Creation:** Genesis 1:26-28
- ▶ **Fall:** Genesis 2:16-17; Genesis 3
- ▶ **Redemption:** Romans 3:24; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11
- ▶ **Transformation:** Romans 12:1-2; 2 Corinthians 3:18
- ▶ **Consummation/Renewal (Glorification):** Philippians 3:20-21; Revelation 21:5

Key Truths

1. Creation
2. Sovereignty
3. Providence
4. Christ
5. Good (infinitely perfect)
6. Glory (Blessedness)
7. Consummation (telos)

Times Satan Hates.

1. Conversion
2. Repentance
3. Humility
4. Church
5. Rejoicing (in suffering)
6. Gratitude (in abundance)
7. Renewal/Revival
8. Hope
9. Death in Christ

JESUS



1. Jesus stays true despite temptation.
2. Jesus teaches the truth about the devil and demons.
3. Jesus despoils the strong man.
4. Incarnation was to defeat the devil

- ▶ **Genesis 3:15:** I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel."
- ▶ **Romans 16:20:** The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.
- ▶ **Colossians 2:13-15:** And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him.

- ▶ **Hebrews 2:14-18:** Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery. For surely it is not angels that he helps, but he helps the offspring of Abraham. Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For because he himself has suffered when tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.
- ▶ **1 John 3:5-8:** You know that he appeared in order to take away sins, and in him there is no sin. No one who abides in him keeps on sinning; no one who keeps on sinning has either seen him or known him. Little children, let no one deceive you. Whoever practices righteousness is righteous, as he is righteous. Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil.
- ▶ **1 John 4:9-10:** In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

THE FLAW OF THE EXCLUDED MIDDLE



Paul G. Hiebert, "[The Flaw of the Excluded Middle](#)," *Missiology: An International Review*, Vol. X, No. 1 (January 1982), 35-47.

Paul G. Hiebert, "[Spiritual Warfare and Worldviews](#)," Vol. 29 No. 2 (Fall, 2000), pp. 114–24.
1992. Biblical perspectives on spiritual warfare. *Mission Focus* 20 (3): 41-50.

