

Class 203 Introduction to Spiritual Warfare: Session 1 Full Notes

For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. (1 John 3:8b)

Session One: Welcome to Reality

1.1 Reality - It's Not All It's Cracked Up To Be!

1.1.1. Coming to grips with the Biblical view of reality.

One of the key goals of this class is to enable you to begin to grow in understanding, wisdom and effectiveness when it comes to matters of spiritual warfare. In order to do this it will be necessary to understand first of all that the Biblical view of reality is quite different from the conception of reality held by materialistic Western society.

To be biblical Christians (and I know of no other kind) we must come to grips with - and accept - what the Bible reveals about reality. The truth of the Bible is revelation - meaning it is truth we could not know unless it were revealed to us by one having superior knowledge. The Bible is clear that Man* is not capable of learning much about God other than what God reveals to him. In fact, Man is not even interested in finding out about God and is not even looking for God. Rather, Man is hiding from God!

Canst thou by searching find out God? (Job 11:7a)

There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. (Romans 3:11)

If the Bible is true, then no amount of wishing can cause its revelation to be untrue. We are obligated as Christians to conform not only our *professed doctrine* but also our thinking and our practices to what the Bible reveals. Failure to do so hurts our effectiveness in ministry. In the area of spiritual warfare, the Church is crippled by pet theories, pet doctrines, and learned behaviors which can be ineffective - not only bringing a reproach on the Church but leading even well-wishing observers to conclude that there is nothing to this spiritual warfare business after all.

Accepting the Bible's picture of reality also creates problems for Christians who live in rationalistic, materialistic societies for the Bible contains some uncomfortable assertions about the nature of reality, and particularly the reality of evil.

* - We are using the traditional Christian theological term "Man" in place of the awkward invented word *humankind*. The term means all human beings who have ever lived and, in particular, human beings as they stand in relation to God. For example, we say that God created Man, or that Christ is God and Man, or that Christ has reconciled God and Man.

1.1.2. The reality of good and evil supernatural beings.

The Bible presents a universe in which there is not only a Supreme Being but a host of non-material beings of different types. These beings are neither tangible nor visible, nor can they be communicated with, at least in the ordinary course of events.

The Bible also presents a universe in which there is active evil - not just evil as the absence of good, but actively working. This is also an offensive idea to many on philosophical grounds.

There are at least three ways to conceive of the operation of evil:

- First, evil may be structural. For example a government may be racist or economically oppressive. For the rationalist, this is the easiest evil to conceive of - and perhaps the only one he can imagine.
- Secondly, evil can be thought of as an influence which is not attached to any personality. This can be structural (e.g., the effects of growing up in an abusive environment) or supernatural. Popular culture is filled with examples of the latter.
- Third, we can conceive of evil that his evil exists not just structurally or as an influence, but which is personal. That is to say, personal evil is bound up with and is located within the evil actor himself as a part of his nature.

This is the difference between saying, "This government is corrupt," "This place is evil," and "That person is evil."

Again, the Bible reveals that there are good and evil supernatural beings - these are not mere influences but creatures who have the characteristics of personhood: will, intellect, and emotion.

1.1.3. Christians are at war with evil supernatural beings, not merely evil systems and societal structures.

The Bible reveals that there are evil supernatural beings which not only exist but which can influence the affairs of human beings and their social organization such as families, religions, governments, etc. Their effects can be spiritual, psychological (affecting the soul), or physical. These entities are actively opposed to God and to His people.

1.2 The Worldview Problem

1.2.1. Human beings interpret life through the grid of their beliefs, ideas, biases, and experiences: their "worldview."

A worldview can be described most simply as the set of lenses through which one view the world. Your worldview or paradigm is the grid through which you look at the world, although someone said that nothing establishes you as a phony intellectual faster than

using the word "paradigm."

We all have cultural norms and experiences that can interfere with our accurately perceiving reality or with us responding to reality and finding solutions.

1.2.2. Western societies have adopted an anti-supernatural bias; this keeps people from considering supernatural causes and influences.

