OUR PLACE IN THE SPIRIT REALM

GODS • ANGELS • DEMONS

By
B.L. Cocherell
PREFACE

The Bible is unique. It is the only book that has the answers to the basic questions of life and claims to be written by the true God. This book tells humanity who its Creator is, why it was created, and its ultimate destiny.

Although the Bible reveals the awesome purpose for human existence, it does so in a carefully coded message. The studies that we present reveal much of what is contained in these messages that has not been taught or understood since the demise and disappearance of the early church as a powerful spirit filled entity.

OUR GOALS

Our primary goal is to share our knowledge and understanding of the Sovereign God’s plan and purpose for humanity with those who are interested in living their lives according to the law of God, not by the dictates and traditions of men. Our secondary goal is to proclaim the coming Kingdom of God as a warning and a witness to humanity before the Messiah returns to rule the earth.

We hope that you will find this study of God's word intellectually challenging and spiritually enlightening and beneficial.

If you want to know more about us, the work we are doing, or how you can participate in our biblically based educational and research projects, contact us at: www.BibleResearch.org or www.Bible-Prophecy.net

Sincerely,
B. L. Cocherell
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INTRODUCTION

Whether you believe the Bible is the infallible word of a supreme being or pure mythology fabricated by writers of the ancient nation of Israel to explain their history and existence, the Bible reveals what you need to know about the spirit-beings that interact with this dimension of existence.

The spirit realm and the beings who inhabit it and interact with humans are not fictional. The spirit realm is a reality; it does exist. It existed before mankind and will exist long after mankind and this dimension of existence disappears.

Both secular and religious history, along with ancient and current events, contain evidence of the spirit realms existence and that spirit-beings have had both a positive and a negative impact on humanity in the past and are still making their presence known and felt in today's world. However, very few people truly understand the tremendous impact these beings have had in the past, are having in the present, and will have on the earth and humanity in the future.

The Bible narrative is replete with descriptions of spirit-beings who inhabit the earth or come to earth from beyond this dimension of existence. It contains hundreds of direct and indirect references to angels, demons, Satan, and a variety of other spirit-beings who inhabit the spirit realm.

Anyone who truly believes the Bible is a record of the Sovereign God's words and contains his instructions to mankind regarding blessings, curses, and the promise of eternal and immortal life would be foolish not to become acquainted with what the Bible teaches about good and evil spirits.

The secrets, mysteries, and knowledge revealed in the Bible about the spirit realm and the beings inhabiting it are vital to expanding your understanding of who God is and what he is doing here on earth. Moreover, it is essential to working out your salvation as the end of this age and the return of Christ draws near.

This book is a serious discussion about the reality of spirit-beings, the tremendous positive impact that some of these beings have had, are having, and will have in the future on mankind, as well as the serious danger posed by some spirit-beings as they interact with humans and this physical dimension of existence.

If you are just searching for academic knowledge about angels, this book is not for you. However, if you are searching for knowledge and understanding in order to better understand the Sovereign God's plan and purpose for you, this book contains vital information for your edification and use.
THE SPIRIT REALM

The Bible answers the following questions about the spirit realm and the spirit-beings that inhabited the earth millennia before the creation of the first humans:

- Who were the spirit-beings who inhabited the earth before humans and what were they doing here?
- Why do spirit-beings come and go from the earth?
- What impact are spirit-beings having on mankind today and how will they impact mankind in the future?
- Is there anything to fear from spirit-beings?

All of these questions and many more are answered as we explore the subject of spirit-beings described in the Bible as angels, demons, devils, the Devil, Satan, principalities, powers, and the rulers of the darkness.

Although some of the information contained in this book can be found in books written by others, this book contains information and understanding that has been lost since the demise and disappearance of the early church, but is now being made available to those who "have ears to hear" in the spiritual sense.

IMPORTANT NOTES ABOUT THIS BOOK

Because there are hundreds of references and allusions to the spirit realm and spirit-beings contained in the biblical record, there is absolutely no way to explain the spirit realm, the purpose of righteous spirit-beings, the dangers posed by evil spirits, the interaction by spirit-beings with this dimension of existence, and their impact on mankind in a short and concise document. Moreover, because of the complexity of the subject, it will sometimes be necessary to repeat a scripture and parts of previous comments in order to explain the specific event or topic being discussed.

This book is written in a progressive manner; in that, each chapter contains information necessary to fully understand what is presented in the subsequent chapter. Therefore, you will find the information contained in this book to be better understood if you read from beginning to end, rather than skipping from topic to topic.

Hopefully, you will find the information about the spirit realm and the Sovereign God's plan for humanity contained in this book to be interesting, enlightening, and spiritually beneficial.

B.L. Cocherell
INTRODUCTION TO CHAPTERS 1-7

In order to begin to understand the biblical narrative about spirit-beings who were created to serve the Sovereign God, you must have a basic understanding of the reason for the creation of this dimension of existence, why the Bible was written, to whom it is written, and what transpired in heaven and on earth before the creation of mankind.

Without the background information contained in these first seven chapters it is virtually impossible to make any sense out of what the Bible records about the Sovereign God's loyal spirit-servants, angels, demons, devils, the Devil, Satan, principalities, powers, and the rulers of darkness. This background information is essential to understanding why these spirit-beings exist, and why some of them are allowed to roam this planet and interact with humans.

Therefore, the first section of this book contains information which will give you a basic knowledge and understanding of the Sovereign God's plan and purpose for mankind and the foundational information needed to make sense out of the many biblical references to both good and evil angels.

Chapter 1: Mysteries and Secrets
Chapter 2: Before Mankind
Chapter 3: After the Creation of Mankind
Chapter 4: The Angel of the Lord
Chapter 5: Satan—Who and What is He?
Chapter 6: Angels Are Not Immortal
Chapter 7: Worship of Angels Forbidden
Within the Bible, there are many references to mysteries and secrets. When reading these references, it is not always immediately apparent that these mysteries and secrets are related to the functions and responsibilities of spirit-beings. But, if we view these references to mysteries and secrets in the context of the Sovereign God's purpose for the creation of this dimension of existence, the physical things contained in it, and his ultimate plan and purpose for mankind, it becomes clear that many of these mysteries and secrets are indeed about spirit-beings and their functions and responsibilities.

The various mysteries and secrets noted in this chapter and an overview of the Sovereign God's plan and purpose for mankind are provided as foundational information in order to more easily make sense out of statements, prophecies, and events concerning spirit-beings, the interaction between spirit-beings and people, and the interaction among spirit-beings as they relate to the Sovereign God's ultimate plan and purpose for mankind.

The following scripture in which the prophet Daniel explains the meaning of a troubling dream to King Nebuchadnezzar shows that God is the one who reveals "secrets" to individuals and provides revelation at a time when there is a need to understand:

"The secrets which the king has asked to understand cannot be revealed to the king by the wise men, the astrologers, the magicians, the soothsayers; But there is a God in heaven that reveals secrets, and makes known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days. Your dream, and the visions of your head upon your bed, are these; As for you, O king, the thoughts that came into your mind upon your bed, are about the things that should come to pass hereafter: and he that reveals secrets makes known to you what shall come to pass" (Dan.2:27-29 Para.).

The meaning of dreams and visions sent from God, as well as the meaning of the mysteries noted in the biblical text are revealed only to those whom God wants to have this knowledge and understanding. God also reveals secrets to mankind at the proper time and in the sequence of events that he has foreordained in order to complete his plan for the salvation of mankind and his ultimate purpose for the creation of humanity. See Dan.2:47,12:4-10; Joel 2:28.
Today, in the end of this age prior to Christ's return, many of the mysteries and secrets contained in the Bible, including the Sovereign God's purpose for creating billions of spirit-beings long before creating the first two humans, are being revealed and proclaimed as an advance announcement that God is beginning to initiate the next phase of his awesome plan for humanity. See Dan.12:4,10; Eph.6:19; Col.1:24-27; 1.Pet.1:12.

Luke records that, after speaking to the seventy men he had sent out to proclaim the good news of the Kingdom of God, Jesus made the following statement to his twelve disciples about secrets that were hidden from most people:

"In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank you, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hid these things from the wise and prudent, and have revealed them to babes: even so, Father; for so it seemed good in your sight. All things are delivered to me of my Father: and no man knows who the Son is, but the Father; and who the Father is, but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him. And he turned him to his disciples, and said privately, Blessed are the eyes which see the things that you see: For I tell you, that many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which you see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which you hear, and have not heard them" (Lk.10:21-24 KJV).

Here Jesus speaks of three things the Sovereign God had kept secret, but were revealed to these twelve men:

- The Sovereign Father has placed all things under Christ.
- The true identity and existence of God the Father and Christ.
- The things these men saw with Christ and the things he told them were mysteries and secrets which had not been revealed to mankind before that time.

The apostle Peter also recorded that, although the prophets diligently sought to understand the things surrounding the Messiah, his coming, and the method of salvation, these things were not revealed to them. Peter also states that even the angels who existed before mankind were not allowed to know or understand these things:

"Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls. Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come to you: Searching what, or what manner of time the spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. To whom it was revealed, that not to themselves, but to us they did minister the things, which are now reported to you by them that have preached the gospel to you with the holy spirit sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into" (1.Pet.1:9-12 KJV).
But what do these mysteries and secrets have to do with spirit-beings and their interaction with humans and this physical existence? These mysteries and secrets involve the participation, in one way or another, of spirit-beings in the Sovereign God's plan for mankind which is being worked out here on earth.

In the chapters which follow, we will see that both righteous and unrighteous spirit-beings are intimately involved with this physical existence and interact with humans as Christ sees the Sovereign God's greatest and grandest creative project to completion.

MYSTERY OF THE GOSPEL

Most people who profess to believe what is written in the New Testament believe that the gospel is just about the person of Jesus Christ and the forgiveness of sin through his sacrifice. However, the good news message which Christ and the apostles proclaimed and taught is about much more. The gospel message contains many mysteries and secrets which were closely held by the Sovereign God and the Creator God before the creation of this dimension of existence and all that it contains.

It was only after the advent of Christ and during his lifetime that knowledge and understanding concerning many of these mysteries and secrets began to be revealed. But, it was revealed only to the few individuals whom Christ chose to be his disciples. Since the death and resurrection of Christ and the establishment of the Sovereign Father's earthly family of ambassadors, kings, and priests (See 2.Cor.5:20; 1.Pet.2:5,9; Rev.5:9-10), the knowledge and understanding of many of these mysteries and secrets have been revealed and taught by those called to salvation during the gospel age. See Matt.28:16-20; Mk.16:15-18.

After the apostle Paul's explanation to the Ephesians concerning the struggle against spirit-beings in which all of the Sovereign Father's earthly children are engaged, he wrote the following about this mystery of the Gospel:

"Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints [sacred ones]; And for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak" (Eph.6:18-20 KJV).

The mystery of the gospel (i.e., the good news message), which Paul wrote of consists of an understanding of the Kingdom of God, the identity of the members of the God family, the plan of God for the salvation of mankind, the future beyond this physical existence, and much more.
THE MYSTERIOUS PARABLES

Many believe that Jesus spoke in parables to make what he said more clear. However, he said he spoke in parables to conceal information which could lead people to conversion and set them free from the death penalty imposed on them for their violation of God's law:

"And when he was alone, those around him, with the Twelve, asked him about the meaning of the parable. And he said to them, To you has been given to know the mystery of the Kingdom of God. But to these outside, all things are being given in parables: that seeing they may see and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand; lest they should be converted, and their sins be forgiven them" (Mk.4:10-12 Para.). See also Isa.6:8-10; Matt.13:10-15; Lk.8:10; Jn.12:37-40; Acts 28:25-27.

The word mystery in verse 11 is translated from the Greek word mysterion, which means mystery or secret. Jesus clearly said that those outside of his group were not permitted to understand the secret plan of God which would lead them to salvation.

The phrase their sins be forgiven is translated from the Greek word aphiemi, which means to send forth and in some instances forgive or remit. This Greek word aphiemi indicates the fulfillment of the ritual on the Day of Atonement, in which a live goat having all the sins of Israel symbolically placed on its head was sent away from Israel never to return. This live goat was prophetic of the eventual total forgiveness of sin through Christ.

Matthew records additional information about what Jesus said to his disciples when asked why he spoke to the people in parables:

"Because it is given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given. For whosoever has, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever has not, from him shall be taken away even that he has. Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand" (Matt.13:11-13 KJV).

Christ clearly said the reason he spoke to the multitudes in parables was so they would not understand what he was talking about. Matthew, chapter 13, verses 14 to 15 explain why Christ did not want all of the people to understand his message:

"In them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah which says, By hearing you shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing you shall see, and shall not perceive: For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them" (Matt.13:14-15 KJV). See also Mk.4:11-12; Lk.8:9-10.
The reason Christ spoke in parables was so that most people would not understand the message he was bringing from his heavenly Father and be converted and healed spiritually through the forgiveness of sin.

"But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear. For truly I say to you, That many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which you see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which you hear, and have not heard them" (Matt.13:16-17 KJV).

In verse 35 of Matthew, chapter 13, Matthew records a similar statement about secrets that were being kept from most people, but were being revealed to the disciples. Christ said that the things he spoke of had been kept secret from before the existence of the world:

"I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world" (Matt.13:35 KJV). See also Mk.4:11-12; Lk.8:10.

The scriptures tell us the Creator God came to earth to become human, to experience life as a human, and to give his perfect life as a sacrifice for people's violations of God's law. So why would he hide information about the Sovereign God's plan to save mankind from most people and only reveal it to a few individuals? Could it be that there is something going on behind the scenes that most people do not need to know or understand?

**Why the Secrecy?**

The mystery of salvation has been preached since the time of Adam, but only a very few have been allowed to understand it. God the Father and Jesus Christ love their human creation much more than most people can begin to comprehend. It is this love and concern for each individual that prevents God the Father from offering salvation to all of humanity before the establishment of his kingdom on earth.

God the Father and Jesus Christ want everyone to become a part of the God family; they want everyone to obtain salvation:

"Who will have all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of truth" (1.Tim.2:4 KJV).

"The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2.Pet.3:9 KJV). See also Psa.136:1-16.

This love and concern is the reason God the Father and Jesus Christ have formulated a plan which will afford each individual the optimum opportunity for success. The Father knows the potential and character of each individual and in which phase of his plan to offer them the opportunity for salvation. In order for each person to have the best possible conditions for success in obtaining salvation, they must be
allowed to live in a time and in an environment in which they will have the optimum conditions for success. Therefore, a true understanding of God's word is withheld until this time arrives for each individual.

MYSTERY OF GOD THE FATHER AND CHRIST

There are several great mysteries revealed to those with the indwelling of the holy spirit about the identity of the Creator God, God the Father, Christ, and the purpose for human existence. Once these mysteries are understood, many of the interactions between the God Family, angels, and mankind make sense, because these interactions have a major impact on the destiny of mankind. The apostle Paul wrote the following about the mystery of God, the Father, and Christ:

"For I would that you knew what great conflict I have for you, and for them at Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh; That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and to all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ: In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Col.2:1-3 KJV).

The major reason it is so difficult for most people to understand the mystery of God (i.e., the secret concerning God the Supreme Sovereign, and Christ) is that the information is hidden from those who do not need to know it (Matt.13:11-17; Mk.4:10-12). However, those who do need to know and understand can understand if they allow the holy spirit to guide and teach them (Jn.14:25-26; 16:13) as they diligently study God's written word in order to come to an understanding of God the Father and Christ (2.Tim.2:15). Moreover, all of the information given in the Bible about God the Father and Christ is presented as fact, which presumes the person reading this information already believes in God and that the Bible is his written word.

MYSTERY OF CHRIST

The Creator God came to earth to perform a mission of great importance, and the majority of the people with whom he came into contact did not even know who he was.

The conception and birth of the Creator God as the Christ are great mysteries which are revealed through the gospel message. The apostle John introduces his gospel narrative by revealing who Christ was before his human birth and explaining that, during his lifetime, he was the only human ever to have been fathered by the Sovereign God:

"And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth" (Jn.1:14 KJV). See also Rom.8:3; Heb.2:9; 1.Jn.1:5-9; Jude 25.

"He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world did not know him" (Jn.1:10 KJV Para.).
The apostle Paul wrote the following to the elect at Colosse requesting them to pray that he and those with him would be afforded opportunities to proclaim the "mystery of Christ":

"Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving; Withal praying also for us, that God would open to us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds" (Col.4:2-3KJV).