FIGURE 1
The Modern Worldview

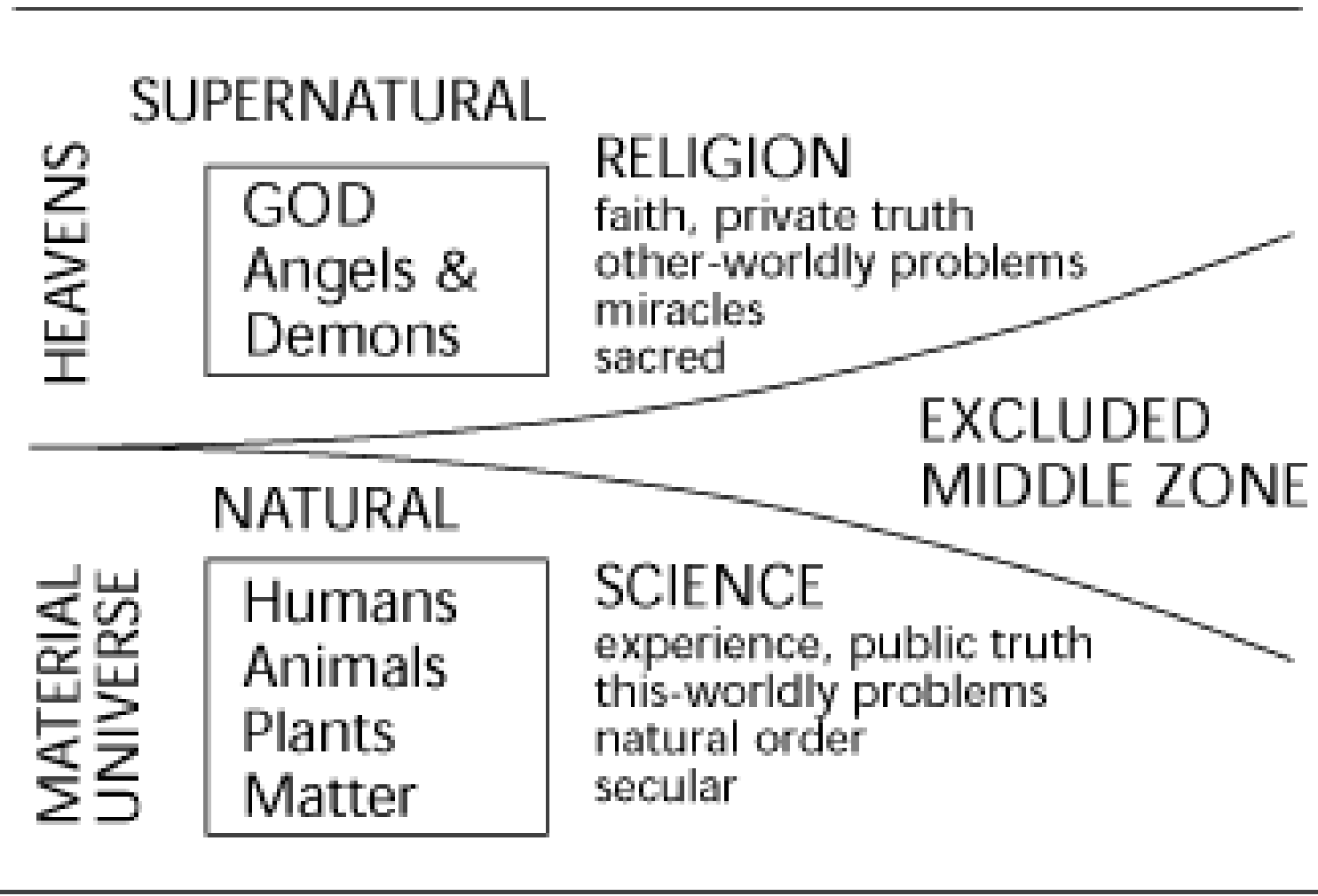


FIGURE 2
Tribal View of Spiritual Encounters

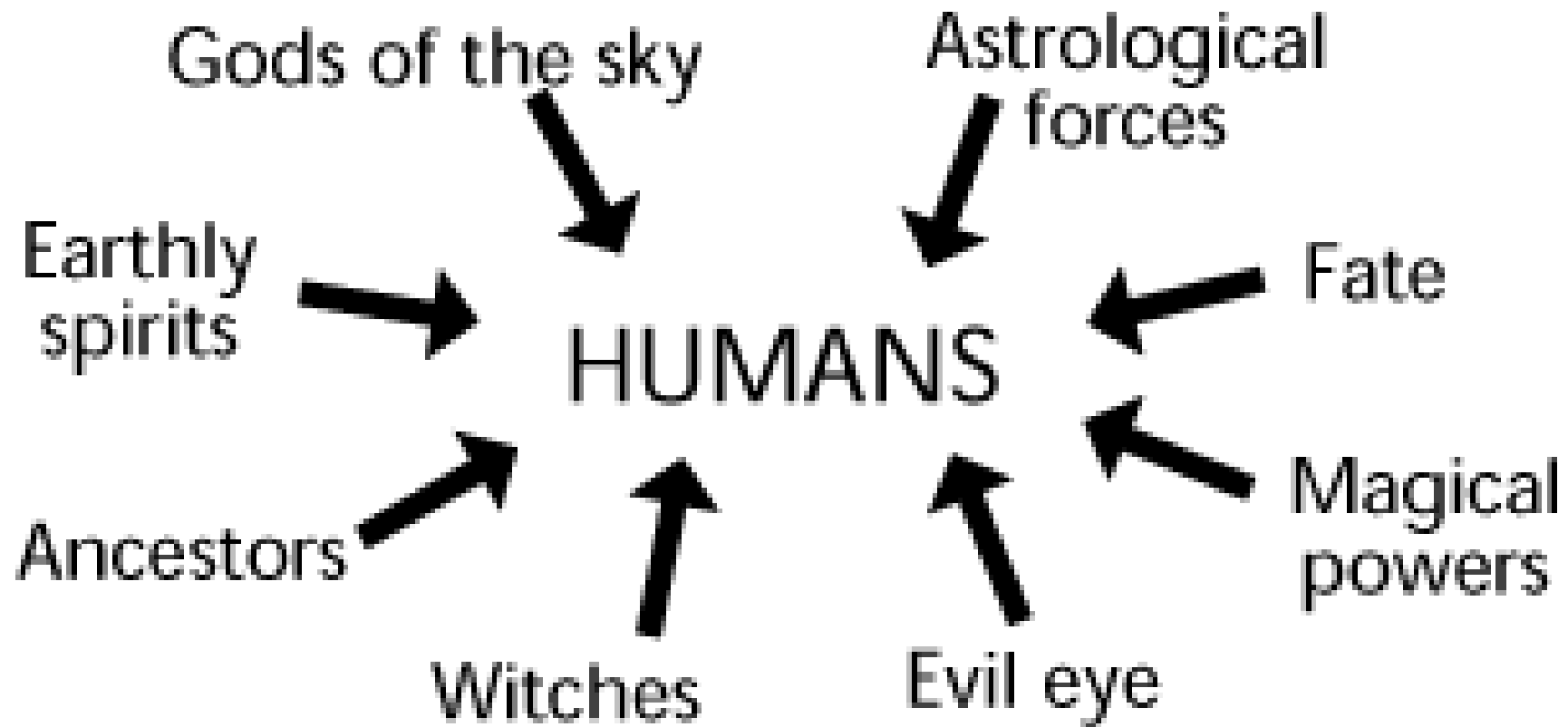


FIGURE 3
The Myth of Cosmic Dualism

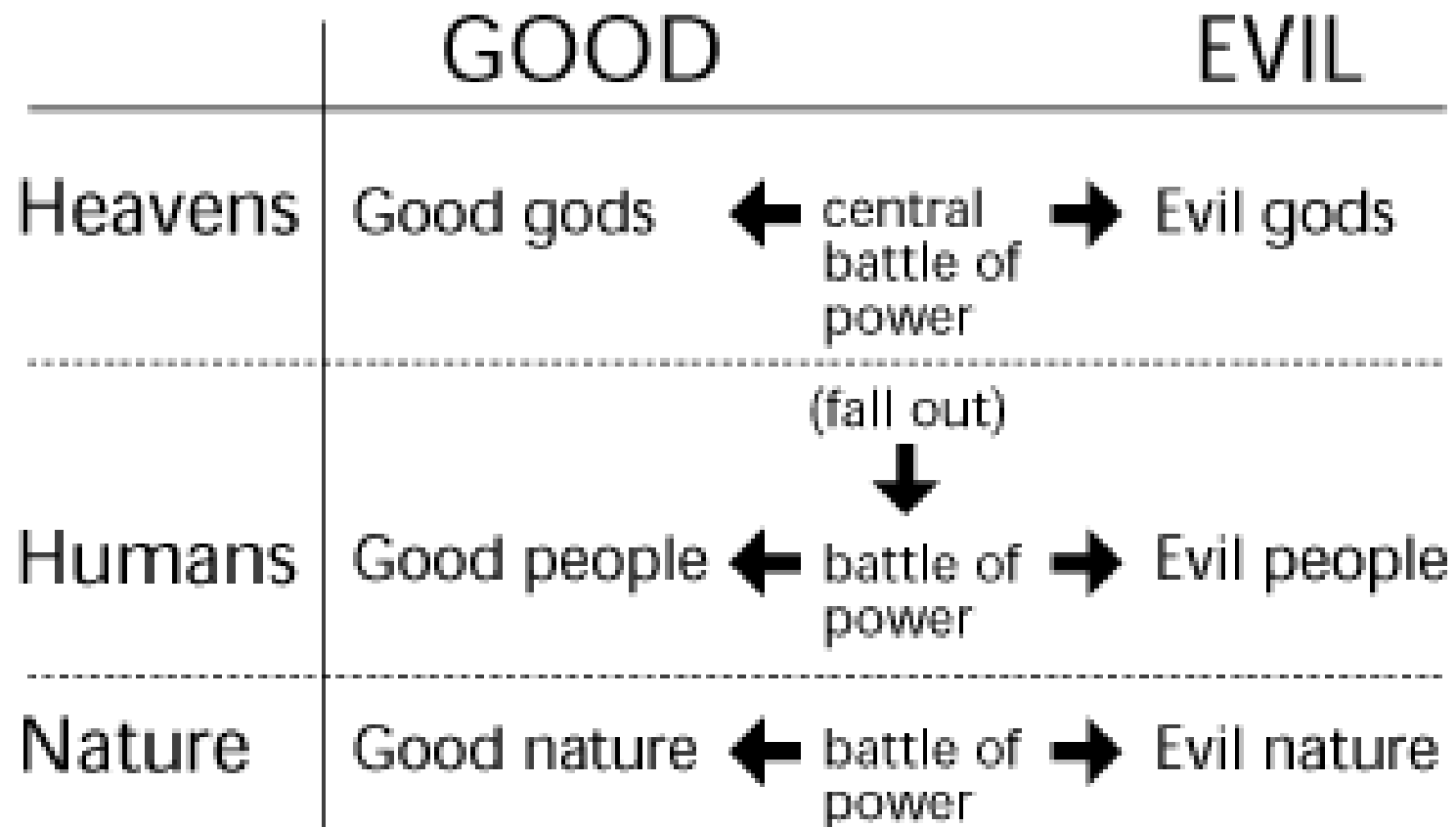
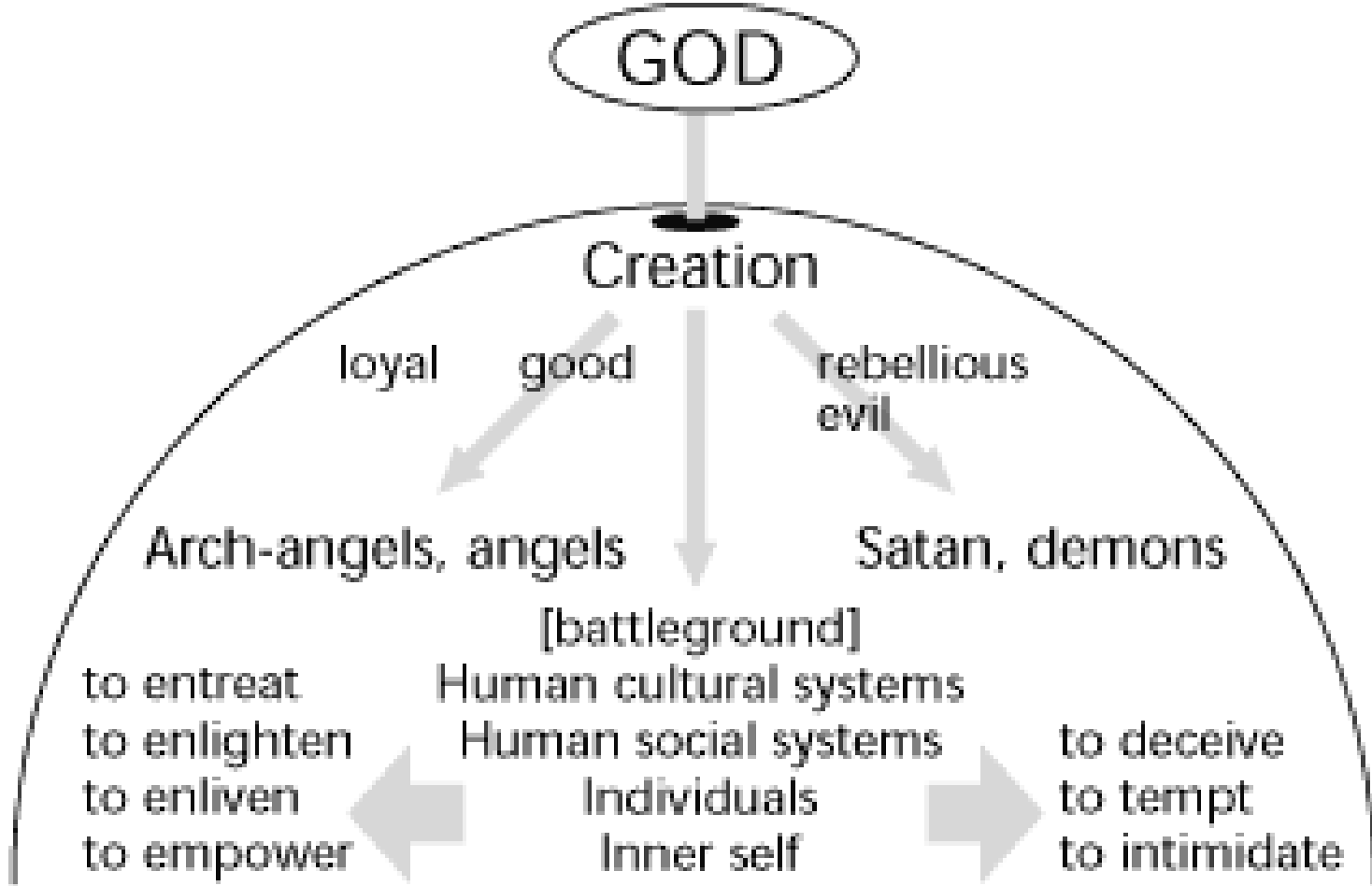


FIGURE 4
Biblical View of Spiritual Warfare



PROVIDENCE



John Piper, *Providence* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2021), pp. 29-30:

- ▶ The reason this book is about the providence of God rather than the sovereignty of God is that the term *sovereignty* does not contain the idea of *purposeful* action, but the term *providence* does. Sovereignty focuses on God's right and power to do all that he wills, but in itself, it does not express any design or goal.
- ▶ Of course, God's sovereignty is purposeful. It does have design. It *does* pursue a goal. But we know this, not simply because God is sovereign, but because he is wise, and because the Bible portrays him as having purposes in all the does. "My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose" (Isa. 46:10).
- ▶ The focus of this book is on God's sovereignty considered not simply as powerful but as purposeful. Historically, the term *providence* has been used as shorthand for this more specific focus.

- ▶ The word *providence* is built from the word *provide*, which has two parts: *pro* (Latin “forward,” “on behalf of”) and *vide* (Latin “to see”). So you might think that the word *provide* would mean “to see forward” or “to foresee.” But it doesn’t. It means “to supply what is needed”; “to give sustenance or support.” So in reference to God, the noun *providence* has come to mean “the act of purposefully providing for, or sustaining and governing, the world.”

The Belgic Confession (1561)

- ▶ Article 13. The Doctrine of God's Providence: We believe that this good God, after creating all things, did not abandon them to chance or fortune but leads and governs them according to his holy will, in such a way that nothing happens in this world without God's orderly arrangement.