People discount the Bible if they adhere to the anti-supernatural bias of materialism: only what is material is real and there are no supernatural forces or beings which can intervene in our world. Under this worldview, the Resurrection could not have happened because it would have been a miracle, and miracles do not exist; therefore, the Resurrection did not happen. In this worldview, all of man's social and physical problems are environmental or physical and there are no supernatural causes or factors which can be involved.

Even Christians can fall prey to this thinking when their faith takes on more of a Deistic tone. Deism is a belief in a personal God who, although He created the world, is not actively engaged in it. Biblical Christianity asserts a God who is directly involved in the shaping of history and in the lives of His people. He even calls His people to shape history with Him through the ministry of intercession.

1.2.3. The Bible deals extensively with the "excluded middle" of reality and its impact on our lives.

The Bible not only teaches the existence of a supreme or "high" God, but a "middle level" of reality which industrial and technological societies have ignored for several centuries. This is the realm of angels, demons and other supernatural experiences such as interactions with the Holy Spirit and supernatural ministry. This is referred to as the "excluded middle," for it represents a middle tier of reality in between God in His Heaven and Man here on Earth.

Modern societies ignore or do not believe in this realm, even though all traditional societies seem to. An interesting feature of modern life is that the dechristianization of Western society has brought about a major repaganization, causing an explosive acceptance of all manner of supernatural experience. This can take different forms, whether an outright adherence to the old pagan gods, invention of novel "New Age" practices, or a melding of science with deceptive, supernatural elements.

1.3 Basic Angelology

1.3.1. The nature of the angels

The term "angel" is generally used in Scripture to describe a class of beings which, like Man, was created by God to have close relationship with Him. Man was made in the image and likeness of God (Gen. 1:26), so much so that God could become Man and that Man could become a partaker of the Divine Nature (2 Pet. 1:4). However, but angels appear not to be

made in the image of God but to have been created as His servants and companions, although the companionship is in a lesser degree than that enjoyed by Man.

The word for angel both in Hebrew and Greek means "messenger." Angels are described as spirits, meaning that in the ordinary course of Nature, they are neither tangible, audible nor visible to men. (Heb. 1:14) However, the Bible is full of instances in which angels could make themselves known to men and interact with the physical world.

Describing angels as messengers means more than simply carrying announcements from Heaven: it speaks to the essence of their duties toward men and to the earth: they are dispatched by God to execute His Will. As such they are intimately involved in the lives of God's people and in the affairs of the nations of the earth.

Bless the LORD, ye his angels, that excel in strength, that do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word. (Psalm 103:20)

Indeed, angels do have tremendous power. They may also radiate a great glory or holiness from God.

For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father's, and of the holy angels. (Luke 9:26)

Angels were apparently created close to the beginning of the Creation, and God says they rejoiced when He made the earth, referring to them as the morning stars or the sons of God.

Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? Declare, if thou hast understanding. Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest? Or who hath stretched the line upon it? Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? or who laid the corner stone thereof when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy? (Job 38:4-7)

Angels are a created and immortal race – they do not procreate and are apparently all masculine, as none are ever referred to as feminine or as a she.

For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven. (Matt. 22:30)

The number of angels is exceedingly large, although we do not know their number.

A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him... (Dan. 7:10)

1.3.2. The fall of Satan

Although the Biblical record is not as full as curious minds would like it to be, it appears that evil originated in Creation when an angel who was possibly the highest of all the angels

rebelled against the Almighty God, being swollen with pride. This angel is known as Satan, which in Hebrew means "enemy." He is of course also known in English as the "Devil," a word which comes from the Greek *diabolos*, meaning "accuser."

This angel's actual name is not known with certainty, but we can suggest on the basis of Isaiah 14 that it was *Helel*, a Hebrew word meaning "daystar" and commonly rendered in English Bibles as *Lucifer*. In context, Isaiah is speaking to the King of Babylon; however, there are a number of elements which make us think it may also refer to Satan:

How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, "I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north. I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High." Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit. (Isa. 14:12-15)

This passage apparently indicates that Satan's fall was due to pride and a desire to exalt himself to the level of the Deity.