The mystery of Christ concerns his identity before he came to earth, the reason he needed to come to earth, and why it was necessary for him to become human and allow himself to be murdered:

"And I [Paul], brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring to you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the spirit and of power: That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God" (1.Cor. 2:1-5 KJV).

The focus of Paul's teaching to the Corinthians was the meaning of Christ, his crucifixion, and how this understanding applied to their being successful in their call to salvation.

Paul refers to speaking the wisdom of God in a mystery. This wisdom is the knowledge and understanding of the Sovereign God's plan of salvation for mankind through Christ:

"Moreover, we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought: But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world to our glory: Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory" (1.Cor.2:6-8 KJV Para.).

If the spiritual leaders of the Jews had known that Jesus was their Creator and the promised Messiah, they would not have dared to even think of killing him.

Christ in You

It is important to note that the writings of the apostles were not meant for everyone to understand. These letters were specifically meant for the edification of those who have been called to salvation, have repented of their sins, have been baptized, and have the indwelling of the holy spirit.
These are the only individuals who can truly understand the "mystery of Christ in you," because this understanding is revealed to them through the holy spirit:

"Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfill the word of God: Even the mystery which has been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory: Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus: Whereto I also labor, striving according to his working, which works in me mightily" (Col.1:25-29 KJV).

The indwelling of Christ within each of the elect is the hope of immortality, because the indwelling of the holy spirit and the Father's and Christ's personal spirit is evidence that a person is one of the Father's new creations (2.Cor.5:17; Gal.6:15). Additionally, this indwelling of the spirit of Christ allows you to have access to the Sovereign Father and many other benefits, including the ability to understand how to deal with both good and evil spirit-beings.

MYSTERY OF CHRIST AND THE CHURCH

While giving instructions to the Ephesians about the love and concern men should have for their wives and the respect wives should have for their husbands, Paul states that there is a mystery concerning Christ and the church:

"Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it: That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loves his wife loves himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourishes and cherishes it, even as the Lord the church. "For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined to his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church. Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband" (Eph.5:25-33 KJV).

The mystery concerning Christ and the Church has to do with Christ as head of the church (symbolically the husband) and the church (symbolically the wife). The husband loves, respects, leads, protects, and teaches the wife. The wife in turn loves, respects, and follows the direction of the husband. Both together are one and inseparable. See Matt.19:4-6; Jn.14:20, 15:4-8.
The Father's earthly children as a whole are called the body of Christ and are symbolically married to him and have become one entity. The church, with Christ as its head, must be able to intelligently interact with righteous spirit-beings and effectively deal with evil spirits in order to carry out the work of the church and fulfill the purpose for its existence.

Mystery of the Father's Will

While explaining to the elect at Ephesus about being predestined to be adopted into the Sovereign Father's divine family through the sacrifice of Christ, Paul said the mystery of the Father's will was being made known to those who have the indwelling of the Father's holy spirit:

"Having predestinated us to adoption [sonship in the Sovereign Father's family] through Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, To the praise of the glory of his grace, in which he favored us in the beloved [Jesus], In whom we have redemption through his blood, that is the forgiveness of sins, according to the richness of his grace [favor]; that he caused to abound toward us in all wisdom and understanding; making known to us the mystery of his will [the Father's will], according to his good pleasure which he proposed in himself" (Eph.1:5-9 Para.).

What Paul says to the Ephesians about predestination to adoption is a very difficult concept to explain to anyone who does not have the spirit of God dwelling within them. Paul explains that God the Father has favored some people above others, calling them to participate in a better resurrection with better rewards than the rest of humanity and to have a special relationship with him that is not afforded to others (Heb.11:32-40; Rev.20:6).

The Father has not only shown great favor to those he has predestined to be his sons before the foundation of the earth but also blesses them with spiritual knowledge and understanding and allows them to know his will concerning his ultimate purpose for humanity.

"That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him: In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who works all things after the counsel of his own will; That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ" (Eph.1:10-12 KJV).

The predestination of some to sonship and a better resurrection and the predestination of mankind in general to sonship is a part of the Sovereign God's master plan to expand his divine family through mankind. In order to accomplish this, he has created many spirit-beings (i.e., angels) and given them functions and responsibilities to carry out in order to accomplish his goal for humanity. However, some of these spirit-beings are performing their functions and responsibilities and some have rebelled and refused to perform the purpose for their creation.
The Father also expects each of his elect to perform his will and purpose. In order to facilitate his goal for mankind, the Father gives each of his elect functions and responsibilities to perform which may require interaction with his spirit-servants.

**MYSTERY OF LAWLESSNESS**

In his second letter to the Thessalonians, the apostle Paul answers the question about the prophetic abomination of desolation and speaks of the mystery of lawlessness, both of which concern Satan and other evil spirits:

"Do not let anyone deceive you in any way, because that day will not come, unless there first comes a falling away [departure from the faith], and the man of sin is revealed, who is the son of perdition. This is the one who opposes and exalts himself over everything being called God, or object of worship, and he is to sit in the temple of God, as God; in order to show that he is a god" (2.Thes.2:3-4 Para.).

An interesting thing about this "man of sin" is that Paul also calls him the son of perdition. The word translated into English as *perdition* in verse 3 is from the Greek word *apoleia*, which refers to an extended state of torment in this context. The scriptures clearly reveal that no human is going to be tormented in fire forever, but all wicked humans will have their life terminated in the Lake of Fire. Therefore, the being who inhabits the physical body of the man of sin (son of perdition) is not human.

The son of perdition is the Antichrist/Beast and leader of the alliance of nations called the Beast who will desecrate the temple which will be built at Jerusalem before Christ returns; he is the abomination that makes desolate. This powerful spirit-being masquerading as a human will, in his arrogance, desecrate the temple of the true God by entering into it and sitting there in defiance of the true God. He will do this in order to attempt to prove to the world that he is indeed a god, and that the true God is no god. See 2.Thes.2:3-4.

This leader of the Beast alliance of nations will be the guarantor of the peace between Israel and her neighbors. One speculation is that, when he surrounds Jerusalem with his armies, he may agree to put his life on the line for this agreement by entering into the temple area as a sign of his commitment. Ultimately, this will lead to his desecration of the holy place by entering into it as foretold by Jesus Christ, Daniel, and the apostle Paul:

"Do you not remember, that, I told you these things when I was with you? And now you know the thing holding him [Man of Sin/Son of Perdition/Antichrist] back from being revealed. For the mystery of lawlessness already works: only he is holding back [being held back] now, until it comes out of the midst" (2.Thes.2:5-7 Para.).
Paul had already talked with the Christians at Thessalonica about the Antichrist and told them that this individual was being restrained from coming out of the middle of something. The thing that this individual comes out of, according to visions of Daniel and the apostle John, is the alliance of nations symbolized by the beast that came out of the sea. Therefore, it is very clear that wherever this powerful and fierce beast-like alliance of nations is located in the end of the age, the Antichrist will be there as its supreme leader.

"And then the lawless one [Man of Sin/Son of Perdition/Antichrist] will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the spirit of his mouth, and he will be brought to nothing by the brightness of his [Christ's] coming" (2.Thes.2:8 Para.).

Christ will remove this lawless individual from power when he comes to rule the earth. This is the same evil spirit mentioned in Daniel 7:11 who will have his physical body destroyed and be cast into a lake of fire in his spirit-form.

"His [Antichrist's] coming is according to the working of Satan with all power and miracles and lying wonders. And all deceit of unrighteousness of those being lost; because they did not receive the love of the truth in order for them to be saved. And because of this God will send to them, a working of error, for them to believe a lie" (2.Thes.2:9-11 Para.).

Based on God’s word, those whom God has called to salvation should know the difference between good and evil; however, many have already been deceived by a false Christianity and many will be deceived by Satan's Antichrist and his religious and political system of government.

Paul gives a dire warning not to allow one's love for the truth of God to erode. Make no mistake, the message of the Antichrist and Satan's religious and political system is not truth; it is a great deception designed to destroy your opportunity to enter the Family and Kingdom of God. The Antichrist's miracles, signs, and wonders will not be from the Sovereign God; they will be from Satan the Devil and are designed to deceive humanity.

The majority of people will believe the Antichrist's message and his great supernatural works, thinking that they are a part of God's plan for the salvation of humanity; however, just the opposite is true. For centuries, evil spirits have been deceiving mankind with religions, religious philosophies, and political and governmental systems. Biblical prophecies reveal that, just before Christ returns to establish his Father's government on earth, the influence and deception by evil spirits will dramatically increase.

A HIDDEN MYSTERY

The apostle Paul wrote the following to the elect at Ephesus about the mystery he had been given to reveal:
"To me, who is less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world [Greek. aion, i.e., age] has been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ" (Eph.3:8-9 KJV Para).

There are mysteries that have been hidden from the beginning of this physical dimension of existence by the Sovereign God who made all things by Christ who was the Creator God before he became human (Jn.1:1-11).

"To the intent that now to the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord: In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him" (Eph.3:10-12 KJV).

Verse 10 seems to be telling us that these heavenly spirit-beings can now know the mysteries concerning the creation and purpose for humans through the church (i.e., the Sovereign Father's earthly children). This explanation seems plausible because now the good news message from the Sovereign Father is being proclaimed by his earthly family of king-priests (i.e., the church), and this message includes the purpose for the creation of mankind. Paul gives a similar message to the saints at Colosse and adds that this hidden mystery is to be preached as a warning:

"Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfill the word of God; Even the mystery which has been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory: Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus" (Col.1:25-28 KJV). See Rom.16:25-26; Eph.1:8-9; 1.Tim.3:9.

Everyone to whom this mystery is revealed, is given the option to either accept the opportunity that comes with understanding this mystery or reject it. Those who accept it will alter their lives accordingly and receive its promised benefits, but those who reject it are warned that the consequence of rejecting it is the second death in the Lake of Fire.

To the saints at Rome, Paul explained that the mystery of Christ which had been kept secret is revealed to the saints and is being revealed to the nations:

"Now to him that is of power to establish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made
known to all nations for the obedience of faith: To God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen" (Rom.16:25-27 KJV).

From what the apostle Paul said about the hidden mysteries and secrets that were kept from spirit-beings and humans, it seems logical to assume that these mysteries and secrets had something to do with the creation of mankind and the purpose for its creation. We can assume this, because it is only after the advent of Christ and the formation of the early church that these mysteries and secrets were and are being revealed and understood.

MANKIND, ITS CREATION, AND PURPOSE

In the timelessness of eternity, a plan unfolded that is more fascinating and engrossing than any science fiction story or real-life saga ever told. This plan involves every person who has lived, is now living, and is yet to be born.

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth" (Gen.1:1).

"And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness:" (Gen.1:26 KJV).

Physical to Spirit

Many hold the popular belief that heaven is the reward of the saved. To even question this time-honored teaching is thought of as blasphemy to those who believe in it. However, what is found in the Bible about the rewards and responsibilities of the elect of God is far more exciting than the nebulous idea of going off to heaven without a clue as to what one would do there for eternity.

Believe it or not, the reward for being righteous is not to float aimlessly around heaven playing harp music for eternity. There is something far more spectacular in store for those who are accounted worthy of salvation prior to the return of Christ. The apostle Paul wrote the following about the life that awaits a righteous individual:

"But as it is written, Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for them that love him" (1.Cor.2:9 KJV).

Thousands of years ago, a man named Job asked the same questions that many people today ask about life after death. The only difference between Job and most people of today is that Job knew the answers to the questions. He knew there would be a resurrection of the dead, and that there was a purpose for humanity beyond this physical existence:

"But man dies, and wastes away: yes, man gives up the spirit, and where is he? As the waters fail from the sea, and the flood decays and dries up: So man lies down, and rises not: till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep. O that you would hide me in the grave, that you would keep me secret, until your wrath be past, that you would appoint me a set time, and
remember me! If a man die, shall he live again? all the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come You shall call, and I will answer you: you will have a desire to the work of your hands" (Job 14:10-15 KJV).

Job was an individual who had a harmonious relationship with the Creator which allowed him to understand a great deal about God and his plan for humanity. Job knew that, after his physical his life was over, God still had a future for him, which required him to be resurrected from the dead and changed from a mere man into something more grand and glorious—a change from physical to spirit.

MYSTERY OF IMMORTALITY

How a person is changed from a physical being to a spirit-being is a great mystery which is revealed through the gospel message. The apostle Paul wrote the following explanation to the elect at Corinth about this change and the end result of this change:

"Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither does corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I show you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality" (1.Cor.15:50-53 KJV).

Paul says that those who are of the Sovereign God's earthly family of elect children will be changed into immortal spirit-beings.

The creation of the universe, the creation of mankind, and major historical world events have all been carefully guided through the centuries in preparation for the earth-shaking events to come at the grand climax of God's plan for humanity. With the creation of humans, the Sovereign God embarked upon the greatest and grandest of all his creations—the changing of physical humans into immortal spirit-beings in the Family and Kingdom of God:

"So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is your sting? O grave, where is your victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1.Cor. 15:54-57 KJV). See also 2.Tim.1:9-10; Rev.20:6.

God the Father offers much more than eternal life to those he calls to salvation during this age. The angels have eternal life and are sustained by God's life-giving power, yet they can be destroyed if they disobey him. The life God offers to the elect during this gospel age of salvation is immortal life, which can never be destroyed.
The quality of life promised by the Father is comparable to that which he himself has. The Sovereign God is a spirit-being who inherently possesses the highest form of life: immortality on the divine plane of existence. Immortal life springs forth from itself and is not dependent on any other source to sustain it, because it is self-sustaining:

"Whereby are given to us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these you might be partakers of the divine nature. . ." (2.Pet.1:4 KJV).

It is abundantly clear that God intends to share immortality (a part of his divine nature) with those he has called to salvation.

That's right! Humans were created to become eternal and immortal spirit-beings just like God the Father and the Creator God who became Jesus Christ (1.Jn.3:2; Phil.3:21; Rom.8:14-19). This is the Sovereign God's primary purpose for the physical creation and this is what is in store for those who obey the Sovereign God's will for their life (Jn.1:12). These individuals will become spiritual sons of God the Father and live forever with him and their spiritual brother Jesus Christ (Rom.2:7, 8:29).

The acquisition of immortality and eternal life allows the elect to pass beyond this physical existence into the Family of God as god-beings which never die:

"He that has an ear, let him hear what the spirit says to the churches: He that overcomes will not be hurt of the second death" (Rev.2:11 Para). See also Rev. 20:6,14; 21:8.

MYSTERY OF GODLINESS

The mystery of godliness has to do with the manifestation of God in the flesh (i.e., Christ) and being sinless, blameless, and holy in the eyes of the Sovereign Father, and how this godliness is accomplished through the sacrifice of Christ:

"These things I write to you, hoping to come to you shortly: But if I tarry long, that you may know how you ought to behave yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth. And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached to the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory" (1.Tim.3:14-16 KJV Para).

The English word godliness is translated from the Greek word eusebeia, which means piety. How to become and remain a godly person is a mystery to those who do not have the indwelling of the holy spirit. The idea that a person can be holy and godlike in the flesh is thought to be unobtainable and an ethereal, philosophical concept by most people. However, this quality of life is obtainable and maintainable by those who have the indwelling of the holy spirit. The apostle Peter wrote the following concerning godliness:
"Grace and peace be multiplied to you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord. According as his divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that has called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given to us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these you might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity" (2.Pet.1:2-7 KJV).

The mystery of godliness concerns the method through which a person is granted godly characteristics as an integral part of their mental, physical, and spiritual existence and the process through which a person maintains these godly characteristics. It is a fact that a person cannot maintain themselves in the condition of godliness if they are not already in that condition to begin with; therefore, godliness in the flesh is obtainable and maintainable. See also 1.Tim.2:1-2; 4:7-8; 6:3-11.

It is also a fact that righteous angels respect and serve godly individuals of the Father's earthly family of king-priests, but evil spirits hate godliness and seek to destroy the Father's earthly children who practice godliness. See 1.Pet.5:8; Eph.6:11-12.

Mystery of the Kingdom

In his explanation to his disciples about why he spoke in parables, the first thing that Christ mentions is the mystery of the Kingdom of God, and that an understanding of this mystery is not revealed to everyone:

"To you has been given to know the mystery of the Kingdom of God. But to these outside, all things are being given in parables: that seeing they may see and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand; lest they should be converted, and their sins be forgiven them" (Mk.4:11-12 Para.). See also Isa.6:8-10; Matt.13:10-15; Lk.8:10; Jn.12:37-40; Acts 28:25-27.

