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Fallen Angels

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Series: Angels

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Fallen Angels

We cannot quite grasp it, can we? This whole concept of spirit beings that we cannot see (particularly that of angels, some with six wings, invisibly flitting from place to place) seems too far-fetched and difficult to imagine. In an age of science-fiction and high-tech imagery, you would think we could grasp it, but we can't.

If we can't see it or touch it, it's hard for us to believe. It shouldn't be, however. If we can believe that the Holy Spirit indwells us, if we can believe that heaven awaits us, if we can believe that God answers prayer, then we ought to be able to believe that He has a multitude of created beings who were designed in eternity past to do His bidding, whose cardinal responsibilities are to worship and to serve. We ought to be able to take that by faith.

Our only authority for this lesson is the Scripture, and the Scripture makes no apologies for the existence of angels. It is straightforward, clear, and detailed in its portrayal of this heavenly host of spiritual missionaries. It is also just as clear that at some point in time something happened to that angelic throng that literally threw all of the spirit world into a tailspin. It was a cataclysmic event, and it all had to do with fallen angels.

It is that event and the corresponding changes that event caused in the realm of principalities and powers that we will address in this lesson. In our opening study of angelology, we took a look at who the angels are, when they came into being, and how they came to be. We determined that they were created beings, created by Christ Himself, probably before God made the world. We found that they are spirit beings with characteristics we do not yet have, yet they are distinctly different even from what we will one day become. We will never be angels, though we will take on some of their characteristics.

We also learned that we can learn from the angels. They are heavenly object lessons, created in eternity past to teach us how to worship God and how to serve the saints. By watching them,

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we can honestly learn a lot about how God expects His children in fellowship to behave. By watching their demonic counterparts, we can also learn how we look and act when we are outside the will of God and not abiding in Christ.

We learned that angels are stronger than we are, but they are not omnipotent. They are wise, but not omniscient. They have the means of traveling through time and space, but they are not omnipresent. In short, they have qualities we do not have, but are not, in any way, possessors of the attributes of God. We learned that Jesus made Himself “a little lower than the angels” for a reason. He was demonstrating something He desperately wanted us to understand. We learned that angels are the epitome of servanthood. They meet the needs of those who need them most without even revealing their presence. They are available, but invisible, and their availability includes a willingness to do the most menial of tasks with absolutely no accolades or fanfare. They serve so transparently that even when they meet our needs, we seldom have a clue that they have done so. What a pattern for New Testament servitude.

But as we said earlier, something happened early in the game of life that caused this angelic host to be divided into two camps, and that division would serve as the catalyst for a spiritual war that would last from that moment until the end of time as we know it. One day it will be over, and that day has been assigned by an omniscient, sovereign God. Until then, however, the battlefield will be Planet Earth, and the participants on the battlefield will be you and me.

What happened those many years ago that caused such a spiritual upheaval? Why did God allow it to happen? What is happening today as a result of that moment? And what will happen in the future to bring it to an end? Those are some of the issues we must deal with in today’s study. We will face the issue of Satan and his demonic host early on, because his revolt is the defining moment in history when spiritual warfare, as we know it, began. We will also deal with this issue first because of its chronological place in the history of angels, and because we want to overlay a portrait of the power of God on top of Satan’s limited power, to keep it all in perspective.

So we must, then, rewind the DVD of history back very close to the beginning and try to hit the “pause” button at just the

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moment in time when part of the heavenly host turned their backs on the authority of God and, in the shot heard 'round the world, caused the spirit realm to be blown into two armies never again to be united. One of those armies would do the bidding of the Commander-in-chief, Almighty God. The other would serve religiously, doing the wishes of their counterfeit commander, a once angelic being called Satan. Their objectives would be diametrically opposed; in fact, *there would be no basis at any point for the two to ever coexist in agreement.* Never in history has there been or could there be two groups more alienated the one from the other, or more determined to destroy the work of the other. In fact, never in history have two armies come against one another with objectives so clear and destinies so different. This was to be the war of wars. It would be fought out on Planet Earth, but the strategies would be directed from the heavenlies, and the ultimate casualties would be eternal.