It appears from a similar passage that Satan is a cherub, which is probably the highest order of angelic being, and was intimately connected with the worship of God. In Ezekiel 28 there is a lamentation for the King of Tyre which, like Isaiah 14, contains odd elements which lead us to think that God is also speaking of another:

Thus saith the Lord GOD; "Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty. Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering, the sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold: the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee in the day that thou wast created. Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee." (Ezek. 28:12b-15)

The power, beauty and high responsibility of this cherub is clearly seen here and apparently, if we were to derive a narrative from these two passages we could deduce that Satan was inflated with pride because of his great power and responsibility.

1.3.3. Fallen angels and demonic spirits

We know that a large number of the angelic spirits rebelled with Satan. There is a clue in Scripture to suggest that the number was 1/3 of the total number of angels.

And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth... (Rev. 12:3-4a)

Satan appears to have some limited access to the Presence of God, using that opportunity to slander believers in Christ, although there will come a point at which he will be definitively hurled down to the earth and be denied this ability. Christians differ in their interpretations of this passage.

And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, "Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night." (Rev. 12:7-10)

The angels who fell together with Satan now serve him in the administration of the kingdom which he heads and has set up against the Kingdom of God. Among these are many powerful spirits who undoubtedly retain their vast intelligence and great capacities.

There is also a host of spirits commonly called demons and over whose origin Christians differ. Some consider all the demons to be among the number of the fallen angels; some consider them to be disembodied spirits from a pre-Adamic world which existed on the earth before Earth's present history under the stewardship of Man. The timeframe for this pre-Adamic world would have been in between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2. Such discussions, although interesting, do not have any practical bearing on the Christian who seeks to walk in an effective ministry of delivering the oppressed from the power of Satan. It is best to avoid arguments about matters which are not so clearly set forth in the Word of God.

1.3.4. Types of angelic creatures and their hierarchies

At this point we urge caution. For while there is a surprising amount of detail given about angelic beings, we simply do not know as much as would satisfy human curiosity. Still, it is apparent that there are various classes or types of angelic and demonic beings. The Bible is fairly clear that angels differ in authority, glory, ability, strength, and assignment. This should not be surprising when we consider that God is a God of order but also a God of variety!

It would seem that Satan also has a hierarchy of evil spirits organized under him and in probably imitation of God's own angelic hierarchy. This hierarchy is set forth (although we cannot say whether it is complete) in Ephesians 6:12, where Paul says:

For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

The Greek would indicate four levels here:

- Principalities (princedom)
- Powers (authorities)
- World-rulers of this darkness

- Wicked spirits, or spiritual hosts of wickedness (a possible reference to the whole category of demons, viewed as lesser spirits)

The arrangement of the heavenly host is different, being more complex as it seems to have more levels:

For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him... (Col. 1:16)

To these we would add the additional categories of cherubs and seraphs, beings which are intimately connected with the Throne of God and the heavenly worship. Note: the terms cherubim and seraphim are simply Hebrew masculine plurals transliterated. Thus, cherubim means "cherubs."

We also would note that there is likely an innumerable host of ordinary angels who do not have the power and authority implied in the other, higher levels. It would not surprise even the casual student, therefore, that there are seven basic classes of holy angels set forth in the Word of God:

- Cherubs
- Seraphs
- Thrones
- Dominions
- Principalities
- Powers
- Angels

Adding to the mystery is that one of the angels, Michael, is referred to as an *archangel*, clearly implying some level of headship. In my opinion, this may not place him above the ranks of the throne angels but he is possibly first among all the governmental angels and those angels who interact with Man and the earthly realm.

1.3.5. Functions of angelic creatures

The holy angels have at least seven functions or duties we can surmise: worshipping God, attending upon God, administering various spheres of authority in the heavenly realms, executing God's decrees, recording events, ministering to the saints, and warring against the Satanic kingdom.