But, what does having an understanding of the mystery of the Kingdom of God have to do with God's plan for the salvation of mankind, and what does it have to do with angels?

The answer is that an understanding of what the Kingdom of God is and how it functions has everything to do with angels and the salvation of mankind; because, without this understanding, a person cannot understand much about righteous angels and evil spirits and how each impacts mankind.
Without an understanding of what comprises the Kingdom of God, who its Sovereign is, who its citizens are, what its governmental structure and laws are, and what the primary goals of God's kingdom are, much of the gospel message cannot be understood. Moreover, without an understanding of the Kingdom of God none of the mysteries concerning the existence and purpose for the creation of mankind and spirit-beings, including Satan, can be understood.

What is a Kingdom?

A kingdom basically consists of four things: a king, a territory, citizens, and laws. A kingdom has a Supreme Sovereign who rules over a territory, with defined boundaries within which are citizens or subjects who are subordinate to the Sovereign's laws and governmental structure.

The Kingdom of God is a spirit realm (the Kingdom of Heaven) and it belongs to and is under the authority of God the Father who is its Supreme Sovereign. God the Father has given the administration of his Kingdom to his son Jesus Christ who now rules this kingdom from heaven. See 1.Cor.15:25-28; Heb.1:1-3, 8:1, 12:1-2; 1.Pet.3:18-22.

All functioning kingdoms are based on a foundational set of laws, rules, and regulations that establish a system of authority, functions, and responsibilities through which its territories and citizens or subjects are governed and are to comport their lives.

The Sovereign God's governmental system and its laws are administered through spirit-beings whom he has placed in various functions and responsibilities within his kingdom. It is through these spirit-beings he has created that the Sovereign God now governs the physical and spiritual dimensions of existence through Christ, his firstborn son (Jn.1:1-10; Eph.1:20-22). God's government administers his law and directs the various activities of his kingdom and its citizens and subjects in the Sovereign's way of life.

The Organizational Structure

The Bible indicates that there are hundreds of millions (perhaps billions) of spirit-beings within the Sovereign Father's kingdom. Although many biblical researchers have spent much effort attempting to explain the organizational structure of angels within God's government, but it really does not matter to mankind how they are organized. What matters is how and for what purpose they interact with mankind, because this interaction is what impacts mankind negatively or positively.

Throughout the biblical record, only a few angels are mentioned by name. However, many are mentioned by their character (e.g., demons and evil spirits) or by function, responsibility, or mission (e.g., principalities, powers, covering cherub, a messenger, a death angel, the watchers, guards, and transporters of God's throne).
All spirit-beings in the heavenly realm were created to serve the Sovereign God in many functions and responsibilities throughout his vast expanding kingdom. This service includes performing functions and responsibilities concerning his awesome purpose for his physical creation and mankind. According to the writer to the Hebrews, all of these created beings were also specifically charged with caring for the Sovereign Father's earthly children:

"Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" (Heb.1:14 KJV).

The biblical record reveals that the angelic realm is comprised of many different types of individuals with differing outward appearances and characteristics, as well as differing authorities, functions, responsibilities and powers within the Kingdom of God. The writer to the Hebrews says that the overall purpose of this vast realm of spirit-beings is to minister to the heirs of salvation.

The English word minister in verse 14 is translated from the Greek word diakonia, which means one in attendance or as a servant. These spirit-beings were created to provide a service to the heirs of salvation.

But, is this the only reason for the creation of these beings? The biblical record shows that they have many other functions and responsibilities within the Kingdom of God. However, a major function and responsibility during the age of man is to serve individuals who are being called and will be called to become heirs of salvation.

After the Sovereign God's plan and purpose for mankind is finished, the physical existence has been purified with fire, and the new heaven and earth exist (2.Pet.3:10-12; Rev.21:1-22), the heavenly host will still serve the heirs of salvation, because it is the heirs of salvation who will administer the Sovereign's Kingdom along with Christ for eternity. See Rev.2:26-27, 3:11-12, 20-21.

The Kingdom of God Established on Earth

After the first resurrection, Jesus will return to the earth with the elect of all ages who will have been changed into immortal spirit-beings (1.Cor.15:51-54). One of the primary reasons Jesus will return to rule the inhabitants of earth is to remove Satan and other evil spirits and to bring peace, so the Sovereign God's plan for the salvation of humanity can go forward, unimpeded by Satan who is the present god of this world. See 2.Cor.4:4; Rev.12:9.

Isaiah prophesied that, after Christ's return, there will be a time of peace in which the nations will come to Jerusalem to learn the way of God. The government of God is symbolized by a mountain that will be above all other governments and the people will look to this government for guidance:
"And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain [government] of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains [governments], and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow to it. And many people shall go and say, Come you, and let us go up to the mountain [government] of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem" (Isa.2:2-3 KJV).

After all the earth comes under the rule of the Sovereign Father's Son and family of king-priests who will have been made immortal and after Satan and all other evil spirits have been removed, the earth will have lasting peace:

"And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more" (Isa.2:4 KJV). See also Isa.9:6-7.

Although war among nations will not be permitted during Christ's millennial rule, verse 4 speaks of mankind's last armed rebellion against God's government, which will occur after Satan has been loosed to deceive the nations (Rev.20:7-10). But, Christ will put down this last rebellion by mankind and destroy Satan forever.

The following are a few of the many prophecies that speak of the earth under God's government after Christ's return and the peace and prosperity which will ensue:

**Daniel**

"And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever" (Dan.2:44 KJV). See also Dan.2:1-43.

**Micah**

"But in the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain [government] of the house of the Lord shall be established in the top of the mountains [governments/nations], and it shall be exalted above the hills [governments/nations]: and people shall flow to it. And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain [government] of the Lord and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more" (Mic.4:1-3 KJV).
Zechariah

"This is what the Lord says: 'I will return to Zion and dwell in Jerusalem. Then Jerusalem will be called The City of Truth, and the mountain [government] of the Lord Almighty will be called The Holy Mountain [government]" (Zech.8:3 NIV) See also vs.4-7; ch.14:1-21; Hag.2.6-7.

Revelation

"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" (Rev.11:15 KJV). See also 1.Cor.15:24; Rev.19:15; 20:4-6.

A Time of Rewards

The rewards and inheritance for the righteous are reserved in heaven; however, when and where will they be given to the saints? The prophetic scriptures clearly show that, at the first resurrection, the elect of God will be given rewards for the works they performed during their earthly lives. The following are a few of the many prophecies which speak of the distribution of these rewards:

"For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works" (Matt.16:27 KJV). See also Rev.14:12-13.

"Behold, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to everyone according to what he has done" (Rev.22:12 NIV).

"And the nations were angry, and your wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that you should give reward to your servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear your name, small and great; and should destroy them which destroy the earth" (Rev.11:18 KJV).

The apostle Paul knew that, besides being given immortality, which was beyond any human's ability to earn, the righteous would also receive rewards for their performance above and beyond their call to salvation:

"Now he that plants and he that waters are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labor" (1.Cor. 3:8 KJV). See also verses 13-15.

"Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but to all them also that love his appearing" (2.Tim. 4:8 KJV).
Inherit the Kingdom

"When the Son of man [Christ] shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats: And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King [Christ] say to them on his right hand, Come, you blessed of my Father [God the Father], inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Matt.25:31-34 KJV). See also Jms.2:5.

Individuals who participate in the first resurrection will inherit the Kingdom of Heaven as a part of their reward. See also Matt.5:3, 5.

Inherit all Things

After the first resurrection, the saints (i.e., elect) of all ages will be taken to the heaven of heavens where they will be given their rewards.

The righteous will not only inherit the Kingdom, but they will inherit all things which exist or ever will exist. What a tremendous reward to inherit the Kingdom and to be joint-heirs with Christ of all that will ever exist:

"And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said to me, Write: for these words are true and faithful. And he said to me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give to him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. He that overcomes shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son" (Rev.21:5-7 KJV). See also Heb.1:1-2, 5-8.

God the Father and Jesus Christ's purpose for humanity is so awesome and exciting that it is almost beyond belief. God the Father who sent his Son Jesus the Christ to earth centuries ago is in the process of creating children out of human beings. Yes, that's right! God the Father is expanding his Family.

CO-RULERSHIP WITH CHRIST

King David

Ezekiel was inspired to tell of a time when all of Israel will again be a nation under God's leadership with David as their king:

"And David my servant shall be king over them; and they shall have one shepherd: they shall also walk in my judgments, and observe my statutes, and do them. And they shall dwell in the land that I have given to Jacob my servant, wherein your fathers have dwelt; and they shall dwell therein, even they, and their children, and their children's children, for ever: and my servant David shall be their prince for ever" (Ezk.37:24-25 KJV). See also Zech.12:8-10.
The Apostles

On two different occasions, Jesus promised that the twelve apostles would rule the earth with him:

"Then answering, Peter said to him, Behold, we have left all things and followed you: what then shall happen to us? And Jesus said to them, Truly I say to you, You who have followed me; in the regeneration, when the Son of man sits on his throne of his glory, you also will sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Matt.19:27-28 Para.).

"You are those having continued with me in my trials. And I appoint a kingdom to you, as my Father appointed to me, that you may eat and drink at my table in my Kingdom. And you will sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Lk.22:28-30 Para.).

The Overcomers Will Rule With Christ

Individuals who overcome the trials and tests of this physical life and practice righteousness will participate in the first resurrection and rule with Christ:

"To him that overcomes will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne" (Rev.3:21 KJV).

"And he that overcomes, and keeps my works to the end, to him will I give power over the nations: And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to pieces: even as I received of my Father" (Rev.2:26-27 KJV). See also 1.Cor. 6:2-3; 2.Tim.2:12.

Kings and Priests

Individuals who have been adopted into the Sovereign Father's earthly family are of his royal household and are a nation of spiritual kings and priests who will reign on earth after Christ's return:

"You also, as living stones, are being built a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. Because indeed it is also contained in the scripture, 'Behold I lay in Zion an elect, precious Stone, a Corner-foundation; and the one believing in him shall never in any way be ashamed. . . . But you are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for possession, so that you may openly speak of the virtues of the One who has called you out of darkness into his marvelous light" (1.Pet.2:5-6, 9 Para.).
"John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace to you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne; And from Jesus Christ who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. To him that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood, And has made us kings and priests to God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen" (Rev.1:4-6 KJV).

"And has made us to our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth" (Rev.5:10 KJV).

Authority, Responsibility, and Angels

Before his death, Jesus told his disciples that he was going to prepare a place for them where his Father resides:

"In my Father's house are many rooms [i.e., offices or positions of authority]; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am" (Jn.14:2-3 NIV).

The elect who obtain immortality will be given major positions of authority and responsibility in the Kingdom of God (Rev.2:26; 3:12), which includes the management of angels to assist in the administration of the affairs of the kingdom.

In his reprimand to the elect at Corinth, the apostle Paul speaks to their behavior and their future responsibilities in the kingdom of God:

"Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints? Do you not know that the saints shall judge the world? And if the world shall be judged by you, are you unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Don't you know that we shall judge [i.e., manage] angels? how much more things that pertain to this life?" (1.Cor.6:1-3 KJV).

Major Responsibilities

Many wrongly assume that the elect will be in heaven forever; however, those in the first resurrection will rule the earth with Jesus for at least a thousand years in which the earth will become a place of peace and prosperity. One of the first major responsibilities for those in the first resurrection is to assist in the conversion of humanity to the Sovereign Father's truth and way of truth, because the Father and Jesus Christ want everyone to obtain salvation (1.Tim.2:4; 2. Pet.3:9).

For this task, the elect of God are being trained through various trials and tests in order to grow in grace and knowledge. As a result of this training, the elect will be able to fulfill an office of king and priest; thereby, they will be able to rule and teach God's truth to those who have never heard or understood the way to salvation.
MYSTERY OF GOD FINISHED

Just before the seventh angel sounds his trumpet, another powerful angel will announce that there will be no more delay and that the mystery of God has come to an end.

"And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up his hand to heaven, And swore by him that lives for ever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer: But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he will begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he has declared to his servants the prophets"  (Rev.10:5-7 KJV).

The New International Version of this text renders the phrase there should be time no longer as There will be no more delay!, which seems to be more accurate as time does go on after Christ's return to conquer the earth and establish the Sovereign God's government over the earth.

In Revelation 10:5-7, an angel announces the end of one phase of God's plan for humanity and the beginning of another. The mystery of God refers to the plan and purpose of God for creating humanity. At this time, the next phase of God's plan begins: all of humanity past, present, and future will be given an opportunity to understand his awesome plan for mankind. They will also be given an opportunity to decide whether or not they want to take part in it.

THE FUTURE OF GOD'S FAMILY

What lies in the distant future beyond all the resurrections and the reign of Christ over physical humans is not totally known. But we are told that there will be no end to the increase of God's family. This future increase seems to be portrayed in God's annual Festival of the Eighth Day, which pictures a new beginning and looks forward to the time when God the Father will bring the New Jerusalem to the earth, make it the center of his vast realm, and begin the next phase of his plan for eternity.

Within the pages of the following chapters, you will find explanations of the functions and responsibilities of many spirit-beings who interact with humans and the hidden agenda of many of these beings. Within these pages, you will also find information that is extremely important for you to understand as this world careens chaotically toward its inevitable destruction and the revealing of the last mysteries and secrets which were given to the apostles and the early church by Christ.

By B.L. Cocherell
The controversy over the age of the earth and the universe and when the first humans appeared on earth rages on within the scientific community and among biblical scholars. But, does it really matter if the earth is fifty billion, five billion or six thousand years old and what difference does it make if human-like creatures inhabited the earth eons ago? The reality is that a person's salvation does not depend on knowing the age of the earth, the age of the universe, or the exact moment when humans with the spirit of man appeared on earth.

Although the Bible is silent as to the exact age of the earth and the universe and the exact date when Adam and Eve were created, it is not silent as to the purpose for the creation of this physical existence and mankind. Knowing and understanding the Sovereign God's purpose for the creation of this dimension of existence, the creation of the earth, and the creation of humans with the spirit of man is what should matter to those who believe the Bible is the word of God.

The Purpose For All Things

In the Book of Revelation, the apostle John records that he saw twenty-four individuals who are kings and priests sitting on thrones in front of Sovereign God of all that exists. This prophetic record tells us why the Sovereign God has created all things:

"And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal: and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four beasts full of eyes before and behind. And the first beast was like a lion, and the second beast like a calf, and the third beast had a face as a man, and the fourth beast was like a flying eagle. And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come. And when those beasts give glory and honor and thanks to him that sat on the throne, who lives for ever and ever, The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that lives for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for you have created all things, and for your pleasure they are and were created" (Rev.4:6-11 KJV).

The biblical record shows that the Sovereign God is a creator and verse 11 tells us that all things, which includes angels, the physical and spirit realms, and mankind, were created and are created by the Sovereign God for his pleasure.
ANGELS

People have many questions about the spirit-beings described as angels in the Bible, including what they are, why they exist, how powerful they are, and what their functions and responsibilities in the physical and spirit realms are. Some of these questions will be answered here and many more questions about these intelligent and powerful spirit-beings will be answered in the following chapters.

What Are Angels?

At some point in the timelessness of eternity, angelic beings did not exist. But, now there are hundreds of millions and perhaps billions of unique individual angelic beings. These spirit-beings did not come into existence through some evolutionary or independent, spontaneous process in the heavenly realm; they are created beings who are composed of material and energy unique to the spirit dimension of existence.

The English word *angel* used in biblical texts is translated from the Hebrew word *malak* and the Greek word *aggelos*. *Malak* is derived from an unused root, which means to dispatch as a deputy; a messenger, specifically, of God. It also means a prophet, priest, or teacher. *Aggelos* means to bring tidings; a messenger, and by implication, a pastor.

The Hebrew and Greek words *malak* and *aggelos* only described one category of spirit-beings who are sent to interact with the physical environment and mankind; however, the biblical text describes many other types of spirit-beings, which have differing outward appearances and characteristics, as well as differing authorities, functions, responsibilities, and powers within the Kingdom of God.

When Were Angels Created?