Part of Satan's task would be to convince the world that there is no war at all. He will try, whenever possible, to make both believers and unbelievers think that the real issues are temporal, and that they can be solved by making temporal decisions. Hence, his three offers to Jesus in the wilderness. They were offers to solve spiritual problems by accepting physical compromises as peace offerings. Had Jesus accepted any of the three, He would have sinned; and our salvation would never have happened. But, praise God, He understood that we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, powers, and the rulers of the darkness. He understood, and His paramount goal is that we understand, as well. For if we do, then we will begin to view life from a spiritual vantage point; and when Satan offers us the same three options, (and he does) we will recognize them for what they are.

Let's look momentarily at Satan's three attempts to take spiritual lordship and transfer it into the realm of physical or temporal activities.

Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.

And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward hungry.

And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.

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But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple,

And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.

Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.

Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them;

And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.

Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.

Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him. (Matthew 4:1-11)

You may be asking, “Why begin a study of fallen angels by looking at a New Testament passage?” Because the heart attitude that caused the fall, and the root conflict between Satan and God can be better defined in Matthew 4 than anywhere else in Scripture.

Remember, the conflict between Satan and God will be for control over what occupies your heart in the midst of spiritual warfare, because that’s what spiritual warfare is. It is the personalization on Planet Earth of the eternal battle Satan is waging against Almighty God. It is a losing battle for Satan. He knows it. God knows it. We know it. Yet he is able to win skirmishes along the way because we forget what the battle is all about and get caught up with what we see on the battlefield, rather than with who is waging war and why.

1- The first issue is the timing of Satan and the circumstances he uses to initiate conflict. He knew Jesus was fasting. He knew that spiritual energy was being stored up in the Master’s heart. He also knew that physically, He was being exhausted to the point of collapse. Spiritual victories and physical weariness so often

go together. And look for the enemy to attack whenever those ingredients are present.

2- He began by asking a question. His cardinal rule is to create confusion about lordship by raising doubts. He said, "If you are the Son of God, why not solve this problem physically? You're hungry. It's a simple problem. Let's stop at McDonald's and make a "rock burger". In this case, He tempted God to use His powers to accomplish something in the physical realm in order to ease a perceived physical problem. He raises seemingly unanswerable questions to create a smokescreen over the real issues of life. The woman at the well bought the same lie. "Our fathers worshipped over here. Your fathers worshipped over there. Who was right?" she asked. "That's not the issue," Jesus responded, "The issues are spiritual." And indeed they are.

3- Satan then proceeded to reveal his nature using the same three temptations he had used with Eve in the garden.

A- The lust of the flesh (good to the taste)

B- The lust of the eye (good to look at)

C- The pride of life (it'll make you wise)

All three had one common denominator. It was: *"Do what appeals to you. You have no Lord. You are in charge if you want to be."* That statement underlines Satan's theology. "You have no Lord. You are in charge."

Now, how did such a theology evolve? If his whole war tactic hinges on this one issue, and God's perspective is 180 degrees from that, where did it come from? When did it all begin?

The truth from the beginning was: *"You are created in the image of God. You were designed in eternity past to be a spiritual servant; a slave of the Most High God."* You are to be a spiritual "yes" man, if you will, to do God's bidding. You were designed to be inhabited by Him, controlled by Him, led by Him, and protected by Him: from yourself, from Satan, and from sin.

He wants to be your Lord; not just your Savior, not just your friend, not just your deliverer, not just your protector. He wants to be *your Lord*. Read Philippians, chapter two. Jesus gave up all rights to His own life and became a servant, so that we might become kings. To do that, He had to die. To do that, we have to die, too (to self).

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Our desires must become His
Our will must succumb to His
Our priorities must become only His
He must become Lord—that means *He runs our lives totally.*
We die. He lives.

Now at one time Satan himself complied with that concept of Lordship. He was one of God's elect, perhaps the most beautiful, wisest angel ever created. He lived to do God's bidding. Here is how Scripture describes him before that fatal moment in history when he chose to become his own 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.

(Ezekiel 28:12b-15)

He was created to be an anointed cherub, one who covered the holy mountain of God, which in Biblical imagery, represents the throne or the center of God's governing power. This description, as written, could describe no one but Satan as he existed before the fall.