Heidelberg Catechism (1563)

- ▶ Lord's Day 10, Question 27. What do you understand by the providence of God?
- ▶ A. God's providence is His almighty and ever present power,[1] whereby, as with His hand, He still upholds heaven and earth and all creatures,[2] and so governs them that leaf and blade, rain and drought, fruitful and barren years, food and drink, health and sickness, riches and poverty,[3] indeed, all things, come not by chance[4] but by His fatherly hand.[5]
- [1] Jer. 23:23, 24; Acts 17:24-28. [2] Heb. 1:3. [3] Jer. 5:24; Acts 14:15-17; John 9:3; Prov. 22:2. [4] Prov. 16:33. [5] Matt. 10:29.

- ▶ Question 28. What does it benefit us to know that God has created all things and still upholds them by His providence?
- ▶ A. We can be patient in adversity,[1] thankful in prosperity,[2] and with a view to the future we can have a firm confidence in our faithful God and Father that no creature shall separate us from His love;[3] for all creatures are so completely in His hand that without His will they cannot so much as move.[4]
- [1] Job. 1:21, 22; Ps. 39:10; James 1:3. [2] Deut. 8:10; I Thess. 5:18. [3] Ps. 55:22; Rom. 5:3-5; 8:38, 39. [4] Job 1:12; 2:6; Prov. 21:1; Acts 17:24-28.

Westminster Confession of Faith (1646)

- ▶ Chapter 5. Of Providence
- ▶ 5.1. God the great Creator of all things doth uphold, direct, dispose, and govern all creatures, actions, and things, from the greatest even to the least, by his most wise and holy providence, according to his infallible foreknowledge, and the free and immutable counsel of his own will, to the praise of the glory of his wisdom, power, justice, goodness, and mercy.
- ▶ 5.4. The almighty power, unsearchable wisdom, and infinite goodness of God, so far manifest themselves in His providence, that it extendeth itself even to the first fall, and all other sins of angels and men, and that not by a bare permission, but such as hath joined with it a most wise and powerful bounding, and otherwise ordering and governing of them, in a manifold dispensation, to His own holy ends; yet so, as the sinfulness thereof proceedeth only from the creature, and not from God; who being most holy and righteous, neither is nor can be the author or approver of sin.

- ▶ 5.5. The most wise, righteous, and gracious God, doth oftentimes leave for a season His own children to manifold temptations and the corruption of their own hearts, to chastise them for their former sins, or to discover unto them the hidden strength of corruption and deceitfulness of their hearts, that they may be humbled; and to raise them to a more close and constant dependence for their support upon himself, and to make them more watchful against all future occasions of sin, and for sundry other just and holy ends.

PROVIDENCE OVER SATAN AND DEMONS

John Piper, *Providence* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2020), 255-284.



- ▶ Most people who live where modern science has shaped everyday life have little awareness of Satan and demonic forces of the world. Other cultures live with profound and daily awareness of demonic reality. Secular people will attribute this difference largely to the fact that demons are not real and to the belief that more primitive peoples are still in the illusion of prescientific explanations of reality. A more biblical explanation for modern obliviousness to demonic reality is that Satan is by nature a deceiver, and he uses different deceptions to get modern and nonmodern cultures to fall in with his designs.
- ▶ In modern cultures, his shrewdness plays on people's true awareness of his reality and controls them with fear. In modern cultures, he holds people in his sway incognito, happy with their disbelief in his reality, as he leads them by the illusion that their deification of self is an experience of autonomy and freedom, when in fact, they are in perfect sync with his desires.

Ten Powers of Satan That Are Not Final or Decisive

1. Providence over Satan's delegated world.
2. Providence over demons and evil spirits.
3. Providence over Satan's hand in persecution.
4. Providence over Satan's life-taking power.
5. Providence over Satan's hand in natural disasters.

6. Providence over Satan's sickness-causing power.
7. Providence over Satan's use of animals and plants.
8. Providence over Satan's temptations to sin.
9. Providence over Satan's mind-blinding power.
10. Providence over Satan's spiritual bondage.

The Ongoing Existence of Satan

6. God is defeating Satan with *showing* more of his own attributes.
7. God is defeating Satan with *suffering*.
8. God is defeating Satan with *Satan*.
9. God is defeating Satan with *savoring*.

GREAT DRAGON, ANCIENT SERPENT, THE DEVIL, SATAN, THE DECEIVER OF THE WHOLE WORLD



- ▶ **Genesis 3:1, 4-5:** “Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God actually say, 'You shall not eat of any tree in the garden'?" . . . But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”
- ▶ **Matthew 6:9-13:** “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.”
- ▶ **John 10:10:** “The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.”
- ▶ **2 Corinthians 2:10-11:** “Anyone whom you forgive, I also forgive. Indeed, what I have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, has been for your sake in the presence of Christ, so that we would not be outwitted by Satan; for we are not ignorant of his designs.”
- ▶ **2 Corinthians 4:3-4:** “And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.”

- ▶ **2 Corinthians 10:3-6:** “For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ, being ready to punish every disobedience, when your obedience is complete.”
- ▶ **2 Corinthians 11:3:** “But I am afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, your thoughts will be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ.”
- ▶ **2 Corinthians 11:13-15:** “For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. So it is no surprise if his servants, also, disguise themselves as servants of righteousness. Their end will correspond to their deeds.”
- ▶ **2 Corinthians 12:7:** “So to keep me from becoming conceited because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to harass me, to keep me from becoming conceited.”
- ▶ **Ephesians 4:26-27:** “Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and give no opportunity to the devil.”
- ▶ **Ephesians 6:10-13:** “Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm.”

- ▶ **1 Timothy 4:1-2:** “Now the Spirit expressly says that in later times some will depart from the faith by devoting themselves to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons, through the insincerity of liars whose consciences are seared.”
- ▶ **Hebrews 2:14-15:** “Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery.”
- ▶ **1 Peter 5:8-9:** “Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world.
- ▶ **Revelation 2:10:** “Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and for ten days you will have tribulation. Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life.”
- ▶ **Revelation 12:9-11:** “And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world-- he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him. And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, “Now the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ have come, for the accuser of our brothers has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God. And they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death.”

- ▶ **Exodus 20:1-3:** “I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. You shall have no other gods before me.” As Christians and as the church, what are “other gods” we have placed before God?
- ▶ **Mark 8:33** (cf., Matt. 16:23): “But turning and seeing his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, “Get behind me, Satan! For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man.” As Christians and as the church, in what ways may we be setting our minds on the things of man, not on the things of God?
- ▶ **Colossians 3:1-5:** “You have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth . . . put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.” As Christians and as the church, what are those idolatrous things, which may be good things though perceived or lived as ultimate, that need to be put to death?
- ▶ **1 John 5:21:** “Little children, keep yourselves from idols.” As Christians and as the church, what may be identified as the idols of our age?