The biblical record does not reveal when angels were created. However, the Creator God’s conversation with Job reveals that, before the earth was created, there were other spirit-beings in existence besides the Sovereign God who said, "Let us make man in our image and after our likeness" (Gen.1:26), and the Creator God who carried out this instruction. Notice what the Creator God asked Job:

"Prepare yourself like a man; for I will demand of you, and you will answer me. Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth? Tell me, if you understand. Who has laid its dimensions, if you know? or who has stretched the line upon it? Where are its foundations fastened? or who laid its corner stone when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?" (Job 38:3-7 KJV Para.).

The stars and the sons of God who were present at the foundation of the earth are revealed in the biblical record as spirit-beings who inhabit the heavenly realm of eternity. Because eternity is timeless, when and in what order each angel was created are questions that will go unanswered until the arrival of the kingdom of God on earth.
Why Were Angels Created?

The Sovereign God is a creator and before creating this physical existence and mankind, he created tens of millions and perhaps billions of spirit-beings (See Heb.12:22-23). These spirit-beings were created for a purpose and with an eternal quality of life that is sustained by the power of their Creator.

King David was one of the few individuals who was given insight into the identity of God and the purpose for his creation and the beings who inhabit it:

"The Lord has prepared his throne in the heavens; and his kingdom rules over all. Bless [i.e., to kneel as an act of adoration] the Lord, you his angels, that excel in strength, that do his commandments, hearkening to the voice of his word. Bless you the Lord, all you his hosts; you ministers of his, that do his pleasure. Bless the Lord, all his works in all places of his dominion: bless the Lord, O my soul" (Psa.103:19-22 KJV).

Here, David speaks of the Sovereign God's authority and rule over all things, including the spirit-beings who were created to do his bidding and kneel as an act of adoration before him. These spirit-beings also practice his law and obey the voice of his word, which is a reference to the Creator God who administered, directed and interacted with mankind prior to his coming to earth as the Christ.

Moreover, the hosts (i.e, angels) are called the Sovereign's ministers. In Psalms 103, the English word ministers is translated from the Hebrew word sharath, which is a primitive root word meaning to attend as a menial or worshiper; figuratively, it means to contribute to.

Primarily, the Sovereign God created a vast number of spirit-beings for the purpose of serving him in whatever endeavors he is engaged in for his pleasure. This includes performing the many functions and responsibilities required to manage and maintain his vast and expanding kingdom. One of these responsibilities is watching over and assisting the Sovereign God's earthly children as they work out their salvation and perform the functions and responsibilities of their calling.

The biblical record reveals much about the spirit-beings who inhabit the spirit realm of existence and those who interact with this physical realm and humans, yet much is still not known about these intelligent and powerful beings. However, the biblical record does reveal that the angelic realm is comprised of many different types of individuals, with differing outward appearances and characteristics and differing authorities, functions, responsibilities, and powers within the Sovereign God's Kingdom and governmental system.
HOW MANY ANGELS ARE THERE?

The total number of spirit-beings who inhabit the heavenly realm cannot be found in the Bible. But, there are enough references in the biblical record to indicate that there are hundreds of millions and perhaps billions of spirit-beings that have been created to perform certain functions and responsibilities within the Sovereign God's vast and ever expanding realm.

In a vision about events that will come to pass before Christ returns at the end of this age, the prophet Daniel sees the Sovereign God on his throne with millions of spirit-beings in attendance before him:

"I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened" (Dan.7:9-10 KJV).

While encouraging the Sovereign Father's elect children to maintain their holiness, the writer to the Hebrews says the following about the elect's personal access to the Sovereign Father and Jesus Christ who have an innumerable number of angels present with them:

"But you are come to mount Sion, and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaks better things than that of Abel" (Heb.12:22-24 KJV).

The English word innumerable is translated from the Greek word murias, which means myriad or indefinite number.

In a vision, the apostle John saw what seems to be billions of angels and other spirit-beings at God's throne acknowledging and praising the Sovereign God and Christ:

"And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands" (Rev.5:11KJV). See also Deut.33:1-2; 1.Kgs.22:14-19; Psa.68:17.
HOW POWERFUL ARE ANGELS

Spirit-beings created to serve the Sovereign God are extremely intelligent and powerful beyond the comprehension of the human mind. In order to have some understanding of the awesome power that these spirit-beings are capable of wielding, we need to know the source of their power and its magnitude. Therefore, we need to know about the Sovereign God and his power. To understand his power, we must have an understanding of his holy spirit.

**The Sovereign God's Spirit-Power**

The biblical record describes the Sovereign God as a spirit-being with an individual personality. He has an energy, force, and power that is described in the Bible as the *holy spirit*, the *spirit of God*, and the *spirit*.

One of the mistakes many people make in trying to understand the Sovereign God's holy spirit is separating this spirit-energy and power from him and identifying it as a separate entity. However, this energy, force, and power is not a separate entity; it is something that belongs to the Sovereign God and is under his absolute control and administration.

**The Holy Spirit Is Energy and Power**

It is unfortunate that in most English translations of the Bible the holy spirit has been referred to in the masculine gender as *he* and *him* instead of *it*, which is the correct translation.

The holy spirit is not some mystical, ethereal, or philosophic thought. The Sovereign God's spirit is tangible energy and power, which belongs to him and resides within him. The holy spirit is not a person; it is energy and power. Therefore, the spirit should be referred to as *it*, not *he* or *him*. This spirit-energy and power is not a separate entity; it is something that the Sovereign God uses, distributes, and shares as he desires.

**Awesome Power**

The first few verses in the Book of Genesis show the awesome power of the Sovereign God's holy spirit. Through this power, the Creator God who became Christ brought this dimension of existence and all things that exist within it into existence. Some time after its destruction during the war between the Sovereign God and the rebellious spirit-beings who inhabited the earth, God refurbished his physical creation by this same power in preparation for the creation of humanity:

"*In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters*" (Gen.1:1-2 KJV).

The following scriptures show the awesome power that the Sovereign God delegated to the Creator in order for him to be able to create and sustain all things that exists for the Sovereign God's pleasure (Rev.4: 10-11):
"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made" (Jn.1:1-3 KJV). See also Col.1:7-18.

"And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world has been hidden in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ" (Eph.3:9 KJV). See Jn.3:3-4.

"Long ago God spoke in many different ways to our fathers through the prophets [in visions, dreams, and face-to-face], telling them little by little about his plans. But now in these days he has spoken to us through his Son to whom he has given everything, and through whom he made the world and everything there is. God's Son shines out with God's glory, and all that God's Son is and does marks him as God. He regulates [Greek: phero, i.e., to uphold or to rule] the universe by the mighty power of his command. He is the one who died to cleanse us and to clear our record of all sin, and then sat down in highest honor beside the great God of heaven" (Heb.1:1-3 LBP). See Rom.16:25-27.

The writer to the Hebrews says Christ created all things through the Sovereign God's spirit-power and through this same power, he now controls and rules all he has created for the Sovereign God.

It is through the use of the energy and power of the holy spirit that all things and all beings, whether spirit or physical, are able to exist and exert spiritual or physical action and influence. The Sovereign God who became God the Father, the Creator God who became Christ, and their loyal spirit-servants exert a positive influence upon the physical and spiritual existence through the power of the holy spirit. However, disloyal evil spirits exert a negative influence using this same spirit-power.

The first chapter of Genesis shows that the physical realm came into existence by the power of the Sovereign God's spirit. In the New Testament, a number of scriptures show that it was the Sovereign God who directed the Creator God who later became Christ to create all that exists. Therefore, it is possible to conclude the following about the holy spirit:

- It originates and emanates from the Sovereign God.
- It belongs to Sovereign God.
- It is a real, tangible energy and power.
- It can be used to create, sustain, and control everything that is created.
- The Sovereign God has absolute authority and control over his holy spirit.
God Is All Powerful

The Sovereign God (God the Father) and the Creator God (Christ) are spirit-beings who inhabit a spirit dimension of existence. It is through God the Father's spirit-power, energy, and force that he animates, creates, controls, and sustains all that exists. See Col.1:15-17; Heb.1:1-4.

The Sovereign God's holy spirit is the sum total of all energy and power that permeates and sustains all that he has created through Christ. This awesome power of the Sovereign's holy spirit, which can be used to create, maintain, and destroy is being used by both good and evil spirit-beings in the physical and spirit realms of existence.

TWO CATEGORIES OF SPIRIT-BEINGS

In the biblical record, there are only two categories of created spirit-beings described as malak and aggelos (i.e., angels): those who are loyal servants to the Sovereign God and the Creator God (who became the Savior of mankind) and those who are disloyal and rebellious. Loyal spirit-beings who interact with mankind are commonly called angels in most translations of the Bible and spirit-beings who are disloyal and rebellious are commonly called evil spirits, devils, and demons.

The spirit-beings described as malak and aggelos have free will and can either choose to live in harmony with their Creator and serve him or choose to rebel against his rule over them as Satan and many other spirit-beings have done in the past.

Were Angels Created to be Good or Evil

A misunderstanding of the intent of what the prophet Isaiah recorded concerning the creation of good and evil has led some to believe the Creator God created evil spirit-beings to deceive, torment, and destroy mankind and generally cause turmoil within his kingdom. However, there is a more logical explanation for what is recorded by Isaiah:

"I am the Lord, and there is none else, there is no God beside me: I secured you, though you have not known me: That they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none beside me. I am the Lord, and there is none else. I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the Lord do all these things" (Isa.45:5-7 KJV Para.).

The English words peace and evil in verse 7 are translated from the Hebrew words shalom and rah. Shalom means well, happy, friendly, and (abstractly) welfare, (i.e., health, prosperity, peace). Rah means bad or (as noun) evil (natural or moral). In other words the Creator God created all the things considered good and bad within the earth.

It is a fact that there are both beneficial and harmful plants, animals, microbes, and many other life-forms and non-life-forms on earth, all of which were created to balance the physical creation and maintain its functionality for the purpose it was created.
It is also a fact that everything God created, including humans and angels, would produce only a good result if the laws that were created to govern and order their existence were not broken, manipulated, or perverted in order to alter the purpose and intent for which they were created.

God knows what is beneficial and what is not beneficial in both the spiritual and physical realms (Gen.3:22) and he knew what would benefit and what would harm mankind before mankind was created. However, individuals must choose good over evil of their own free will in order to accomplish his purpose for mankind, which is for humans to become immortal spirit-beings as sons in his family. Therefore, God gave mankind the freedom to choose between right or wrong and good or evil.

Adam and Eve Chose to Disobey

Adam and Eve were created as beings who had neither good nor evil characteristics. They were neutral to good and evil and had the freedom to obey or disobey their Creator's instructions. While in the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve were protected from all things that were physically harmful to them, with the exception of Satan who could not have done them harm if they had obeyed the Creator's instructions. Once they disobeyed and were evicted from the garden, they were exposed to things that were potentially harmful to them, which included evil spirits. Thus began the human learning experience, whereby mankind would gain the knowledge and understanding of the result of good and evil decisions, attitudes, and behaviors.

Ever since Adam and Eve's decision to disobey the Creator's instructions not to touch or eat the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, mankind has been experiencing both good and evil and learning through experience the difference between the two and the short and long term results of each.

Angels Are Also Free to Choose

Just as Adam and Eve were created as beings with neither good nor evil characteristics, angels were also created neutral to good and evil, having the freedom to choose to obey or disobey their Creator's instructions.

The Sovereign God did not create evil spirit-beings for the purpose of being adversaries and destructive elements within his kingdom, nor did he create evil spirits to terrorize and test mankind's willingness to obey his law (Jms.1:13-14). All of the spirit-beings the Sovereign God caused to be created were created to bring him pleasure (Rev.4:11); they were not created to bring him displeasure. However, angels have the same freedom as humans to either comply or not with the law which produces happiness, joy, love, peace, and many other good results.
The Lying Spirit

In 1.Kings, chapter 22 and 2.Chronicles, chapter 18, we find the account of Ahab the king of the House of Israel and Jehoshaphat the king of the House Judah forming an alliance to go to war against the king of Syria in order to regain the territory of Ramoth-gilead.

To find out if they would be successful, Ahab gathered four hundred prophets out of the House of Israel and asked them if he should go to war. These false prophets encouraged him to go to war and told him that he would be victorious. However, Jehoshaphat wanted more assurance that they would be successful and asked Ahab if there was a prophet of Jehovah (God) that they could ask.

Ahab said there was, but he hated him, because his prophecies about him were never favorable. But, at the insistence of Jehoshaphat, Ahab sent a messenger to fetch Jehovah's prophet, Micah:

"The messenger who had gone to summon Micah said to him, 'All of the other prophets are predicting success for the king. Agree with them, and speak favorably'. Micah replied, 'As surely as Jehovah the Lord lives, I will tell him what God says'" (2.Chron.18:12-13 Para.).

A true prophet of God understands the consequences of not accurately conveying a message that he is entrusted with, whereas false prophets do not know the true God and, therefore, do not hesitate to lie.

Verses 14 though 16 contain the exchange between Ahab and Micah in which Micah, probably with a bit of sarcasm, tells Ahab what he wants to hear and then tells him actually what will happen if he goes to Ramoth-gilead:

"When Micah arrived, the king asked him, 'Shall we go or not go to war against Ramoth-gilead? Micah replied, Attack and be victorious. For they will be given into your hand. Ahab replied, How many times must I ask you to swear to tell me the truth in the name of Jehovah? Micah replied, I saw all Israel scattered on the hills like sheep without a shepherd, Jehovah has said, 'These people have no master. Let each one go home in peace'" (2.Chron.18:14-16 Para.).

After telling Ahab what would happen to him if he went to war against the king of Syria, Micah says the following:

"Hear the word of Jehovah: I saw Jehovah sitting on his throne with all the host of heaven standing on his right and on his left. And Jehovah said, 'Who will entice Ahab into attacking Ramoth-gilead in order for him to die there?'' (2.Chron.18:18-19 Para.).

The English word entice in verse 19, is translated from the Hebrew word pathah, which can mean entice, deceive, or persuade.
The Creator asked for one of the spirit-beings at his throne to volunteer to entice Ahab to go into battle, so that he would be killed. The biblical record depicts Ahab as an exceptionally wicked person who was more evil than all the kings of the House of Israel before him, which seems to be the reason God decides to remove him.

"One suggested one thing and another something else. Finally, a spirit came forward, stood before the Jehovah and said, I will entice him. Jehovah asked, By what means? I will go as a lying spirit in the mouths of all his prophets. Go do as you have said and you will entice him" (2.Chron.18:19-21 Para.).

Micah tells Ahab, "Jehovah has put a lying spirit in the mouths of these prophets of yours. Jehovah has decreed evil on you" (2.Chron.18:22 Para.). See also 1.Kg. 22:20-22.

The English word lying in verse 18 and 22 is translated from the Hebrew word sheqer; derived from the word shaqar; a primitive root, which means to cheat, i.e., be untrue (usually in words). The word sheqer basically means not truthful, and by implication, a sham (often adverbial).

It is important to this subject to understand that some evil spirits, including Satan, will have access to the heavenly realm until they are evicted from heaven in the coming great war noted in Revelation12:7-9, and that the Creator God did occasionally send an evil spirit to preform a specific task for him (Jdgs.9:23; 1.Sam.16:14-23; 18:10;19:9).

Although this account does not emphatically say that the spirit-being who volunteered to deceive Ahab's prophets was an unrighteous angel, nowhere in the biblical record do we see a righteous angel lying to anyone. Moreover, God is a God of truth, so it is unlikely that the angel who volunteered was a righteous angel. However, if this angel was a righteous angel, there are many ways that he could influence Ahab's prophets to convince Ahab to go into battle against the king of Syria.

It is a biblical fact that both righteous and unrighteous angels have been shown to influence people's thoughts and emotions, and to cause people to have dreams and visions. Therefore, it is plausible that a righteous angel could have spoken out of the air and instructed Ahab's prophets to tell him to go into battle against the king of Syria. Ahab's prophets would have then thought that Ahab would be victorious. Alternately, an angel could have caused some or all of Ahab's prophets to have dreams and visions that influenced them into thinking that Ahab would defeat the king of Syria.

An evil spirit could have influenced the thoughts and emotions of Ahab's prophets or projected dreams or visions to them or even cause their methods of divination to give answers that influenced what they told Ahab. An evil spirit could also have possessed the minds and bodies of Ahab's prophets and spoken through them or otherwise influenced their thoughts in order to get them all to agree to a single lie.
God's Advice to Samuel

Because of God's advice to the prophet Samuel concerning his trip to anoint David as king over Israel, some people think that the Creator God told Samuel to lie to King Saul about the purpose of his journey:

"And the Lord said to Samuel, How long will you mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel? fill your horn with oil, and go, I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite: for I have provided me a king among his sons. And Samuel said, How can I go? If Saul finds out what I am going to do, he will kill me. And the Lord said, Take a heifer with you, and say, I am going to sacrifice to the Lord" (1.Sam 16:1-2 KJV Para.).