So at one time, he was the angel of angels. He was created perfect, according to this passage. Indeed, all things created by God in the beginning were perfect. God said so Himself:

And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. (Genesis 1:31)

But something happened. Something of earth-shaking, heaven-shaking proportions happened. Something happened that set off a string of events and initiated the longest war in the history of mankind, a war in which the stakes are so high that even those engaged in the conflict by and large do not grasp how serious the casualties are and how significant the prize. The angel of angels,

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this created one, designed to bring God glory, rebelled and declared war on the One who made him. It was fought on the battlefield of the heart, and his heart rejected the lordship of His Creator and he determined to become his own god. As is always the case, his rebellion was only the rock that started a landslide, for he took with him perhaps one-third of all the heavenly host.

He did not threaten God with bullets or bombs. Such did not exist. He took from God the one thing he had no right to take: control of his life. And therein lies the root of all sin. Sin is independence from God. Any attitude, act or activity that takes control away from God and assumes it for oneself is sin; and the attitudes are, in essence, the cause. The acts and activities are the results. When your thoughts covet, you are sinning as though you are stealing, because in your heart you have taken control away from God, who gave you all you need to be content. If you lust in your heart, God says you have already committed adultery, for you wrestled control of your heart away from God who cannot look upon impurity. Hence, the sin originates in the heart and only culminates in the act.

Satan's great sin was the pattern for all sin to follow. What did he do? *He thought in his heart that he no longer needed God.* Listen to God's assessment of Satan's thoughts:

By the multitude of thy merchandise they have filled the midst of thee with violence, and thou hast sinned: therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God: and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire.
(Ezekiel 28:16)

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.
(Isaiah 14:12-15)

Beloved, even reading those verses ought to cause us to weep. At that moment, the warfare began. The moment Satan said in his heart, "I will...I will...I will." At that moment, hell came out of

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heaven. At that moment, all of the holiness and purity and love that captured the angelic host began to feel the tremble of an earthquake of rebellion. At that moment, the will of the creature defied the will of the Creator, and the battle began. This one who had been created and anointed to not only exist in the presence of total holiness in total peace and was created to literally guard the gates into the presence of the King of kings, decided that if God could sit on that throne, so could he.

God could. He couldn't, and neither can we. And the echoes of that moment of insidious rebellion began to send its shock waves into the four corners of the heavens, radiating through the annals of eternity into the realm of time, reaching into the very depths of something called "earth" which would, in the years to come, feel the impact of that moment until time, as we know it, is wrapped up in the mantle of God's unchanging love and is once and for all swallowed up in that precious cloth called "eternity". Until then, sin will reign on Planet Earth, and until then, in the spirit world, there will be a battle for the souls of men. It won't be an occasional skirmish; but a constant, ongoing, nearly invisible battle will rage in the heart of every man and every woman and every child who breathes the breath of God. Every choice will be a choice to either obey God or be God. Every thought will either be captive to the mind of God or in rebellion to it, for no thought can be neutral; no choice can be incidental.

Lordship is an all-consuming relationship. The role of a slave is an around-the-clock happening. Any movement a slave makes that does not focus on or center around his master is an act of disobedience. Any ignoring of his master's wishes becomes defiance. Any act of independence that even hints that the master is not needed to control his life is an act of rebellion. So all the enemy has to do to initiate spiritual warfare is to do what he did originally. He only has to think in his heart, I will. In that instant, he ascends to the throne of God and struggles to crawl upon that throne. He may not realize it. That does not make it any less sin. When he thinks independently of God, he says, "I will." And if he will, God can't.

Do you see the gravity of it all? Do you see how vital it is to understand just what Satan is saying to us and through us to God when we so much as exalt ourselves one ten-trillionth of an inch towards that throne? Dear God, help us to see what Jesus

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meant when it says that He “took upon Himself the form of a slave and was made in the likeness of man. He, who thought it not robbery to be equal with God, made Himself nothing (Philippians 2:6,7 paraphrase).

And we, who know it is robbery to think ourselves equal with God blaspheme that name whenever we so much as move a millimeter towards that throne that only He was meant to occupy.