GOD SUBSTITUTES, IDOLS, AND IDOLATRY



Tim Keller in [*The Reason for God: Belief in an Age of Skepticism*](#), (2009), “Ten—The Problem of Sin,” endnote 8, pages 291-292, Keller gives a lengthy, bulleted list, the seeds of which would grow into his later book [*Counterfeit Gods*](#).

If we use Kierkegaard’s definition we can categorize various “god substitutes” and the particular kinds of brokenness and damage that each one brings into a life. So we could discern some of the following:

- ▶ If you center your life and identity on your spouse or partner, you will be emotionally dependent, jealous, and controlling. The other person’s problems will be overwhelming to you.
- ▶ If you center your life and identity on your family and children, you will try to live your life through your children until they resent you or have no self of their own. At worst, you may abuse them when they displease you.

- ▶ If you center your life and identity on your work and career, you will be a driven workaholic and a boring, shallow person. At worst, you will lose family and friends and, if your career goes poorly, develop deep depression.
- ▶ If you center your life and identity on money and possessions, you'll be eaten up by worry or jealousy about money. You'll be willing to do unethical things to maintain your lifestyle, which will eventually blow up your life.
- ▶ If you center your life and identity on pleasure, gratification, and comfort, you will find yourself getting addicted to something. You will become chained to the “escape strategies” by which you avoid the hardness of life.
- ▶ If you center your life and identity on relationships and approval, you will be constantly overly hurt by criticism and thus always losing friends. You will fear confronting others and therefore will be a useless friend.

- ▶ If you center your life and identity on a “noble cause,” you will divide the world into “good” and “bad” and demonize your opponents. Ironically, you will be controlled by your enemies. Without them, you have no purpose.
- ▶ If you center your life and identity on religion and morality, you will, if you are living up to your moral standards, be proud, self-righteous, and cruel. If you don’t live up to your standards, your guilt will be utterly devastating.

Tim Keller, *Counterfeit Gods: The Empty Promises of Money, Sex, and Power, and the Only Hope That Matters* (2011), “Epilogue—Finding and Replacing Your Idols,” endnote, 119, pages 203-204:

Here is a brief list of idol categories. The list may help us see the broad scope of idolatry in order to better recognize our own:

- ▶ **Theological idols**—Doctrinal errors that produce such distorted views of God that we end up worshipping a false god.
- ▶ **Sexual idols**—Addictions such as pornography and fetishisms that promise but don’t deliver a sense of intimacy and acceptance; ideals of physical beauty in yourself and/or your partner; romantic idealism.
- ▶ **Magic/ritual idols**—Witchcraft and the occult. All idolatry is in the end a form of magic that seeks to rebel against the order of transcendent reality rather than submitting to it in love and wisdom.

- ▶ **Political/economic idols**—Ideologies of the left, right, and libertarian that absolutize some aspect of political order and make it *the* solution. Deifying or demonizing free markets, for example.
- ▶ **Racial/national idols**—Racism, militarism, nationalism, or ethnic pride that turns bitter or oppressive.
- ▶ **Relational idols**—Dysfunctional family systems of codependency; “fatal attractions”; living your life through your children.
- ▶ **Religious idols**—Moralism and legalism; idolatry of success and gifts; religion as a pretext for abuse of power.
- ▶ **Philosophical idols**—Systems of thought that make some created thing the problem of life (instead of sin and some human product or enterprise the solution to our problems (instead of God’s grace)).

- ▶ **Cultural idols**—Radical individualism, as in the West, that makes an idol out of individual happiness at the expense of community; shame cultures that make an idol out of family and clan at the expense of individual rights.
- ▶ **Deep idols**—Motivational drives and temperaments made into absolutes: a. Power idolatry: “Life only has meaning/I only have worth if—I have power and influence over others.” b. Approval idolatry: “Life only has meaning/I only have worth if—I am loved and respected by ____.” c. Comfort idolatry: “Life only has meaning/I only have worth if—I have this kind of pleasure experience, a particular quality of life.” d. Control idolatry: “Life only has meaning/I only have worth if—I am able to get mastery over my life in the area of ____.”

LUTHER ON BECOMING A THEOLOGIAN: *ORATIO, MEDITATIO, TENTATIO*" (PRAYER, MEDITATION, TRIAL)."

Quotes from Ewald M. Plass, compiler, *What Luther Says:
An Anthology*, (St. Louis: Concordia Pub. House, 1959),
v.3, pp. 1359f.



- ▶ "I want you to know how to study theology in the right way. I have practiced this method myself...The method of which I am speaking is the one which the holy king David teaches in Psalm 119...Here you will find three rules. They are frequently proposed throughout the psalm and run thus: *Oratio, meditatio, tentatio*" (prayer, meditation, trial)."
- ▶ **Prayer (*oratio*)**: "You should completely despair of your own sense and reason, for by these you will not attain the goal...Rather kneel down in your private little room and with sincere humility and earnestness pray God through his dear Son, graciously to grant you his Holy Spirit to enlighten and guide you and give you understanding. As you see, David constantly prays in the psalm..."

- ▶ Psalm 119:18 Open my eyes, that I may behold wonderful things from Thy law. 27 Make me understand the way of Thy precepts, teach me, O Lord, the way of Thy statutes. 34 Give me understanding, that I may observe Thy law. 35 Make me walk in the path of Thy commandments, for I delight in it. 36 Incline my heart to Thy testimonies, and not to dishonest gain. 37 Revive me in Thy ways.
- ▶ “He uses many more words of this nature, although he knew the text of Moses well and that of other books besides and heard and read them daily. Yet he desires to have the real Master of Scripture in order by all means to make sure that he does not plunge into it with his reason and become his own master.”

- ▶ **Meditation (*meditatio*):** “Secondly, you should meditate. This means that not only in your heart but also externally you should constantly handle and compare, read and reread the Word as preached and the very words as written in Scripture, diligently noting and meditating on what the Holy Spirit means...Therefore, you observe how in this psalm David always says that he will speak, think, talk, hear, read, day and night and constantly—but about nothing else than God’s Word and Commandments. For God wants to give you his Spirit only through the external Word.”
- ▶ Psalm 119:11 Thy word I have treasured in my heart, that I may not sin against Thee. 15 I will meditate on Thy precepts, and regard Thy ways. 48 I shall lift up my hands to Thy commandments, which I love, and I will meditate on Thy statutes. 24 Thy testimonies also are my delight; they are my counselors. 47 I shall delight in Thy commandments, which I love. 93 I will never forget Thy precepts. 97 O how I love Thy law! It is my meditation all the day.