God advised Samuel what to do in preparation for his journey and what to tell people if they asked why he was going. Did God tell Samuel to lie about the purpose of his journey? No, he certainly did not. He told him to say he was going to sacrifice, which was the truth.

Keeping information secret is not lying; it is just wise in many instances. God did not tell Samuel to lie; he told him to limit the amount of information he gave out.

The Elders of Israel

The prophet Ezekiel records that certain elders of Israel came to him and the Creator instructed him to tell these men he would answer their questions according to the idols they had embraced and their lawless practices. The Creator also says the following about those who are not in harmony with him and he gives a warning of punishment for inquiring of him in their present condition:

"For every one of the house of Israel, or of the stranger that sojourns in Israel, which separates himself from me, and sets up his idols in his heart, and puts the stumbling-block of his iniquity before his face, and comes to a prophet to inquire of him concerning me; I the Lord will answer him by myself: And I will set my face against that man, and will make him a sign and a proverb, and I will cut him off from the midst of my people; and you shall know that I am the Lord. And if the prophet be deceived when he has spoken a thing, I the Lord have deceived that prophet, and I will stretch out my hand upon him, and will destroy him from the midst of my people Israel" (Ezk.14:7-9 KJV).

The two English words translated as deceived in verse 9 are derived from the same root word with each denoting a different action in the text. In the phrase "If the prophet be deceived" the word translated deceived is the Hebrew word data, which can mean entice, deceive or persuade. In the phrase "I the Lord have deceived" the word translated deceived is the Hebrew word pati, which can mean simple or foolish.
The scriptures tell us that God is a god of truth and does not lie. Therefore, a more accurate translation of verse 9 would be:

"And if the prophet be deceived when he has spoken a thing, I the Lord have made that prophet simple, and I will stretch out my hand upon him, and will destroy him from the midst of my people Israel"

Making a person simple (i.e., of very low intelligence or understanding) is not the same as lying to a person in order to deceive them. God has the ability to cloud a person's mind so they do not have the ability to think rationally or make sound decisions, which seems to be the case with all prophets who are not in harmony with him.

**Edom's Destruction**

In a vision given to the prophet Obadiah, the Creator God reveals that Esau's descendants who are prophetically identified as Edom will be destroyed just before Christ returns. In this prophecy, the Creator gives many reasons for their national destruction, including their arrogance which led to self-deception and being led astray by those with whom they have made national treaties for security.

This prophecy shows that God allows people to deceive themselves and others in order to fulfill prophetic events.

**Deception**

The biblical record tells us that Satan is a liar (Jn. 8:44) who is actively going about deceiving the entire world (Rev. 12:9); moreover, there are many warnings from the apostles Paul and John concerning evil spirits who are actively going about deceiving people. This should leave no doubt that there are evil spirits who lie. The following are two of the warnings given by the apostle Paul about lying spirits:

"Now the Spirit speaks expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron" (1.Tim.4:1-2 KJV). See also 2.Tim.4:3-4; Jude verses 1-19.

The apostle Paul warns that there are people who are promoting teachings in opposition to God's truth and way of truth and he reveals that the true source of these teachings are evil spirits. The reality is that evil spirits continually influence, deceive, and manipulate individuals into teaching and practicing things in opposition to God's truth. See 2.Cor. 11:13-15; Gal.1:6-7.

Many who fellowshipped in the congregations of the early church would not accept God's truth (2.Tim.4:3-4). Instead, they sought out teachers who would teach things that did not require their obedience to God's laws, precepts, and principles. To deceive the gullible and the spiritually lazy, these teachers replaced truth with error and taught mysticism and other philosophies that appeal to human nature.
Paul warns the elect at Thessalonica not to allow anyone to deceive them and he makes reference to an individual who will claim to be God just before Christ returns:

"For the mystery of iniquity does already work: only he who now lets will let, until he is taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, And with all deceit of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness" (2.Thess.2:7-12 KJV).

The English word delusion in verse 12 is translated from the Greek word plane, which is a derivative of the Greek word planos and has the basic meaning of someone who is an imposter or misleads. The Greek word plane means, objectively, fraudulence; subjectively, a straying from orthodoxy or piety.

Does God cause people to be deceived? Yes. God causes people to be deceived; in that, he allows people to deceive themselves or be deceived by other people, or evil spirits. God allows people who have no intention of obeying him or coming into conformity to his way of life to be deceived. He even allows individuals with whom he is interacting on a personal level to deceive themselves, be deceived by other people or evil spirits if they do not live in obedience to him and practice his truth and way of truth. See Lk.21:8; Jms.1:22; 1.Jn.2:26; Rev.2:18-20.

God Does Not Lie

God does not lie; however, he allows deception to continue in order to teach people a lesson only experience can teach. The great lesson of deceptive words and practices is that they bring unpleasant and sometimes disastrous results for the deceiver and the deceived. Although God is currently allowing people to be deceived, he is a God of truth. Here is what the Psalmist David and the apostle Paul wrote about God's truthfulness:

"Into your hand I commit my spirit; you have redeemed me, O Lord God of truth" (Psa.31:5 KJV). See also Deut.32:4; Isa.65:16.

"Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect, and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness; In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began; But has in due times manifested his word through preaching, which is committed unto me according to the commandment of God our Savior" (Titus 1:1-3 KJV).
Angels: Authority and Power

Angels were created eternal with tremendous authority and power for the purpose of serving the Sovereign God and the Creator God as messengers and representatives in the administration of his kingdom. Many angels are given responsibilities to minister to and serve the Sovereign Father's earthly children who are heirs of his kingdom and who will inherit all things, according to Christ.

Although both good and evil spirit-beings have the ability to tap into and wield spirit-energy and power in order to control and manipulate the spiritual and physical existence, the use of this power is not without limitations. Otherwise, the Sovereign God could not control and rule his kingdom effectively, and evil-spirits would be able to cause chaos within his heavenly and physical realms and frustrate his plan and purpose for mankind. The Sovereign God has placed limits on the use of spirit-energy by evil spirits. And even righteous spirits have different levels of authorization in using this energy. Although angels have tremendous power, this power is far less than that of the Sovereign God and the Creator God.

The Bible reveals that angels are far superior than humans and cannot be harmed or constrained through physical means. However, the Bible and the writings of Enoch document that some disobedient and sinful angels are imprisoned while waiting for their punishment to be carried out (i.e., death by fire).

Although they are extremely intelligent and powerful, angels are not invincible, because they are created as eternal, not immortal. Eternal beings can be imprisoned and have their life erased from all dimensions of existence if the Sovereign God wills it.

Angel Beings: Eternal not Immortal

Many assume that, because angels are spirit-beings who have eternal life, they cannot die. However, the Bible shows that eternal spirit-beings who have their life-force sustained by the Sovereign God's spirit-power can be terminated.

Eternal life is far different from immortal life, which is a self-perpetuating life-force. Angels can have their life-force terminated under certain conditions, which is documented by the many scriptures that show the destruction of evil spirits. See Chapter 6, "Angels Are Not Immortal."

EARTH CREATED TO BE INHABITED

The prophet Isaiah was inspired to record the following concerning the purpose for the creation of the earth:
"For this says the Lord [Yehovah] that created the heavens; God [Elohiym] himself that formed the earth and made it; he has established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited: I am the Lord [Yehovah]; and there is none else" (Isa.45:18 KJV).

In verse 18, the English words Lord and God are translated from the Hebrew words Yehovah and Elohiym, which respectively mean the self-Existent or Eternal, and the Supreme God.

Isaiah records that the reason for the creation of the earth was for it to be inhabited. By what and for what purpose it is to be inhabited is answered throughout this book.

The Beginning

All scientific evidence extant today clearly indicates that, at one time in the distant past, nothing of this physical realm existed, but at some point, the earth and all that is in it began to appear out of nothing. It is at this point that the Biblical narrative begins:

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters" (Gen.1:1-2 KJV).

Before one can understand much about the spirit realm of existence or the purpose for the existence of angels and why they interact with humans, it is important to have a foundational understanding of the first two verses of the biblical narrative. These first two verses hold the keys to unlocking the mystery surrounding the angelic realm and their interaction with mankind.

The first two verses of the Book of Genesis tell us the following four important things:

• Before this dimension of existence a God-being existed who had the power to create.
• God created the heaven and the earth.
• The earth lay in ruin and was covered with water sometime after its creation.
• Sometime after the earth lay in ruin, God began to refurbish the earth's surface.

In the Beginning God

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth" (Gen.1:1 KJV).

The Bible clearly states that a being called God created the heavens and earth. But who is this God? Is he the Sovereign God who became God the Father, the God who became Jesus Christ, or both?
The answers to these questions are important, because they not only give us the identity of who is being spoken of in these first few verses of the Book of Genesis, but also will help to explain the creation of angels, their functions and responsibilities, and their interaction with the physical creation and mankind.

Genesis 1:26-27 reveals that, after the beginning of the physical creation, there were two God-beings in existence:

"And God said let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them" (Gen.1:26-27 KJV).

Most Bible scholars and linguists will agree that the English word God in Genesis 1:1 and 26-27 is translated from the Hebrew word Elohim, which is a plural word that can mean Mighty Ones. Therefore, some people believe that, in Genesis 1:1 and 26-27, Elohim describes two specific individuals. Although the word Elohim does allow for a plural meaning, understanding who God is does not entirely depend upon this one descriptive word for God, because there are many scriptures showing that, at the beginning of the physical creation, there were two God-beings in the God family—the Sovereign God and the Creator God.

Genesis 1:1 speaks of the Creator God who became Jesus Christ and Genesis 1:26-27 reveals that it was the Sovereign God who gave the instructions to the Creator God to create humanity when he said, "let us create man in our image."

The meaning of much of the Bible concerning the identity of God becomes clear when we understand that the Creator God of ancient Israel was the second member of the God family, and that it was the Creator who divested himself of his immortality to become a human in order to live a righteous life, reveal the Sovereign God of all that exists, and give himself as the perfect sacrifice for the sins of humanity.

Earth Becomes an Empty Ruin

"And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters" (Gen.1:2 KJV).

The English words without form are translated from the Hebrew word tohuw from an unused root meaning to lie waste; a desolation (of surface), i.e., desert; figuratively, a worthless thing; adverbially, in vain.

The English word void is translated from the Hebrew word bohuw, which means to be empty; the absence of matter, (i.e., superficially) an undistinguishable ruin.
Genesis, chapter 1, verses 9 and 10 reveal that the earth was covered with water, but was reshaped in order to provide dry land after whatever cataclysmic event took place that caused it to become in the condition described in verses 1 and 2:

"And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together to one place, and let the dry land appear: and it was so. And God called the dry land Earth; and the gathering together of the waters called he Seas: and God saw that it was good" (Gen.1:9-10 KJV).

Exactly what happened between the creation of the earth and the refurbishing of the earth is extremely nebulous; however, the Bible does give us some interesting insight into the events before the creation of Adam and Eve.

WAR ON EARTH BEFORE MANKIND

Tucked away in a prophecy about Jerusalem, the tribe of Dan, Ephraim, and the cities of Judah is a record of what happened on earth before the creation of mankind:

"O Jerusalem, wash your heart from wickedness, that you may be saved. How long shall your vain thoughts lodge within you? For a voice declares from Dan, and publishes affliction from mount Ephraim. You make mention to the nations; behold, publish against Jerusalem, that watchers come from a far country, and give out their voice against the cities of Judah. As keepers of a field, are they against her round about; because she has been rebellious against me, says the Lord" (Jer.4:14-17 Para).

Up to this point, it seems clear that Jerusalem and the cities of Judah are the focal point of this prophecy; however, in verse 18, there seems to be a change in focus that does not seem to apply to what has been said thus far:

"Your way and your doings have procured these things to you; this is your wickedness, because it is bitter, because it reaches to your heart" (Jer.4:18 Para.).

Verse 18 seems to be pointed toward a specific individual or individuals that are wicked in their innermost being.

"My bowels, my bowels! I am pained at my very heart; my heart makes a noise in me; I cannot hold my peace, because you have heard. O my soul, the sound of the trumpet, the alarm of war" (Jer.4:19 Para.).

Here we see tremendous distress and agony being felt by the one either viewing, experiencing, or making this announcement of war.

"Destruction upon destruction is called for; for the whole earth is ravaged: suddenly laid waste my dwelling place is spoiled, and broken up in a moment" (Jer.4:20 Para.).
In verse 20, the English words *in a moment* are translated from the Hebrew word *rega*, which means *a wink (of the eyes)*, i.e., *an extremely short space of time*.

This shows a compounding of destruction called for upon the earth and a lamenting of its destruction. Moreover, from the use of the Hebrew word *rega*, we can conclude that this event does not described the events at the end of this age just prior to Christ's return and the time of God's wrath, which will be carried out over years, months, and days. The destruction noted in verse 20 happened very quickly.

"How long shall I see the standard, and hear the sound of the trumpet? For my people are foolish, they have not known me; they are sottish children, and they have no understanding: they are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge" (Jer.4:21-22 KJV Para.).

There are three Hebrew words in verses 21 and 22 that reveal a much different meaning from what is related in the King James and other translations of these verses.

The English words *people, sottish, and children* are translated from the Hebrew words *am, eviyyl, and ben*, respectively. In this context, these mean the following:

- *am* does not necessary mean a nation as one would expect from the beginning of this prophecy which mentions the tribes of Dan, Ephraim, and Judah. The word *am* can mean *a people* (as a congregated unit); *a tribe* (collectively) *troops or attendants*; figuratively, a *flock*.
- *eviyyl* means *to be perverse*.
- *ben* translated as *children* is from a Hebrew root word meaning *to build* (literally and figuratively), *a son* (as a builder of the family name), in the widest sense (of literal and figurative relationship, including *grandson, subject, nation, quality or condition*, etc.).

It does not stretch the imagination to view verses 21 and 22 in the context of a lament for the destruction of the earth and the rebellion and perverseness of those who were to build on earth and care for it before the creation of mankind. In verse 23, there is a dramatic shift in context from what began this prophecy:

"I beheld the earth, and, lo, it was without form, and void; and the heavens, and they had no light" (Jer.4:23 KJV).

The English words *without form* and *void* are translated from the same Hebrew words *tohuw* and *bohuw* used in Genesis 1:2 to describe the earth lying in ruins before its refurbishing and the creation of Adam and Eve.

"I beheld the mountains, and, lo, they trembled, and all the hills moved lightly" (Jer.4:24 KJV).

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The English word *trembled* is translated from the Hebrew word *raash*, which means *to undulate* (as the earth, the sky, etc.; also a field of grain), *through fear*; specifically, *to spring* (as a locust).

The English word *lightly* is translated from the Hebrew word *qalal*, which means *to be* or *make light*, literally *swift, small, sharp*.

The Hebrew words used in verse 24 describe powerful and destructive worldwide earthquakes shaking the earth in a violent undulating and jerking action.

"I beheld, and, lo, there was no man, and all the birds of the heavens were fled" (Jer.4:25 KJV).

Verse 25 firmly fixes the time of this prophecy before the creation of mankind, because the English word *man* is translated from the Hebrew word *adam* which means *ruddy* i.e., *a human being* (an individual or the species), *mankind*.

Because no humans with the spirit of man were on earth at the time of this war and the subsequent destruction of the earth described in this record, there are only two options for the combatants—non-human physical beings or spirit-beings.

Verse 26 reveals who one of the combatants was and who caused the ultimate destruction of the earth before the creation of mankind:

"I beheld, and, lo, the fruitful place was a wilderness, and all the cities thereof were broken down at the presence of the Lord [Yehovah], and by his fierce anger" (Jer.4:26 KJV).

The English words *fruitful place* are translated from the Hebrew word *karmel* meaning *a planted field* (garden, orchard, vineyard or park); by implication, *garden produce*.

The earth was originally created as an extremely beautiful, productive, and awesome place to inhabit. But at the presence and fierce anger of Yehovah, it was destroyed.

