

FIVE LEVELS OF PRAYER

Level 4 -- Spiritual Warfare

SPIRITUAL WARFARE 2

THE PURPOSE OF SATAN AND HIS KINGDOM

God's chief purpose and plan before the world was ever created was to bring into existence a group of people who would willingly choose to love and serve Him. Satan's chief purpose has always been to keep this from happening--to thwart and hinder the plan and purpose of God.

After God created Adam and Eve, Satan took immediate action to destroy their relationship with God. He also succeeded in taking authority from Adam and became the prince of this world. However, God restored His relationship with Adam and Eve by slaying two animals instead of them, and at the same time He instituted the substitutionary sacrifice system.

During the Old Testament era, although Satan lost his heavenly position and had been cast down to the earth, he still had access to heaven: *"Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them. And the LORD said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it"* (Job 1:6-7).

God permitted Satan to act as "the accuser of the brethren" (Revelation 12:10), trying to persuade God that Job only served Him because of the blessings he received from God: prosperity, health, family, etc. However, after Job lost all of these things, he continued to serve God faithfully.

Nevertheless, there were not many people who lived righteous, overcoming lives during the Old Testament era. Mankind needed a Saviour, and for that purpose Jesus Christ was born!

Possibly Satan did not understand completely the whole plan and purpose of God, but he knew enough that he wanted to destroy Mary's baby! He put jealousy in the heart of a king so that Herod killed hundreds of babies, trying to kill Baby Jesus. All of his efforts failed, and Baby Jesus grew to be Jesus, the young man and future Saviour of the world!

Whenever Jesus was almost thirty years old, Satan heard words from the lips of John the Baptist that disturbed him: *"Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand"* (Matthew 3:2).

The kingdom of heaven (which is the same as the kingdom of God) was a threat to Satan's kingdom, and this was bad news for him. He must try to keep this from happening. His opportunity came early. The Holy Spirit led Jesus into the wilderness to be tempted of Satan. Jesus was there for forty days, fasting, praying, and being tempted of the devil (Luke 4:1-2). If Satan could cause Jesus to sin, the plan and purpose of God would be defeated. At the conclusion of the forty days of fasting, Jesus was very hungry! *"And the devil said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, command this stone that it be made bread"* (verse 3). Many years before, David had written, *"Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee"* (Psalm 119:11). Evidently, Jesus had done the



same, and answered Satan: *"It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone; but by every word of God"* (verse 4).

Next, the devil showed Jesus all of the kingdoms of the world, and said unto Jesus: *"All this power (authority) will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it. If thou therefore will worship me, all shall be thine"* (verses 6-7).

Jesus had the opportunity to regain what Adam had lost! But He did not come into this world to establish an earthly kingdom for Himself. Neither would His kingdom come because of compromise with the devil. Once again, Jesus used His knowledge of the Word of God (the sword of the Spirit -- Ephesians 6:17) to defeat his chief enemy: *"Get thee behind me, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve"* (verse 8).

Next, Satan brought Jesus to Jerusalem, and set him on the pinnacle of the temple: *"If thou be the son of God, cast thyself down from hence: For it is written, He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee: And in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone"* (verses 10-11).

Notice that the devil used the Word of God to try to get Jesus to sin. There are many people in the world today just like this. They teach a little truth, but choose only the Scriptures that will serve their own selfish purposes.

As long as Jesus Christ allowed him to do so, Satan continued to tempt Him. Matthew informs us that after the third temptation, Jesus said unto him, "Get thee hence." *"Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold angels came and ministered unto him"* (Matthew 4:10-11).

According to these verses, you can choose who you want to have a conversation with! As long as we continue to listen to the devil, he will continue to talk to us and tempt us. But as soon as we say, "In the name of Jesus, get thee hence," he will leave!

After Jesus' time of temptation, He returned to Galilee "in the power of the Spirit" (Luke 4:4). Jesus never cast out devils nor healed the sick until this important time of fasting, praying, and battling the devil took place. But after that important period of time in his life, He entered the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up to read: *"And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias (Isaiah). And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written. The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of the sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised. To preach the acceptable year of the Lord. And he closed the book, and then he gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him. And he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears"* (Luke 4:17-21).

By this, Jesus served notice to His people--and to the devil--that His miraculous ministry was about to begin. This event took place in Nazareth, his home town, and he was not received by the people. In fact, they tried to kill Him, but he left them and went to Capernaum. It was there that Jesus announced, as John had a few months previously, *"the kingdom of heaven is at hand"* (Matthew 4:17).

Jesus taught every day in the synagogue. The people *"were astonished at his doctrine: for his word was with power"* (Luke 4:32). Jesus then began his miraculous ministry by casting a demon out of a man possessed with an unclean spirit: *"And they were all amazed, and spake among themselves, saying, 'What a word is this! for with authority and power he commandeth the unclean spirits, and they come out.' And the fame of him went out into every place of the country round about them"* (Luke 4:36-37).

JESUS PROMISED TO MULTIPLY HIS MIRACULOUS MINISTRY

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto the Father" (John 14:12).

1. Jesus gave power and authority to his twelve disciples: *"Then he called his twelve disciples together, and gave them power and authority over all devils, and to cure diseases. And he sent them to preach the kingdom of God, and to heal the sick" (Luke 9:1-2).*

2. Jesus gave power and authority to the seventy disciples: *"After these things the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself would come. 'And heal the sick that are therein, and say unto them, The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you.' And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name. And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven. Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you" (Luke 10:1, 9, 17-18).*

When Jesus spoke about serpents and scorpions in the above verses, He had reference to spirits, not animals or insects. Read also Romans 16:20.

While the seventy were rejoicing, there was cause for greater concern in the kingdom of Satan, because Jesus had already commissioned and given power and authority to 82 people to heal the sick and cast out devils--and He was not through yet!

3. Jesus gives power and authority to all true believers: *"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. And these signs shall follow them that believe; in my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover" (Mark 16:16-18).*

By these verses we understand that all true believers have power over Satan and his kingdom through the name of Jesus Christ! *ds*