- ▶ **Trials (*tentatio*):** “Thirdly, there is the *tentatio*, testing (*Anfechtung*). This is the touchstone. It teaches you not only to know and understand but also to experience how right, how true, how sweet, how lovely, how mighty, how comforting God’s word is: it is wisdom supreme. This is why you observe that in the psalm indicated David so often complains of all sorts of enemies...For as soon as God’s Word becomes known through you, the devil will afflict you, will make a real [theologian] of you.”
- ▶ Psalm 119:67 Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I keep Thy word. 68 Thou art good and doest good; teach me Thy statutes. 71 It is good for me that I was afflicted, that I may learn Thy statutes.

INFANT/CHILD DEDICATION SERVICE



Infant/Child Dedication Service

- ▶ **Parental Promises** (one of them): We pray against the deceit of the enemy who seeks to steal, kill, and destroy by claiming true and abundant life is found outside of Christ and in self, and we pray for protection from some of the chief temptations experienced in the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, or the boastful pride of life and their contemporary expressions.

- ▶ **United Prayer:** Lord of Glory, giver of every good and perfect gift, your grace alone can make _____ what you created him/her to be. In the name of Jesus, we stand against any and all unclean spirits who would tempt or deceive him/her. We pray he/she will be joyfully satisfied in being a biologically-sexed male/female, not a female/male, and become a man/woman after God's heart. We claim for him/her the protection and love our Savior promised. Our trust is in you. Strengthen our wills to do your will so that by love and patience, discipline and service, prayerful silence and well-chosen words, we may all play our parts and see your will fulfilled in his/her life. In Jesus' name, Amen.

IDENTIFICATION WITH CHRIST, REPUDIATION OF SATAN: BAPTISM

Ryan Griffith, [Have You Renounced Satan?: The Lost Second Vow of Baptism](#)
(February 18, 2023).



- ▶ From the earliest days of the church, baptism was understood as a person's public identification as a disciple of the risen Christ (Matt. 28:18). Baptism testifies to a person's conscious faith in Jesus as Lord, reflects the deep inworking of grace in the transformation of desire, and marks the believer's entry into the community of the local church (Rom. 6:3-5; 1 Cor. 12:13; Gal. 3:27). Luke's narrative history of the early church depicts new believers being baptized in the presence of witnesses, testifying to their adoption as fellow heirs, and signaling their pledge to live as citizens of a heavenly kingdom (Acts 10:44-48).
- ▶ Leaders in the early church universally maintained these emphases in the post-apostolic age. [The *Didache* (c. 90), for example, describes a period of repentance entailing a prescribed fast one or two days prior to baptism (*Didache* 7.4). So also, Justin Martyr (c. 100–165) reserved baptism for “the person who has been persuaded and has given consent” (1 *Apology* 65.1 [ANF 1:185]; cf. also 61.1–13 [ANF 1:183]).] They emphasized the importance of public profession of faith as part of baptismal practice by pointing to the “good confession” Timothy made “in the presence of many witnesses” (1 Tim. 5:12). So also, they noted how the apostle Peter linked the public “pledge of a good conscience to God” to the celebration of baptism (1 Pet. 3:21). Tertullian (155–220) argued that the practice of profession of faith at baptism, if not directly derived from the Scriptures, “without doubt flowed down from tradition,” having been “handed down” from the disciples. [Tertullian, *De corona* iii (ANF 3:94).]

- ▶ One's public testimony at baptism not only highlights the work of sovereign grace in election and regeneration; it also reflects supernatural deliverance from the domain of darkness and into the kingdom of the beloved Son (Colossians 1:13). Trusting in Messiah Jesus entails deliberately forsaking the self-reliance, idolatry, and vain pursuits that characterize life under the power of the evil one (1 John 5:19). As with a wedding vow, the new believer makes a dual commitment at baptism. He freely and intentionally renounces the claims of Satan upon his life, and he consciously embraces a lifelong, exclusive commitment to the lordship of Christ.

- ▶ In the early church, new converts entered a process of instruction as catechumens (Greek *katēkhōmenos*, “being instructed”), in which they were taught the basics of the Christian faith. Only upon clear understanding and conscious profession of faith would a catechumen be accepted for baptism. The earliest accounts of baptismal practice thus record not only a profession of faith, but the renunciation of Satan. Tertullian of Carthage writes,
 - When we are going to enter the water, but a little before, in the presence of the congregation and under the hand of the bishop, we solemnly profess that we disown the devil, and his pomp, and his angels. [Tertullian, *De corona* iii (ANF 3:93).]
- ▶ Allegiance to Christ meant renouncing, rejecting, and repudiating the reign believers were formerly under and the practices they previously performed. The *Apostolic Tradition*, an early third-century Egyptian handbook to church order, records a similar instruction:
 - Then the presbyter, taking hold of each of those about to be baptized, shall command him to renounce, saying: I renounce thee, Satan, and all thy servants and all thy works. [*Apostolic Tradition* 21.9 in Burton Scott Easton, *The Apostolic Tradition of Hippolytus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1934), 45.]

- ▶ In a series of lectures designed to prepare catechumens for baptism, Cyril (313–386) describes how this renunciation was practiced at the church at Jerusalem. On the night before their baptism, after candidates entered the outer hall of the baptistery building, they were told to face west (symbolically the region of darkness), stretch forth their hand, and, “as though he were present, [say,] ‘I renounce thee, Satan!’” Cyril continues,
 - What then did each of you stand up and say? “I renounce thee, Satan,” — thou wicked and most cruel tyrant! meaning, “I fear thy might no longer; for that Christ hath overthrown, having partaken with me of flesh and blood, that through these He *might by death destroy death*, that I might not be made *subject to bondage* for ever.” “I renounce thee,” — thou crafty and most subtle serpent. “I renounce thee,” — plotter as thou art, who under the guise of friendship didst contrive all disobedience, and work apostasy in our first parents. “I renounce thee, Satan,” — the artificer and abettor of all wickedness. [Cyril of Jerusalem, “Lecture XIX” (*NPNF* 2/7:145). Cyril goes on to explain what the catechumen was to mean when saying, “and all thy works, and thy pomp, and all thy service.”]