The English phrase *fierce anger* does not do justice to what is said in this text. These words are translated from the Hebrew words *charown* and *aph*, which respectively mean *a burning of anger* and the *nose or nostril*; hence, *the face*, and occasionally *a person*; also (from the rapid breathing in passion) *ire*.

What we see in this text is extreme anger which was so intense that it alters the appearance of the face. This is the anger of God as he destroys that which has caused him great displeasure. This is the same kind of anger that the Creator God displayed when he told Moses to stand aside because he was going to destroy the rebellious and idolatrous Israelites who had made and worshiped an image of a calf while Moses was on the mountain receiving the ten commandments. See Ex.32:1-10.
Jeremiah's record reveals that the earth as it was originally created was populated by beings other than humans (verse 25) who lived in cities (verse 26) before the creation of Adam and Eve, and that there was a war between these beings and their Creator which left the earth in total ruin and the heavens in darkness.

Because of the rebellion of the spirit-beings who were placed on earth to manage, maintain, and prepare it for the creation of mankind (with the spirit of man), the Creator God under the direction of the Sovereign God, destroyed the earth's surface and all its inhabited cities (See Isa.45:18):

"For this has the Lord said, The whole earth [Heb. erets] shall be desolate; yet will I not make a full end. For this shall the earth mourn, and the heavens above be dark: because I have spoken it, I have purposed it, and will not repent, neither will I turn back from it" (Jer.4:27-28 Para.).

Verses 27 through 28 reveal that, after the earth's surface was rendered uninhabitable, the earth would not be totally obliterated and removed from existence; it would remain in its desolate state until the time when it would be refurbished and mankind would be placed on it to begin the next phase of God's plan of creation. See Genesis, chapter 1.

REBELLION

Did God know in advance that vast numbers of the spirit-beings he had created would rebel against him? Of course not! But he did know that they had the potential to rebel, because he had given them intelligence and the ability to think, reason, and make decisions based on their knowledge.

If God had wanted automatons for servants, he would have created beings with instinct and predictable responses to stimuli, which is what he did with most of the physical creatures on earth. Angels were created with knowledge, intelligence, and the freedom to make decisions and choices, and some made a very bad choice when they rebelled against their Creator.

The biblical record does not tell us exactly what happened to the rebellious angels who inhabited the earth after the earth's surface was destroyed by the Creator God. However, we know that, according to the Genesis record, all the land was submerged under water, making earth uninhabitable by land-based life-forms (Gen.1:1-10). We also know that Satan continued to live after his rebellion against God and the destruction of the earth's surface, because we see him in the Garden of Eden deceiving Eve and interacting with others as noted in the biblical record. So, what happened to the other spirit-beings who inhabited the earth with Satan?
Assuming that they had access to physical bodies in order to live in cities and interact with the physical realm, the following seem to be three logical options for what happened to the rebellious spirit-beings who inhabited the earth before the creation of mankind and during the war that destroyed the earth's surface:

1. Some lost their physical bodies, became disembodied spirits, and are living either on earth or in the heavenly realm until they are punished for their rebellion.
2. Some lost their physical bodies and became disembodied spirits who were then imprisoned to await punishment for their rebellion.
3. Some escaped with their physical bodies to another dimension of existence or to other inhabitable planets.

Because Satan still has access to the earth and comes and goes as he pleases, it is logical to assume that other rebellious spirit-beings who escaped also have access to earth and can come and go as they please, until the Sovereign God decides to bring an end to this phase of his plan and purpose for the creation of mankind.

SUMMARY

A kingdom consists of a sovereign, a territory, citizens, and laws. Extended territories, possessions, and citizens of a kingdom come under its governmental system of law in order for there to be order, peace, prosperity, and productivity.

The Sovereign God created the earth and populated it with beings created for the purpose of maintaining it and preparing it for the creation and habitation of mankind. Therefore, at one time in the distant past, the earth and all its inhabitants were under the Sovereign God's governmental system of law.

It seems logical that, when the spirit-beings who were created to prepare and maintain the earth for the advent of mankind rebelled against the Sovereign God and the earth was subsequently made uninhabitable through war, the Sovereign's governmental system of law ceased to be administered on earth and the countless millions of spirit-beings who had inhabited the earth prior to their rebellion were scattered throughout the heavenly and physical realms of existence.

You might think that a being created by the Sovereign God, given eternal life as an intelligent thinking being with the ability to exist as both a spirit and a physical being, and allowed to enjoy all the things that the Sovereign God has to offer those who serve him would have had enough incentive to be forever grateful and loyal. But, it seems that this was not enough for many of the spirit-beings who were created to serve the Sovereign God before the creation of humans.
These created spirit-beings were never going to advance beyond being servants to the Sovereign God, they were never going to become immortal god-beings, which is the destiny of humans who choose to live in obedience to the Sovereign God and his truth and way of truth. But, that is little reason to rebel against the God that has caused them to come into existence and sustains their existence.

These rebellious spirit-beings either did not understand that they were only eternal and not immortal or they thought that they could become immortal and therefore usurp the Sovereign God's authority and rule over their life, which was a disastrous mistake.

Although the biblical record reveals very little about the spirit-beings (i.e., angels) who inhabit the heavenly realm and those who inhabited earth before the creation of mankind, the biblical record clearly shows that these beings were important to the Sovereign God's plan to expand his family of immortal beings and they will remain an important part of his plan to expand his family and his kingdom throughout eternity.

By B.L. Cocherell
What does the Bible reveal about the interaction between spirit-beings and mankind before the great flood, which destroyed the earth's surface and killed all but eight people on earth?

Except for the conversation between the Serpent and Eve, the conversations between the Creator God and a small number of individuals, and the mention that the sons of God fathered children with the daughters of men, the biblical record seems to be almost totally silent about the interaction between spirit-beings and mankind before the great flood. But, are these brief accounts all that is recorded about the interaction between spirit-beings and mankind during over 1,600 years of human history?

If we look closely, we can see that the biblical record is replete with information about the interaction between spirit-beings and mankind before the great flood. But, piecing together this information requires an examination of both the biblical accounts and some of the accounts in the Book of Enoch.

**THE BOOK OF ENOCH**

To understand the importance of what Enoch's record has to say about the interaction between angels and humans during the time before the great flood, it is helpful to have some background information about Enoch and his record.

There are two Enochs mentioned in the Book of Genesis, but it is the second Enoch whose accounts are recorded in the Book of Enoch. Jude calls the second Enoch (the son of Jared, the father of Methuselah, and great grandfather of Noah) "the seventh from Adam," which does not mean that he was the seventh person from Adam; it means he was the seventh preacher of righteousness from Adam (Noah was the eighth). See 1.Chr.1:1-2; Jude 14-15; Lk.3:37-38; 2.Pet.2:5.

The Book of Enoch is written in the language and script of an age of which we know practically nothing today. Outside of the Book of Enoch this same language and script has only been found on a few discovered artifacts, which seem to predate the great flood.

**Note:**

It seems logical that the writings which comprise the Book of Enoch, were brought through the great flood by Noah, and the Ethiopic and other translations were probably made from these. It also seems doubtful that any of these translations are totally accurate in every detail because
of the language differences of the translators and the fact that no copy of the original work exists for editorial comparison. Additionally, because of the proclivity of humans to inject their own thoughts and beliefs into translations of scripture, there is little doubt that some of what was in the original writings has either been left out of translations or inserted in order to conform to the belief of the translator.

Although there are a number of translations of the Book of Enoch that differ slightly in their presentation of the number of chapters and verses and in the interpretation of certain words, these translations seem to be more of less consistent in translating the basic thoughts contained in Enoch's record.

The basic translation used in this chapter was made by George H. Schodde, Ph. D. in 1882 from a copy of the Book of Enoch in the ancient Ethiopic Ge'ez language, which is considered by some scholars to be the complete text of Enoch's record. For clarity and readability, I have revised some of the words and spellings quoted in the chapters to a more modern version.

An Important Record

Enoch explains why his record exists in the first two verses of the first chapter of the Book of Enoch:

"The words of the blessing of Enoch wherewith he blessed the chosen and just, who will exist on the day of tribulation when all the wicked and impious shall be removed. And then answered and spoke Enoch, a just man, whose eyes were opened by God so that he saw a holy vision in the heavens, which the angels showed to me, and from them I heard everything, and I knew what I saw, but not for this generation, but for the future generations which are to come" (Enoch 1:1-2, Book 1, Watchers).

The Book of Enoch was written as a revelation to future generations. It is important to the discussion of angels, because Enoch not only documents that angels inhabited the earth in flesh and blood bodies alongside humans before the great flood, but also summarizes the major events which happened on earth as God's spirit-servants were fulfilling their various functions and responsibilities and interacting with humans. Moreover, the Book of Enoch records what some of these angels did in order to deserve their imprisonment and punishment noted by the apostles Peter and Jude, as well as what will happen to these angels and wicked humans in the end of this age.

Jude Quotes Enoch

The following reference by Jude concerning Enoch's prophetic record foretelling the return of Christ and the future punishment of the wicked documents the belief in the validity of Enoch's writings by the early church:
"And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him" (Jude 14-15 KJV). See also Isa.9:6-7; 1.Thes.3:13; Rev.17:14.

Enoch the Prophet

Enoch also foretold the destruction of the world in which he lived (Gen.5:21-27) through the name of his son Methuselah, whose name can be interpreted as man of the spear/weapon or at his death it shall be. We can assume Methuselah's name means at his death it will be, because the genealogical records in the Book of Genesis documents the Great Flood beginning at his death (Gen.7:6).

What happened to Enoch?

"By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God" (Heb.11:5 KJV).

In verse 5, the translators of the King James Bible translated the Greek words metathesis and metatithemi, which mean, respectively, change of place and put in another place into the English word translated. This is probably because the theology of their day taught that when righteous people died, they were taken to heaven. However, by no stretch of the imagination can metathesis and metatithemi, which are used in Hebrews 11:5, convey the concept of Enoch being transported to heaven.

Even a casual reading of Hebrews, chapter 11 reveals that none of the men and women mentioned, including Enoch, had yet received the promises given to the patriarchs and other righteous individuals (Heb.11:13, 39-40).

Enoch Walked With God

One thing that is evident about Enoch is that he had a very close and special relationship with the Creator God. This relationship was so special to God that he spared Enoch the agony of seeing the catastrophic events of the flood by mercifully ending his life:

"And Enoch walked with God after he begat Methuselah three hundred years, and begat sons and daughters: And all the days of Enoch were three hundred and sixty and five years: And Enoch walked with God; then he was not, for God took him" (Gen.5:22-24 Para.).
Here, the English phrase *was not* is translated from the Hebrew word *ayin*, which has no single meaning, but it is a negative substantive. Therefore, its meaning must always be determined by context. The word *ayin* can never indicate that something continues to exist in one state or another. Moreover, it cannot mean that something is transported to another place in existence. In the context of Genesis 5:24, it can only mean that Enoch was not (i.e., he ceased to exist as a living breathing human). He was not alive from that point on.

**THE SERPENT AND EVE**

In his letter to the saints at Corinth, the apostle Paul uses the following example of the Serpent's deception of Eve in Genesis, chapter 3 as a warning not to become corrupted through deceptive words:

"But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ" (2.Cor.11:3 KJV). See also Gen.3:1-5,13.

We can safely assume that the Serpent mentioned here is Satan, because of what the apostle John records in Revelation, chapter 12:

"And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceives the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him" (Rev.12:9 KJV).

The prophetic event noted in Revelation, chapter 12:9 comes after a future war in heaven described in verses 7 and 8. Verse 9 gives us the following important facts:

- The Serpent who deceived Eve and who continues to deceive mankind is the Devil who is also called Satan.
- Satan continues to have access to the world even after his rebellion against God, which resulted in the destruction of the earth's surface. See Gen.1:2; Jer.4:23-27.
- Satan and the spirit-beings who follow him will continue to have free access to earth for a short time after a future war in heaven before Christ returns. See Rev.12:7-12.

The scriptures clearly show that Satan and other evil spirits rebelled against the Sovereign God before the creation of mankind and that Satan still has access to earth and is attempting to frustrate God's plan for mankind. But are Satan and the others who rebelled with him the only angels who have rebelled against God's authority to rule over them or is there a second group of angels who rebelled after the creation of mankind? Indeed, evidence of a second group of spirit-beings who rebelled is found in the letters of Peter and Jude to the early church and in the Book of Enoch.
The fact that there was another group of spirit-beings who rebelled against God and did not fulfill the functions and responsibilities for which they were created and to which they were assigned after the creation of mankind shows that God has been intimately involved in the lives and affairs of mankind since its initial creation.

Mankind was not created and then left alone to do whatever it pleased. We were created to eventually take part in the Sovereign God's immortal family as spirit-beings. Therefore, along with multitudes of angelic beings who have been assigned functions and responsibilities to watch over the physical creation and mankind, the Sovereign God and the Creator God who became Christ have always been personally involved in the physical creation and in the lives of their human creation.

THE WATCHERS WILL TREMBLE

The first chapter of Enoch's record reveals the punishment reserved for all wicked humans and spirit-beings and the blessings that will be given to righteous humans at some time in the far distant future:

"The words of the blessing of Enoch where-with he blessed the chosen and just, who will exist on the day of tribulation when all the wicked and impious shall be removed. And then answered and spoke Enoch, a just man, whose eyes were opened by God so that he saw a holy vision in the heavens, which the angels showed to me, and from them I heard everything, and I knew what I saw, but not for this generation, but for the far-off generations which are to come" (Enoch 1:1-2, Book 1, Watchers).

In verses 5 and 6, Enoch foretells the end of human civilization and the complete destruction of the earth in flame. He says the watchers shall tremble at this time.

"And all will fear, and the watchers will tremble, and great fear and terror will seize them to the ends of the earth. And the exalted mountains will be shaken, and the high hills will be lowered, and will melt like wax before the flame" (Enoch 1:5-6, Book 1, Watchers).

Enoch's reference to the watchers in verse 5 might seem meaningless if these specific individuals were not mentioned so many times in his narrative as evil spirit-beings who were the primary instigators of much of mankind's wickedness before the great flood.

The prophecy of the destruction of the earth by fire in the Book of Enoch is the same event recorded by the prophet Isaiah and the apostle Peter in the Bible:

"And all the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll: and all their host shall fall down, as the leaf falls off from the vine, and as a falling fig from the fig tree" (Isa.34:4 KJV).
"The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in all holy conversation and godliness, Looking for and hastening to the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?" (2.Pet.3:9-12 KJV).

Two Groups of Watchers

The Watchers noted in the Book of Enoch, chapter 1 who tremble at the end of the age are only one of two distinct groups of spirit-beings that Enoch describes in his narrative as Watchers who interact with humans. The first group of Watchers that Enoch mentions in his narrative are unrighteous individuals and the second group are righteous individuals. These Watchers are spirit-beings who have the ability to manifest themselves in flesh and blood bodies as they interact with humans.

As we review what Enoch recorded, it will become clear that the Watchers are high ranking spirit-beings in God's governmental structure who have been given major responsibilities of stewardship over the physical creation and the care of mankind for the furtherance of God's ultimate plan for humans to become a part of his ever expanding family of spirit-beings. See 2.Cor.6:16-18; 1.Jn.3:1-2; Rev.21:6-7.

In chapter 6, Enoch lists the names of a number of angels who were in positions of leadership over other angels, but conspired together to disregard the instructions they had been given about their interaction with humans:

"And Semjaza, who was their leader, said to them: I fear that perhaps you will not be willing to do this deed, and I alone shall suffer for this great sin. Then all answered him and said: We all will swear an oath, and bind ourselves mutually by a curse, that we will not give up this plan, but will make this plan a deed. Then they all swore together, and bound themselves mutually by a curse; and together they were two hundred" (Enoch 6:3-5, Book 1, Watchers).

In verses 6 through 8, Enoch lists 17 angelic rulers under the authority of Semjaza, who themselves are over 200 angels:

"And they descended on Ardis, which is the summit of Mount Hermon; and they called it Mount Hermon, because they had sworn on it and bound themselves mutually by a curse. And these are the names of their leaders: Semjaza, who was their leader, Urakibarameel, Akibeel, Tamiel, Ramuel, Danel, Ezeqeeel, Saraqujal, Asael, Armers, Batraal, Anani, Zaqbe, Samsaveel, Sartael, Turel, Jom-
jael, Arazjal. These are the leaders of the two hundred angels, and the others all were with them" (Enoch 6:6-8, Book 1, Watchers).