1.3.6. Human interactions with angels

Interaction with angels is frequent. As the word angel means messenger, they are commonly sent to convey the intentions of God. Their appearance and presence seem to be startling and even terrifying to men, particularly evil men. There are numerous examples of

angelic protection and deliverance of the redeemed. They may also minister to us in a general sense as God commands them, perhaps even physical healing. Some miscellaneous points for thought:

- The angels take great pains to urge us not to worship them, although the great glory some bear seems to create a strong temptation toward this.
- We have no biblical examples of people being urged to initiate contact with them, much less to pray to them or command them.
- Angels maintain frequent concourse with the world and some who appear to us seeking hospitality are actually angels. (Heb. 13:2)
- Angels holy and evil are apparently learning things about God they did not know through God's interactions with Man. (Eph. 3:10)

1.3.7. Human interactions with demons

Demonic spirits seem to be the shock troops of the Devil as he executes his plan to "steal, kill and destroy." To this end, demons have frequent interactions with human beings, principally designed around three goals:

- **Deception**, particularly keeping people blind to the truth of the Gospel
- **Temptation** to sin
- **Affliction** of a more direct kind, such as causing or aggravating physical and psychological suffering

The Bible is clear that people can "have" or be indwelt by demonic spirits.

On what we might call the "macro" level, it seems that the princes and principalities, etc. of Ephesians 6 are involved in administering Satan's kingdom with him, fighting the spread of the Kingdom of God and working to keep men in subjection to Satan within the spheres and geographic territories assigned to them.

The Bible teaches that the sacrifices of Gentile religions are actually made unto demons, whether it is understood that way or not. (1 Cor. 10:20) The Bible gives the strongest of warnings against witchcraft and occult activity, as these involve communication and partnership with demons. A person who is demonized can be delivered through the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ in His Church.

1.3.8. The destiny of the angels

The Bible teaches that the holy angels will enjoy the Kingdom of God forever with Him and with redeemed humanity. God has not made any way of redemption for fallen angels and they will be tormented in the fire of Hell forever. Indeed, Jesus revealed that Hell was created specifically for this purpose. (Matt. 25:41) In the age to come, even the holy angels will apparently occupy a place lower than Man. The angels will be judged by believers, although we do not know exactly what this means. (1 Cor. 6:3)

1.4 An introduction to the Cosmic Conflict

1.4.1. The human race fell from its original position of stewardship over God's creation by disobedience to God.

God created Man to have dominion over the works of His hands. (Gen. 1:26, Psalm 8:6) When Adam fell, he became in a very real sense the servant of Satan whose temptation he had obeyed, his grant of authority thus passing to Satan. Satan had become the "*god of this age.*" (2 Cor. 4:4)

Indeed, when Satan tempted Christ he offered to Him all the kingdoms of the world. I do not believe Satan was lying or else it would not have been a temptation.

And the devil said unto him, "All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it." (Luke 4:6)

This does not imply rulership necessarily of the earth, but of the world – meaning its governments and systems.

With the Fall, Man's predicament was dire; not only was he separated from God due to sin, he was also in bondage to death, and in servitude to Satan.

1.4.2. God obtained the ultimate victory over Satan and made a way for Man to return to Him through the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Through the sacrifice of the Blood of Jesus the Messiah, God has obtained victory for the human race over sin, death and all the power of the Devil.

And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, "All power [exousia, lit. authority] is given unto me in heaven and in earth." (Matt. 28:18)

"I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death." (Rev. 1:18)

...having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it. (Col. 2:15)

Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil... (Heb. 2:14)

The world-system is in a strange and intermediate phase of its existence in which although the government of God and Christ has prevailed over that of Satan, God has not yet chosen to take back the actual full exercise of His dominion over the affairs of the world. We believe this will happen in the future.

And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and

he shall reign for ever and ever." And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God, saying, "We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned." (Rev. 11:15-17)

Nevertheless, all who will receive the salvation of God offered through Jesus' blood now live in the Kingdom of God already and have emerged from their bondage to the enemy.

Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light, Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son... (Col. 1:12-13)

1.4.3. Man is now engaged in conflict with the forces of Satan as he is assailed by them, or as he exercises the authority of Christ to undo Satan's works.

Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. (Eph. 6:11)

Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. (Jas. 4:7)

There came also a multitude out of the cities round about unto Jerusalem, bringing sick folks, and them which were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed every one. (Acts 5:16)

Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them. And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. For unclean spirits, crying with loud voice, came out of many that were possessed with them: and many taken with palsies, and that were lame, were healed. And there was great joy in that city. (Acts 8:5-8)