- ▶ Such was the universal practice from Africa to Palestine to Asia. In a homily on baptism, Proclus (d. 446), bishop of Constantinople, reminds catechumens that blasphemy, empty pleasure, evil deeds, and idolatry are the schemes of the devil. To renounce Satan means forsaking idolatry, rejecting envy and drunkenness, disavowing stealing, lying, and prostitution, and rejecting the use of magic to obtain health. [Proclus, *Homily 27.2.4–10*. For an English translation of Proclus’s sermon, see J.H. Barkhuizen, “Proclus of Constantinople, Homily 27: Μυσταγωγία Εἰς Τὸ Βάπτισμα,” *Acta Patristica et Byzantina* 14, no. 1 (2003): 1–20.] Proclus instructs baptismal candidates to declare, “I renounce you, Satan, and your pomp and your cult and your angels and all your works.” He continues,
 - These things you called out in words. Demonstrate it with your deeds! Sanction your confession with your conduct. Do not return to the place whence you ran away! [Quoted in Everett Ferguson, *Baptism in the Early Church: History, Theology, and Liturgy in the First Five Centuries* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 748–49.]

- ▶ In the account given by the fourth-century bishop Cyril of Jerusalem, the candidates approach the baptistery in darkness, turn toward the west where the Prince of Darkness resides, and cry out, “I renounce you, Satan!” before facing east to profess the creed. As Cyril says, “When you renounce Satan, trampling underfoot every covenant with him, then you annul that ancient ‘league with Hell,’ and God’s paradise opens before you, that Eden, planted in the east, from which for his transgression our first father was banished.”

EPHESIANS



BELIEF/DOCTRINE

Ephesians 1-3



1. God is praised for blessing Christians with every spiritual blessing in Christ (1:3-14 [1:3]).

- ▶ Does the way I live my life reveal that I actually believe that I have been blessed with every spiritual blessing in Christ? Do I long to know and grow in those blessings? Do I do all to the praise of God's glorious grace?

2. Prayer is offered so that believers' hearts may be enlightened that they may know God better (1:15-23 [1:17-19]).

- ▶ How often do I pray? Are my requests tied to Scripture? Do I pray that I and others might know God better?

3. God, who is rich in mercy, made dead people alive by grace through faith (2:1-10 [2:5, 10]).

- ▶ Do I ever tire of thanking God for His incredible gift of salvation? Since I have been created in Christ Jesus to do good works, do I do them? Is there marked growth in Christlikeness in my life?

4. Christ is peace, and He brings peace and unity (2:11-22 12:14-16)].

- ▶ Is Christ the center of my life? Do I look to Him to bring peace and unity? Is He the cornerstone in my life and in the church? Is He my all in all?

5. God's mystery has been revealed to Paul: Christ is the fulfillment of God's plan and those who believe in Him are heirs of the promise (3:1-13 [3:6-7]).

- ▶ Am I a servant of the gospel? Do I share with others the unsearchable riches of Christ? Is God's manifold wisdom seen in the church?

6. Prayer is offered for Christians that they may be strengthened by the Holy Spirit, they may grasp the love of Christ and they may be filled with the fullness of God (3:14-21 [3:16-21]).

- ▶ From where does my strength come? Do I grasp the love of Christ and am I committed to deepening my grasp? Am I filled to the measure of all the fullness of God? Is God being glorified in our church?

BEHAVIOR/PRACTICE

Ephesians 4-6



1. Live a life worthy of the calling that has been received and live in unity (4:1-6 [4:1-3]).

- ▶ Am I living a life worthy of God's call in my life? Am I humble, gentle and patient with others? Do I do all I can to preserve the unity of the spirit iii the bond of peace?

2. The Lord might grow in love and into Christ (4:7-16 [4:7, 12-15]).

- ▶ Do I know the gifts God has given to me? Am I using them faithfully in church? Do I speak the truth in love? Am I growing up?

3. Live as children of the light (4:17-5:20 [4:22-24, 29-5:2, 8-11]).

- ▶ Am I being transformed? In my life are the old ways of the flesh being replaced by the new ways of the Spirit? Is my speech being sanctified? If I am hurt or frustrated, do I speak to the right person and is my goal edifying? Do I live as a child of light? Do I find out and do that which pleases the Lord? Is our aim in life to please the Lord in all we do?

4. Exhortations are given for proper, God-honoring relationships -wives and husbands, children and parents, slaves and masters (5:21-6:9).

- ▶ Where am I being challenged in my relationships? Do I struggle with authority and submission? What needs to change in order that my life will conform to these God-given directives?

5. Believers are to put on the full armor of God in the fight of faith, and they are also to use the weapon of prayer (6:10-20 [6:10-13, 18-20]).

- ▶ Do I believe that we are in a battle? Do I believe that God's resources are sufficient to fight the battle? In whom do I attempt to stand? Do I know what the armor of God is, and do I put on the full armor of God? Do I ask people to pray that I will fearlessly proclaim the gospel?

THE FULL ARMOR OF GOD: EPHESIANS 6:10-20



Ephesians 6:10-18: 10 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. 11 Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. 12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. 13 Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm. 14 Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, 15 and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace. 16 In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; 17 and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, 18 praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints, 19 and also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel, 20 for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak.

1. 'This important section is how Paul concludes this incredible letter, "finally."
2. What is taught here is real, it makes up the experiences of our lives, "our lives." This applies both the individual believer, as a Roman soldier, but also the body as a *whole* (corporate) wears the armor of God in battle against the enemy
3. Paul addresses our divine resources, for the God-given resources are "the full armor of God (6:10, 13), and also our responsibility as Christians to "be strong" (6:10), to "put on" (6:11), "to stand" (6: 11, 13(2)) and to "take up" (6: 13).
4. This passage contributes to inaugurated eschatology in that Christ is already seated above all powers and dominions, with everything in subjection to him (1:20-22), while believers will nonetheless be forced to deal with spiritual forces who are in opposition to them.
5. This text continues the theme of union with Christ (e.g., 2:3-14; 2:1-22). Believers are to be strengthened "in the Lord," and put on the full armor of God, the same armor his Messiah wears in battle. Believers will take their position standing against the forces of evil through their union with Christ.
6. Paul writes of our strength, our provision, our enemy, our struggle, and our goal.