All human governments are structured and based on law and it is no different in the Sovereign God's kingdom. The Sovereign God governs his realm in a structured orderly manner with laws that are administered by those he places in authority, who have the power to enforce his rule of law. Within the framework of God's law, there are laws and rules of conduct that apply only to angels and laws and rules that apply only to mankind. It is within the framework of the laws that apply to angels that we find the reasons for the condemnation and punishment of rebellious angels who interacted with mankind before the great flood.

The Holy Angels Who Watch

Enoch records the following names and the responsibilities of some of the holy angels who interacted with mankind before the great flood:

"And these are the names of the holy angels who watch: Uriel, one of the holy angels, the angel of thunder and of trembling; Raphael, one of the holy angels, the angel of the spirits of men; Raguel, one of the holy angels, who takes vengeance on the earth and the luminaries; Michael, one of the holy angels, namely set over the best portion of men, over the people; Saraqael, one of the holy angels, who is over the spirits of the children of men who induce the spirits to sin; Gabriel, one of the holy angels, who is over the serpents and over the Paradise and the Cherubim (Enoch 20:1-7, Book 1, Watchers).

"I asked the angel of peace who went with me, who showed me all things that were hidden, and said to him: Who are these four faces that I see, and whose voices I hear and have written them down? And he said to me: The first is the holy Michael, merciful, slow to anger; and the second, who is over all sicknesses and over all the wounds of the children of men, is Raphael; and the third, who is over all the powers, is the holy Gabriel; and the fourth, who is over repentance and the hope of those who inherit everlasting life, is Phanuel" (Enoch 40:8-9, Book 2, Parables).

Although Enoch describes these angels as ones who watch, the functions and responsibilities he describes are far more involved than just watching events transpire. These individuals are shown to have extremely important positions of rulership and management in God's government, which would also necessitate their having the authority and power to take certain actions on earth in order to carry out their responsibilities. These responsibilities would include gathering information and status reports from subordinates about the events transpiring on earth and reporting this information to the Sovereign God and the Creator God who became Christ.
WATCHERS TODAY

It is logical to assume that the righteous spirit-beings Enoch describes as Holy Angels and Watchers continue to perform their functions and responsibilities today, because Michael and Gabriel are two of the Watchers mentioned by Enoch and both are shown in the biblical record to interact with mankind after the great flood.

The account of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream in the Book of Daniel documents that Watchers were still actively interacting with mankind during Daniel’s lifetime.

Nebuchadnezzar’s Dream

The Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar had a dream in which he saw a huge beautiful and beneficial tree that gave shelter and food to all that came to it; however, his dream had very troubling ending. But, the king’s court magicians, astrologers, and soothsayers could not interpret the dream, so he called for Daniel to interpret it:

"I saw in the visions of my head upon my bed, and, behold, a watcher and a holy one came down from heaven; He cried aloud, and said this, Hew down the tree, and cut off his branches, shake off his leaves, and scatter his fruit; let the beasts get away from under it, and the fowls from his branches: Nevertheless leave the stump of his roots in the earth, even with a band of iron and brass, in the tender grass of the field; and let it be wet with the dew of heaven, and let his portion be with the beasts in the grass of the earth: Let his heart be changed from man’s, and let a beast’s heart be given to him; and let seven times pass over him. This matter is by the decree of the watchers, and the demand by the word of the holy ones: to the intent that the living may know that the most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomsoever he will, and sets up over it the basest of men" (Dan.4:13-17 KJV).

The English words watcher and watchers in verse 13 and 17 are translated from the Hebrew word iyyr, which is derived from the word uwrr, which has the idea of opening the eyes, to wake (literally or figuratively); therefore, indicating a watcher.

The following are three important things to understand from verses 13 and 17:

• This unnamed watcher is a spirit-being who comes from heaven to pronounce a punishment on Nebuchadnezzar which will last "seven times" (i.e., seven years).
• The decree is a judgement given by the "holy ones" (i.e., the Sovereign God and the Creator God).
• The punishment is administered by a watcher, so the people will know that the God Daniel serves has Sovereign authority over the earth and mankind.
In verse 18, the king asks Daniel to interpret the dream and in verses 19 through 23, Daniel explains what the dream means and what will happen to the king:

"And whereas the king saw a watcher and an holy one coming down from heaven, and saying, Hew the tree down, and destroy it; yet leave the stump of the roots thereof in the earth, even with a band of iron and brass, in the tender grass of the field; and let it be wet with the dew of heaven, and let his portion be with the beasts of the field, till seven times pass over him" (Dan.4:23 KJV).

One year later, while the king was boasting about himself and his accomplishments, a voice called to him from out of the air and explained what was about to happen to him because he would not acknowledge that all he had accomplished was given to him by the true God who was sovereign over the earth and mankind.

**ANGELIC PRISONERS**

The apostle Peter wrote that Christ, as the Creator God, spoke to a group of disobedient angels who were constrained in a place of isolation while Noah was building the ark and that these angels were being held captive awaiting punishment:

"For Christ also has once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but made alive by the spirit: By which he also went and preached to the spirits in prison: Which were some time disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, wherein few, that is eight souls were saved by water" (1.Pet.3:18-20 KJV Para).

"For God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down into hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved to judgment. And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly. . . " (2.Pet.2:4-5 KJV). See also Jude 5-13.

The English word **hell** in 2.Peter 2:4 is translated from the Greek word **tartaroo** and appears only once in the Bible and basically means a place of incarceration or restraint.

Exactly what did these spirit-beings do to deserve being placed into a prison while awaiting their punishment and when did they do whatever it was that they did? Although Peter does not elaborate on their disobedience or when they were put in prison, he does mention Noah and that these angels were already in prison during the building of the ark prior to the great flood.
Jude's Warning

In his exhortation to earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered to the saints, Jude warns the faithful of evil people who would attempt to subvert them. In verse 6, as an example of the inevitable punishment reserved for individuals who forsake God's truth and way of truth, he reminds them of what was common knowledge at that time concerning the punishment reserved for evil spirits:

"I will therefore put you in remembrance, although you once knew this, how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that did not believe. And that the angels who did not keep to their beginning place, but left their own residence, he has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness to the judgment of the great day" (Jude 5-6 Para.).

In order to get a better sense of what Jude actually wrote, it is necessary to understand some of the Greek words from which verse 6 is translated.

The English word keep is translated from the Greek word tereo, which has the sense of watching, which is similar to theoreo, meaning to guard (from loss or injury).

The English words beginning place are translated from the Greek word arche, which means a commencement, or (concretely) chief (in various applications of order, time, place, or rank).

The English word left is translated from the Greek word apoleipo, which can mean to leave behind (passively, remain); by implication, to forsake in the sense of to fail or be absent.

The inference in verse 6 seems to be that these spirit-beings were either created in a specific place or created and placed in a specific position or rank, but did not pay attention to the performance of the functions and responsibilities for which they had been created. Subsequently, they did something which God considered worthy of severe punishment. As a result of their disobedience and subsequent behavior, these rebellious angels are chained in a prison of darkness awaiting the day of their punishment by fire.

In verse 7, Jude compares the angels mentioned in verse 6 to the wicked inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah. This comparison seems to add sexual sins to the sin of rebellion as the reason some of these angels will die by fire:

"Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire" (Jude 7 KJV).
Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed because of their sinfulness, but specifically for their sexual deviance, which was against the natural order. The inclusion of the statement "giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh" makes sense when viewed with the understanding that these angels had physical bodies and inhabited a world with animals and humans capable of sexual intercourse.

Although Jude's letter is mainly a warning to the elect about certain false brethren and wicked individuals who were among them promoting evil instead of righteousness, Jude seems to be speaking of spirit-beings, not people, in verse 13:

"Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever" (Jude 13 KJV).

The punishment for incorrigibly wicked humans is the second death in the lake of fire from which there is no return (Rev. 21:8). But in verse 13, Jude mentions a different type of punishment, which seems to be separate from the punishment for the angels referred to in verses 6 and 7.

The following translations of words from the original Greek text show the severity of the punishment noted in Jude, verse 13 which can only apply to a spirit-being:

- Wandering (Greek planetes: from a root word which means a rover or a planet).
- Blackness (Greek zophos: blackness, darkness as shrouding like a cloud).
- Darkness (Greek skotos: obscurity or darkness).

Because there is no reference to the death of the individuals receiving this punishment, the punishment cannot be the one reserved for wicked humans, which is the second death in the Lake of Fire. Therefore, this punishment must be that which is reserved for certain evil spirits. The indication is that this prison of blackness and darkness is a place where these particular evil spirits will never leave, wandering alone forever. Moreover, Jude's statement in verse 13 seems to explain the type of punishment the demons who met Jesus at the tombs were concerned about. See Matt. 8:28-29.

For a sentient being, there could be no greater or torturous punishment than to be totally cut off from all other beings and left alone with one's thoughts in total darkness forever. This is the torment that demons fear more than death. Some demons are already experiencing this torture, which is indicated in Jude 6 and 2 Pet. 2:4. See chapter 6, Angels Are Not Immortal, for information on the types punishment reserved for evil spirits.
The spirit-beings Jude refers to being in chains awaiting punishment seem to be the same ones the apostle Peter mentions as being chained in darkness awaiting punishment. Who these angels are, what they did to deserve being put in prison, and the reasons for their punishment is clearly documented by Enoch.

After Enoch says the Creator God sent an angel to tell Noah the earth was going to be destroyed, but he and his children would be saved, Enoch relates the following about the punishment of the Watcher Azazel:

"And again the Lord spoke to Raphael: Bind Azazel hand and foot, and put him in the darkness; make an opening in the desert, which is in Duidael, and put him there" (Enoch 10:4, Book 1, Watchers).

Azazel is bound and imprisoned. Later on in the text, the reason for Azazel's imprisonment is shown to Enoch in a vision wherein he sees chains being prepared for Azazel's followers who are also angels. In this vision, Enoch is told that these angels will be destroyed with fire, because they have led the inhabitants of earth astray:

"And I looked and turned toward another side of the earth, and I saw there a deep valley with a burning fire. And they brought the kings and the powerful, and put them into the deep valley. And there my eyes saw how they make instruments for them, iron chains of immense weight. And I asked the angel of peace, who went with me, saying: These chain instruments, for whom have they been prepared? And he said to me: These have been prepared for the hosts of Azazel, to imprison them and put them into the lowest hell: and their jaws will be covered with rough stones, as the Lord of the spirits has commanded. Michael, Gabriel, Raphael, and Phanuel, they will overpower them on that great day, will throw them on that day into the oven of burning fire, that the Lord of the spirits may avenge himself on them on account of their injustice, because they became subject to Satan, and have led astray those who dwell on the earth" (Enoch 54:1-6, Book 2, Parables).

In chapter 69, Enoch reveals the final destruction of these rebellious angels who are imprisoned will come after Christ (the son of man) returns and has established the Kingdom of God on earth:

"And he sat upon the throne of his glory, and the sum of the judgment was given to him, the Son of man, and he causes to disappear and to be destroyed the sinners from the face of the earth, and also those who have led astray the earth. They shall be bound with chains and shall be imprisoned in the assembling-place of destruction, and all their work shall disappear from the face of the earth. And from that time on there will be nothing that will be destroyed, for he, the Son of man, has appeared, and sits on the throne of his glory, and all wickedness will disappear before his face and depart; but the word of that Son of man will be strong before the Lord of the spirits. This is the third Parable of Enoch" (Enoch 69:27-29, Book 2, Parables).
IMPRISONMENT AND PUNISHMENT

Exactly what did these rebellious angels do to deserve being placed into a prison while awaiting their punishment? The answer is that they disregarded the instructions they were given by God concerning their functions and responsibilities toward mankind and did many things, which were forbidden for them to do as they interacted with mankind.

The Taking of Wives

The first four verses of Genesis, chapter 6 prove that angels had sexual relations with physical women and fathered children through these women prior to God destroying the earth with water:

"And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born to them, That the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose" (Gen.6:1-2 KJV).

The English words the sons of are translated from the Hebrew word ben; meaning a son (as a builder of the family name) in the widest sense (of literal and figurative relationship, including grandson, subject, nation, quality or condition, and etc.). The word ben is a derivative of the Hebrew word banah; a primitive root, which means to build.

The English word men is translated from the Hebrew word adam, which means ruddy (i.e., a human being, or the species, mankind).

Genesis 6:1-2 reveals that these sons of God are, in fact, spirit-beings who had flesh and blood bodies like the angels who inhabited the earth before their rebellion and the destruction of the earth's surface in the war before the creation of mankind.

The narrative which follows in verses 3 and 4 of the Genesis record makes no sense, unless spirit-beings with physical bodies were having sexual relations with human women. God says that these abhorrent relations between angels and women were part of the reason he decided to destroy mankind in a great flood:

"And the Lord said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years. There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown" (Gen.6:3-4 KJV). See also Flavius Josephus Antiquities of the Jews, Book 3, Chapter 3:1.

The English word strive in verse 3 is translated from the Hebrew word diyn, which means to rule; by implication to judge (as umpire); also to strive (as at law). The use of the word diyn in the context of verse 3 indicates that the Creator God had given mankind clearly defined laws which contained rules of behavior that prohibited sexual relations between angels and human females.
In verse 3, the English word *man* is translated from the Hebrew word *adam*, which is used when referring to human males and mankind in general; however, when the offspring the sons of God and the daughters of men are referred to in verse 4, the English word *men* is translated from the Hebrew word *iysh*, which can mean a *man as an individual* or a *male person*.

The usage of the word *iysh* in verse 4 to describe the angels' sons, does not define these males as being men with the spirit of man. The word *iysh* only tells us that these are males being described. If it were not for Enoch's record, the genetic identity of these men would remain a mystery and subject to speculation. However, Enoch reveals that the taking of wives by the Watchers (who were spirit-beings in flesh and blood bodies) from among humans in order to father children through them was one of the major reasons for the wickedness of mankind during that age and was a major factor in God's decision to destroy the earth and everyone in it, except for eight people.

The Book of Enoch, chapter 6, describes the angels who took wives of the daughters of men as "the sons of the heavens" who are the sons of God noted in Genesis chapter 6:

"And it came to pass, after the children of men had increased in those days, beautiful and comely daughters were born to them. And the angels, the sons of the heavens, saw and lusted after them, and said one to another: Behold, we will choose for ourselves wives from among the children of men, and will beget for ourselves children" (Enoch 6:1-2, Book 1, Watchers).

In the Book of Enoch, chapter 9, Enoch relates a conversation between four righteous angels and God in which these four angels say that certain angels had revealed secret knowledge and had sexual relations with human women through which they fathered children. This conversation reveals that the behavior of these unrighteous angels resulted in violence and wickedness filling the earth:

"See then what Azazel has done, how he has taught all wickedness on earth and has revealed the secrets of the world which were preserved in the heavens. And Semjaza to whom thou have given the power to be chief of his associates has made known conjuring. And they have gone together to the daughters of men and have slept with them, and have defiled themselves, and have revealed to them these sins. And the women have brought forth giants, and thereby the whole earth has been filled with blood and wickedness" (Enoch 9:6-9, Book 1, Watchers).

Because these rebellious angels defiled themselves with women, which resulted in violence and wickedness throughout the earth, they would see their children die in the great flood and they themselves would be placed in prison to await their punishment:
"And God said to Michael: Announce to Semjaza and to the others who are with him, who have bound themselves to women, to be destroyed with them in all their defilement. When all their sons shall have slain one another, and they shall have seen the destruction of their beloved ones, bind them under the hills of the earth for seventy generations, till the day of their judgment and of their end, till the last judgment has been passed for all eternity" (Enoch 10:11-12, Book 1, Watchers).

The following excerpt from the Book of Enoch shows the punishment that these imprisoned angels will receive. This punishment is also recorded by the apostles Peter and Jude:

"And in those days they will be led to the abyss of fire, in torture and in prison they will be locked for all eternity. And then he will burn, and be destroyed; they will be burned together from now on to the end of all generations. And destroy all souls of lust and the children of the watchers, because they have oppressed mankind" (Enoch 10:13-15, Book 1, Watchers).

No Forgiveness

As Enoch was giving praise to God, one or more of the righteous Watchers called to him and gave him a message to announce to the Watchers who had defiled themselves with women:

"Enoch, you scribe of justice, go, announce to the watchers of heaven, who have left the high heaven and the holy, eternal place, and have defiled themselves with women, and have done as the children of men do, and have taken to themselves wives, and are defiled in great defilement upon the earth. But upon earth they shall have no peace, nor forgiveness of sin; for they will not enjoy their children. They will see the murder of their beloved ones, and they will lament over the destruction of their children, and will petition to eternity, but mercy and peace will not be to them" (Enoch 12:5-7, Book 1, Watchers).