“I will!” Satan thought, and it was done. And when he did, the heavens erupted into a tumultuous battlefield, as this self-serving angelic rebel declared his “rights” as he saw them; and millions upon millions of God-fearing angels became angels who thought they were gods. The heavens were filled with the artillery of rebellion. Don’t you see how Satan, even today, deceives and destroys by creating cults whose ultimate creed simply says, “You, too, can become a god”. And can you not see the more insidious seeds he plants when he builds into the fabric of man’s theology the simple lie that what matters is self-confidence, self-acceptance and self-accomplishment? Beloved, *nothing matters but God—God’s confidence, God’s acceptance, God’s accomplishments*. He alone is worthy. He alone belongs on the throne. He alone is holy and pure. He alone is righteous and just. He alone is merciful and gracious. He alone is God. He said,

I am the Lord: that is my name: and my glory will I not give
to another... (Isaiah 42:8)

Satan did not threaten initially to take over the kingdom or even openly displace God. What did he do?

Satan said in his heart these things:

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, on the sides of the north.

I will ascend above the heights of the clouds.

I will be like the most high.

Watch the progression, once Satan determined to come out from under the lordship of God.

“I will ascend into heaven.” Step one. *The place of servitude was not adequate for him*. He had outgrown the role of a servant. He wanted to move into the sphere God occupies, where decisions

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are not made for him, but where he can co-labor with God to determine what is best.

“I will exalt my throne above the stars of God.” His next step was *to see himself above the other angelic beings*. Once you come out from under God’s total control, you see yourself in the light of your goodness or beauty when compared to others, rather than being humbled at who you are when compared to God.

“I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation.” Having elevated self to a place of semi-deity, *you now believe that you can sit alongside God*; that you and He have some elements of authority in common.

“I will ascend above the heights of the clouds.” *Now, you see yourself as God’s equal*. You and God will occupy the same sphere.

“I will be like the most high.” *Now you think you are a god*. You have gradually elevated your position from that of slave to god, simply by justifying each step as a simple move upward from the last one. You did not start out to be a god. You started by coming out from under God’s authority and rule. But once outside that rule, there’s no stopping the heart of unregenerate man or angel. Man, apart from God, is drawn to assume the role of god, for we all need either to be ruled or to rule.

God’s response? It was three-fold.

I will destroy thee... (Ezekiel 28:16c),

How thou art fallen from heaven...how art thou cut down to the ground... (Isaiah 14:12),

Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell... (Isaiah 14:15)

So Satan’s descent was a direct reversal of his imaginary ascent. God took away his role in heaven, threw him out of his heavenly domain, and consigned him to a fate worse than death, the ultimate prison house of hell itself. You cannot attempt to occupy heaven’s throne without being cast down. God will not share His glory, for to do so would cause Him to cease being God. The very nature He holds as God requires that He be the only God, or He is a liar and a fraud. Therefore, for Him to allow any man or woman or angel to occupy that throne would take from all redeemed men and women the right to their salvation.

Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name in heaven given among men, whereby ye must

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be saved.

(Acts 4:12)

So Satan said in his heart, “I will”. And God said to Satan, “No, you won’t”. Since that noted moment in ages past, all of the forces of hell have been gathered morning, noon and night to garner their offensive against the name of the Most High God. Every circumstance He allows on earth to cause His Name to be lifted up, Satan’s forces attempt to destroy. Every time someone seeks to read His Word, to hear His truth, to elevate that Cross, the demonic host that once gathered around that awesome throne now uses every ploy in their evil trunk of destruction to try to bring to nothing the message of God’s Word.

But they cannot prevail. Like Satan, as he attempted to thwart the Cross in the wilderness, they attempt to take physical failures, physical sicknesses, physical setbacks and use them to tempt the Lord God and to trick His children. But with each attack, the Master weaves into the human heart the golden threads of Romans 8:28; and when the believer focuses on the things of the Spirit, the very weapons the demonic host has turned upon us, God turns upon them, and we are blessed as the demons flee.