- ▶ The Fight: Standing with the Full Armor of God (6:10-13).
- ▶ Truth: The Belt of Truth (6:14a).
- ▶ Righteousness: The Breastplate of Righteousness (6:14b).
- ▶ Peace: The Gospel of Peace (6:15).
- ▶ Faith: The Shield of Faith (6:16).
- ▶ The Helmet: The Helmet of Salvation (6:17a).
- ▶ The Sword: The Word of God (6:17b).
- ▶ Prayer: Praying By/In the Spirit (6:18-20).

Graham A. Cole, *Against the Darkness*, p. 190:

- ▶ In verse 14 Paul refers to the belt of truth, in verse 14 the breastplate of righteousness, in verse 15 shoes for the feet, in verse 16 the shield of faith, in verse 17 the helmet of salvation, and in verse 17 the “sword of the Spirit , which is the word of God.” I contend that all of these items are gospel-related. The truth on view in verse 14 is gospel truth. The righteousness mentioned also in verse 14 is the righteousness that comes to us through the gospel. In verse 15, Paul mentions the “gospel” explicitly. With our feet shod, we can actually stand firmly for the gospel. In verse 16, I take the shield of faith to be the gospel because Paul writes of “the faith.” The faith protects from the onslaughts of the devil. The helmet mentioned in verse 17 consists of salvation, which is the term used in the most general way in the NT to speak of the benefits of the gospel. Lastly, also in verse 17, we read of “the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God,” which for Paul is the gospel message (see 1 Thess. 2:13). Moreover, Paul, having described the armor of God, calls for prayer on his behalf that he might proclaim the gospel boldly. . .

- ▶ We also need to note that Paul is addressing a congregation and not just the individual Christian. This spiritual warfare is not conducted alone. A biblically defensible model of spiritual warfare must seek to ground believers on the gospel of peace.
- ▶ Importantly, Ephesians 6:10-20 begins and ends with God. In verse 10, the admonition is to be strong in the Lord, and in verses 18-20 Paul calls for prayer for his gospel ministry. . . A biblically defensible model of spiritual warfare is both theocentric and gospel informed.

SPIRITUAL WARFARE IN THE STORYLINE OF SCRIPTURE

A Biblical, Theological, and Practical Approach (Nashville: B&H
Academic, 2019)



SPIRITUAL WARFARE AND THE LOCAL CHURCH

Cook and Lawless, *Spiritual Warfare*, pp. 203-229.



Specific Ways and Means of Satan's Strategies and a Christian's Response

- ▶ Marriage: 1 Corinthians 7:5
- ▶ Forgiveness: 2 Corinthians 2:10-11
- ▶ Anger: Ephesians 4:27
- ▶ Stand: Ephesians 6:11
- ▶ Shield of Faith: Ephesians 6:16
- ▶ Affliction: 1 Thessalonians 3:5
- ▶ Submit to God: James 4:7
- ▶ Humility and Watchful: 1 Peter 5:6-8
- ▶ Love: 1 John 3:12

William F. Cook III and Chuck Lawless, *Spiritual Warfare in the Storyline of Scripture: A Biblical, Theological, and Practical Approach* (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2019), “Spiritual Warfare and the Local Church,” 203-229.

The Enemy’s Strategies against the Local Church

- ▶ Sin
- ▶ Division
- ▶ False Teaching
- ▶ Persecution

The Church's Strategy to Stand Against the Enemy

- ▶ Focus on the Centrality of God
- ▶ Preach the Sinfulness of Humanity and the Grace of God
- ▶ Emphasize the Believer's Position in Christ
- ▶ Promote Unity
- ▶ Model and Teach Godly Relationships
- ▶ Teach and Model Holiness in Lifestyle
- ▶ Prioritize Prayer
- ▶ Disciple Believes in Wearing the Armor of God

SPIRITUAL WARFARE AND THE FAMILY

Cook and Lawless, *Spiritual Warfare*, pp. 287-312.



Why the Enemy Attacks Families

- ▶ Satan seeks to destroy what God has created.
- ▶ Satan wants to extinguish the witness of our marriages.
- ▶ Satan hates our children.
- ▶ Satan always wants to hinder our prayers.
- ▶ Satan strives to remove people from ministry.

How the Enemy Attacks Families

- ▶ Personal sin
- ▶ Spousal blame
- ▶ Unrighteous anger
- ▶ Marital inattention
- ▶ Financial worries
- ▶ Faith struggles

How to Prepare for Attacks on the Family

- ▶ Teach a biblical perspective on marriage.
- ▶ Develop a family prayer strategy.
- ▶ Fill the “gap” in marital counseling and prayer.
- ▶ Create opportunities for veteran couples to spend time with young couples.
- ▶ Teach believers to forgive.

SPIRITUAL WARFARE AND LEADERS

Cook and Lawless, *Spiritual Warfare*, pp. 313-336.



Attacks on Leaders

- ▶ Encouraging to live in self-reliance.
- ▶ Promoting teaching and preaching that lacks the Word.
- ▶ Enticing “behind the scenes” ungodly speech.
- ▶ Isolating leaders in loneliness.
- ▶ Luring leaders into the world of secrets.
- ▶ Trapping leaders in unrecognized pride and overconfidence.

How Leaders Prepare for and Win the Battle

- ▶ Do not be hasty in setting apart leaders.
- ▶ Find a mentor, and be a mentor.
- ▶ Take care of yourself spiritually and physically.
- ▶ Decide now to finish well.

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Martin Luther, A Mighty Fortress Is Our God (1529)

1 A mighty fortress is our God,
a bulwark never failing;
our helper he, amid the flood
of mortal ills prevailing.
For still our ancient foe
does seek to work us woe;
his craft and power are great,
and armed with cruel hate,
on earth is not his equal.

2 Did we in our own strength confide,
our striving would be losing,
were not the right Man on our side,
the Man of God's own choosing.
You ask who that may be?
Christ Jesus, it is he;
Lord Sabaoth his name,
from age to age the same;
and he must win the battle.

Martin Luther, A Mighty Fortress Is Our God (1529)

3 And though this world, with devils filled,
should threaten to undo us,
we will not fear, for God has willed
his truth to triumph through us.
The prince of darkness grim,
we tremble not for him;
his rage we can endure,
for lo! his doom is sure;
one little word shall fell him.

4 That Word above all earthly powers
no thanks to them abideth;
the Spirit and the gifts are ours
through him who with us sideth.
Let goods and kindred go,
this mortal life also;
the body they may kill:
God's truth abideth still;
his kingdom is forever!