They win some battles, but they have lost the war. They make some inroads, but ultimately, those very inroads become the detours a Holy God allows us to take to lead us to the throne again. Satan has power. The demons have delegated power. But compared to the power of Almighty God, they are as cap pistols in a field of cannons. They can attack, but we have a shield of faith wherewith we are able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one.

Satan said, “I will” and millions of angels followed suit. Like cattle, they followed their sin-sick leader out of heaven, out of the Holy place, into the marketplace where ultimately they will end up in hell forever.

Some are already in chains, bound and waiting for their eternal punishment (II Peter 2:4). We will see more about that in the next lesson. Others are free to do the bidding of their evil leader, not realizing they are only digging a deeper grave from which they will never emerge (I Corinthians 6:3, Matthew 25:41). All of them will one day get their just reward at the hand of a holy God. For one day, in the not so distant future, the heavens will open, and King Jesus will emerge from the heavenlies, His army of saints by His precious nail-pierced side; and the war will, in essence,

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be over. Oh, what a day that will be.

In the meantime, the battle will go on. The curse was extended through Eve to Adam, and through Adam to us. All of mankind groans as in labor, waiting for its deliverance. Satan and his host attack through witchcraft, demonic warfare, deception, and temptation. They taunt the believer. They persecute the saints. They rail at the church. They create moral substitutes to take our eyes off the Cross. They allow society to feed off its own evil devices until each once-great empire seemingly destroys itself.

Still the battle rages. But quietly, in heart after heart after heart, the Master speaks. And quietly, through God's holy, unchanging Word, God reaches out with perfect truth, exposing Satan's every lie, turning Satan's every evil intent into potential glory for God. The enemy never learns. Again and again he tries to tear down that Cross. Yet still it stands. He tries to undermine the work of the church, but the gates of hell cannot prevail against it.

He has succeeded in causing a revolution and a war. He will not, yea, he cannot win the war he started. He is as doomed to defeat today as he was that fateful day he said in his heart, "I will". He didn't. He couldn't, and he won't.

That's the beginning of the story of fallen angels. In our next lesson we will see who they are, what they are doing, and what they will be doing in the endless age of eternity yet before them. They started the battle, but the battle belongs to God.

Fallen they are, and tortured they will be for all eternity, a glorious picture painted on the canvas of Scripture for all to see of how unbelieving mankind will one day reach the end of itself, and having said, "I will", will end that sentence simply, I will... surely die.

They will. We won't. We will live forever and forever in the presence of God. For instead of "I will", we will have said, "Thy will be done."

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For Focus and Application

1- Try to imagine in your mind what kind of life Satan had before the fall. Think of the awesomeness of God's presence, the kindness of God's love, the fellowship with God's angelic host. His problem, like Adam's was not one of environment. He lived in a perfect setting. But perfection is not enough for the heart that longs to be out from under authority; it cannot tolerate even a perfect authority.

2- If his environment was perfect, what motivated his heart to rebel? Try to reconcile this with today's "It's not my fault" theology. What was Satan's great desire? How has he created that kind of attitude in you and in me?

3- Describe what lordship is. What thoughts run counter to a master-slave relationship? Why is the thought of being a slave so unpleasant to us? What makes the difference in our relationship with God?

4- Read and re-read Matthew 4:1-11. Try to find the three great temptations and their root issues. Compare those with the Genesis 3 passage. Compare that with I John 2:15,16. See if you can trace the sin problems in your own life to one of those three areas. If you can, how can that help you avoid yielding to temptation?

5- Why do you think the devil "left" Christ in Matthew 4:11? What role did the holy angels have then?

6- Read Ezekiel 28:12-15. Put it in your own words. How would you describe Satan's role in God's kingdom? How did that exalted role affect him? What might we learn from that?

7- Read Isaiah 14:12-15 and watch the progression of Satan's presumptuous pride. What do you think it means when it says "thou hast said in thine heart"?

8- When did the sin begin that caused Satan to fall? Why is it so easy to exalt yourself once you have taken the first step? What is the first step? Why is humility the most important, but the most difficult element of lordship?

9- What can you learn about spiritual warfare from this incident? What do you plan to do to be more watchful of the enemy's wiles? How can memorizing Scripture help you? Will you do it?

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