What is recorded in the Book of Enoch, chapter 15, is God's response to the rebellious angels' request for Enoch to petition on their behalf to God for forgiveness and mercy instead of the punishment which Enoch had announced to them:

"And go, say to the watchers of heaven, who have sent you, that you should petition for them: You should petition for men, and not men for you. Why have you left the high, holy, and everlasting heaven, and lain with women, and defiled yourselves with the daughters of men, and taken wives to yourselves, and acted like the children of earth, and begotten giants as sons?" (Enoch 15:2-3, Book 1, Watchers).
Enoch reiterates that certain angels had taken human wives and fathered children by them:

"While you were spiritual, holy, having eternal life, you defiled yourselves with women, and with the blood of flesh have begotten children, and have lusted after the blood of men, and have produced flesh and blood as they produce who die and are destroyed. Therefore, I have given them [i.e., men] wives that they might impregnate them and children be born by them, as it is done on earth " (Enoch 15:4-5, Book 1, Watchers).

The angels who had sexual relations with women had done something that was forbidden for them to do and had subsequently created a hybrid angel-human. The offspring of their forbidden union were considered evil beings, which would also be confined to earth:

"You were formerly spiritual, living an eternal life without death to all the generations of the world. Therefore, I have not made for you any wives, for spiritual beings have their home in heaven. And now the giants, who have been begotten from body and flesh, will be called evil spirits on earth, and their dwelling-places will be upon the earth" (Enoch 15:6-8, Book 1, Watchers).

According to the Book of Enoch, God said that he did not make wives for the angels, because spirit-beings have their home in heaven. This tells us that angels were not created to reproduce themselves in the heavenly realm. The spirit of these giants was comprised of both the spirit of these rebellious and evil watchers who are eternal and the spirit of women who are physical; therefore, the children of these angels were inherently evil by virtue of their genetic and spiritual makeup:

"Evil spirits proceed from their bodies; because they are created from above, their beginning and first basis being from the holy watchers, they will be evil spirits upon the earth, and will be called evil spirits. But the spirits of heaven have their dwelling-places in heaven, and the spirits of the earth, who were born on the earth, have their dwelling-places on earth" (Enoch 15:9-10 Book 1, Watchers).

Enoch records that the giant children of the Watchers fight with humans, cause much trouble and destruction on the earth, and would remain on earth without access to the heavenly realm as their fathers had before their disobedience.

The Revealing of Secrets

Angels are extremely intelligent beings and have knowledge of the physical and spirit realms that humans are not supposed to have for various reasons. The angels who were given functions and responsibilities to manage the earth and guide humans along a path of righteousness were forbidden from providing humans access to certain knowledge; however, Enoch says that some angels gave this forbidden knowledge to humans and taught them how to use it.
In the Book of Enoch, chapter 9, Enoch relates a conversation between four righteous angels and God, in which these four angels say that secret knowledge had been given to humans by specific angels:

"See then what Azazel has done, how he has taught all wickedness on earth and has revealed the secrets of the world which were prepared in the heavens. And Semjaza to whom you have given the power to be chief of his associates has made known conjuring.

(Enoch 9:6-7, Book 1, Watchers)

In chapter 16, Enoch relates more of what the Creator God told him to tell the watchers who had asked him to petition God on their behalf because of their impending punishment. These rebellious watchers had revealed forbidden knowledge to their wives and it was through this knowledge that wickedness was increased on earth:

"And now to the watchers who have sent you that you should petition for them who were formerly in heaven say. You have been in heaven, and though the secrets were not yet revealed to you, still you knew illegitimate mysteries, and these you have, in the hardness of your hearts, related to the women, and through these mysteries women and men increase wickedness over the earth. Tell them therefore: You have no peace!"

(Enoch 16:2-4, Book 1, Watchers).

Enoch was shown that these rebellious angels taught mankind many other things which they were forbidden to teach. Some of this knowledge relates to secrets of nature, such as alchemy, the cloning of life-forms, and herbal technology. They also taught humans how to make instruments of warfare, techniques of hand-to-hand combat, the making of charms and conjuring. All of this knowledge led mankind to moral degradation, conflict, and other violations of God's law.

In chapter 64, Enoch relates the following disastrous results of the forbidden knowledge taught to mankind by the watchers:

"And I saw other faces in that place in secret. I heard the voice of the angel saying: These are the angels who descended from heaven upon the earth, and have revealed to the children of men that which was secret, and have led astray the sons of men that they committed sin" (Enoch 64:1-2, Book 2, Parables).

The Bible defines sin as the violation of God's law. Therefore, it can be assumed that the forbidden knowledge that the watchers revealed to their wives, which was subsequently revealed to other humans, was used in a fashion that produced an evil result, thereby breaking God's law.

The secrets the angels taught to their wives was knowledge which was forbidden for mankind to have, because without the exercise of righteous character, the wielding of the creative and destructive power that this knowledge could unleash was extremely dangerous for mankind to possess.
The Worship of Demons

Enoch says that certain angels who had taken wives of human women had changed their appearance and led mankind to worship evil spirits as gods. For this, these evil spirits will be punished:

"And Uriel said to me: Here will stand the souls of those angels who have united themselves with women, and having assumed many different forms, have defiled mankind, and have led them astray so that they brought offerings to the demons as to gods, namely on the day when the great judgment, on which they will be judged, shall be consummated" (Enoch 19:1, Book 1, Watchers).

The forbidden knowledge the angels revealed to their wives seems to have been the catalyst which gave rise to many mystical practices, false worship systems, and false gods that were in opposition to God's plan and purpose for mankind:

"A command has come from before the presence of the Lord over all those who dwell on the earth, that their end is at hand, because they know all the secrets of the angels, and all the violence of the satans, and all the powers of secrecy, and all the powers of those who practice sorcery and the powers of witchcraft, and the powers of those who make metal images for the whole earth" (Enoch 65:6, Book 2, Parables).

What Enoch recorded about the making of images and the worship of false gods by people who lived before the great flood is also confirmed by the writer of the Book of Jasher, which is also mentioned in the biblical text as having historical validity. See Josh.10:13; 2.Sam.1:18.

"And it was in the days of Enoch that the sons of men continued to rebel and transgress against God, to increase the anger of the Lord against the sons of men. And the sons of men went and they served other gods, and they forgot the Lord who had created them in the earth: and in those days the sons of men made images of brass and iron, wood and stone, and they bowed down and served them. And every man made his god and they bowed down to them, and the sons of men forsook the Lord all the days of Enoch and his children; and the anger of the Lord was kindled on account of their works and abominations which they did in the earth" (Jasher 2:3-4).

SUMMARY

When humanity was created, the Sovereign God planned for people to prosper and eventually become his sons and enter into his Kingdom as spirit-beings. However, when we review the Genesis record, we find that the first two humans failed to follow the Creator God's instructions concerning the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and were evicted from the Garden of Eden.
As the centuries passed, many spirit-beings who took on the form of man failed to follow God's instructions given to them regarding how to interact with mankind; instead, they influenced mankind to reject God and his ways:

"And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And God was sorry that he had made man on the earth, and it caused him great sorrow of heart. And he said, I will destroy humanity whom I have created and wipe them from the face of the earth: both humanity, and beasts, and the creeping things and the birds of the air; for I am sorry that I have made them" (Gen.6:5-7 Para.).

God was extremely discouraged because of the wickedness of people and their rejection of him and the opportunity that he had offered them. Because they chose the way of evil over the way of good and would not change from their wicked lifestyles, God decided to kill all of them except for Noah and his family. It is a sad commentary on the human race that, out of its hundreds of millions and perhaps billions of inhabitants, Noah was the only righteous individual God could find on the planet.

The great flood marks the second time the surface of the earth was destroyed. But this time, God spared eight humans and many animals in order to repopulate the earth.

Although the biblical record does not tell us exactly what happened to the rebellious angels who inhabited the earth after the earth's surface was again destroyed by God, we know that, according to the Genesis record, all the land was submerged under water, making earth uninhabitable by land-based life-forms (Gen.1:1-10). We also know that Satan continued to live and, according to the Book of Enoch, some of the rebellious angels who inhabited the earth were placed in prison before the great flood. The Book of Enoch also records that the children of the rebellious angels would be killed and remain as evil spirits on earth without access to the heavenly realm.

The following are several plausible explanations for what may have happened to the rebellious spirit-beings who inhabited the earth along with mankind during and after the great flood:

- Some lost their physical bodies in the destruction of the earth's surface and became disembodied spirits, which either live on earth or in the heavenly realm until they are punished for their rebellion.
- Some lost their physical bodies in the destruction of the earth's surface and became disembodied spirits who were then imprisoned to await punishment for their rebellion.
• Because Noah preached repentance to the world for one hundred years before the flood waters came, some rebellious spirit-beings, knowing that the earth would be destroyed, made preparations for themselves and their wives to survive by escaping to another dimension of existence or to other inhabitable planets.

Because Satan still has access to the earth and comes and goes as he pleases, it is logical to assume that some of the other rebellious spirit-beings who escaped the two destructions of the earth's surface also have access to earth and can come and go as they please, until the Sovereign God decides to bring an end to this phase of his plan and purpose for the creation of mankind.

The Sovereign God and the Creator God did not leave mankind alone after its creation. God had set in place a system comprised of powerful, intelligent, and talented spirit-beings to help mankind obtain the purpose for its creation, which is to enter into his divine family as spirit-beings. However, as the Book of Genesis records, many of these powerful, intelligent, and talented angels began to desire sexual relations with human females and took them as wives in order to bear children through them, which seems to be the catalyst for the events that eventually led to the corruption of the millions and perhaps billions of people who inhabited the earth during that period of time.

Enoch describes many things that the rebellious angels did outside the bounds of their authority, function, and responsibility. The following are just a few of the things these rebellious angels did, which influenced God's decision to wipe mankind from the face of the earth:

• They took wives of human women.
• They fathered hybrid children through women.
• They revealed forbidden knowledge to humans.
• They promoted forbidden worship systems.

Enoch's record reveals an extremely close and ongoing interaction between both righteous and unrighteous angels and mankind after Adam and Eve were created and before the destruction of the earth's surface and the death of all but eight people by the great flood.

The biblical record shows that after the great flood, this interaction between mankind and angels continued and still continues to this day, but with angels being more limited in how and when they can interact with mankind.

By B.L. Cocherell
Most Bible scholars and theologians believe that, when a spirit-being is referred to as "the angel of the Lord," this being is always a personal representative of the Creator God. Although this may be true in some cases, the descriptive phrase "the angel of the Lord" does not always refer to the personal representative of the Creator God. Sometimes it refers to the Creator himself as the messenger.

It is important to be able to recognize who is referred to as "the angel of the Lord" in various texts, because it not only shows the Creator God's personal involvement in the Sovereign God's plan for mankind, but also that what is being said is of such great importance the Creator God felt it necessary to personally deliver the instruction or message.

TWO GODS

The main barrier to understanding who is being referred to as "the angel of the Lord" (i.e., the messenger of the Lord) in many texts is that most people do not understand that the biblical record clearly documents the existence of two god-beings in the God Family (Gen.1:26; Eph.3:14-15). Therefore, most cannot differentiate between the Creator God who became Christ and the Sovereign God who became God the Father after the birth of Christ.

Before Christ

Before the advent of Jesus Christ, virtually no one knew that God the Father existed. From the scriptural record, it seems that only a few were privileged to understand there was more than one being in the God family. But for the most part, the Father whom those of ancient Israel knew and worshiped was the Creator God who became the Savior. This may seem confusing, but the Savior was the One who created all things; therefore, he was the Father of all creation, but he was not God the Father (the Sovereign God).

Many of the prophets, priests, and possibly King David understood the relationship between the Father and the Son:

"The Lord [Yahweh] said to my Lord [Adon], Sit you at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool" (Psa.110:1 KJV).

In this prophetic psalm, God the Father (the Sovereign God) is speaking to David's Lord—the Creator God.
Speaking to the Scribes about the commandments, Christ said, "The first of all the commandments is, Hear O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, . . ." (Mk.12:29-30 KJV).

It is true that before the Creator God emptied himself of his glory and became a physical human (Christ), he was identified as God in the first of the commandments. But, when he came to earth as a human, he came to reveal the Supreme Sovereign whom we now worship as God. However, in this context Christ was answering a question put forth by the Scribes about the commandments (See verse 28); he was not using this argument to reveal the true identity of God. But, in explaining the first commandment, Christ who was the God of Israel stated that the nation of Israel should love God. But which God was he speaking of? The being he refers to as "Our God" (his God also) is the one he came to reveal—God the Father. Yes, "the Lord our God is one Lord"; the living Savior is one God who created all things, and the Father is the other God; through whose power all things were created. See 1.Cor.8:6.

The apostle Paul said the understanding of what God was doing here on earth was a mystery (Col.2:2), which includes what the God family is and the identity of its members.

Beyond a shadow of a doubt, there is a Sovereign Father who reigns supreme above our Savior. And this Supreme Sovereign is the One our Savior said he was sent to reveal.

No Human Has Seen God the Father

There are two scriptures that many people believe refer to the Creator God whom no human has ever seen or heard; however, these scriptures actually refer to God the Father who sent Jesus Christ to earth to reveal him (God the Father) as the Sovereign Father of all that exists and to teach his (God the Father's) message of salvation:

"No man has seen God at any time, the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he has declared him" (Jn.1:18 KJV).

"And the Father himself, which has sent me, has borne witness of me. You have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape" (Jn.5:37 KJV).

John clearly says that no man has seen God, and Jesus says that no one has heard the Father's voice or seen his shape. So, there should be no question that the God spoken of by John and Jesus is not the same God who walked and talked with humans on earth.
When it is understood that, before this physical creation, there were two individual god-beings in the heavenly God Family, the true meaning of many scriptures can be understood. It also becomes clear that the messenger who appeared and spoke to many individuals as "the angel of the Lord" was often, in fact, the Creator God sent by the Sovereign God in order to give an important message or instruction or to fulfill promises and prophecies.

ABRAHAM'S TEST

Found in the Book of Genesis, chapter 22 is the account of Abraham following the Creator's instructions to sacrifice his son Isaac. As Abraham took a knife with the intent to slay his son, the angel of the Lord called to him out of heaven and stopped him from sacrificing Isaac:

"But the angel of the Lord called out to him from heaven, Abraham! Abraham! Here I am, he replied. Do not lay a hand on the boy, he said. Do not do anything to him. Now I know that you fear God, because you have not withheld from me your son, your only son" (Gen.22:11-12 NIV).

The English word angel in verse 11 is the Hebrew word malak, which means a messenger. Whether this voice from heaven was the voice of a spirit-messenger in the service of the Creator God or the voice of the Creator himself cannot be determined from verses 11 through 12. But, when we review the language and context of verses 15 through 18, it becomes apparent the voice from heaven is the voice of the Creator God:

"And the angel [messenger] of the Lord called to Abraham out of heaven the second time, And said, By myself have I sworn, says the Lord, for because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only son: That in blessing I will bless you, and in multiplying I will multiply your seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and your seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; And in your seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because you have obeyed my voice" (Gen.22:15-18 KJV).

Genesis 22, verses 1 and 2, show that it is Elohiym (i.e., the Creator God) who personally gave Abraham the instructions to sacrifice Isaac as a test of obedience. Verses 15 through 18 reveal that the voice from heaven is the Creator God's voice, because these verses connect the Creator's command to sacrifice Isaac with an acknowledgment from the Creator himself that Abraham had passed this test of obedience.

Jacob

After serving Laben fourteen years in order to acquire Laban's two daughters Leah and Rachael as wives and then an additional six years to receive wages for service rendered, a messenger from God came to Jacob in a dream and tells him to return to his home land and his relatives:
"And he heard the words of Laban's sons, saying, Jacob has taken away all that was our father's; and of that which was our father's has he gotten all this glory. And Jacob beheld the countenance of Laben, and, behold, it was not toward him as before. And the Lord said to Jacob, Return to the land of your fathers, and to your relatives; and I will be with you" (Gen.31:1-3 KJV Para.).

The English word Lord in verse 3 is translated from the Hebrew word Yehovah (i.e., YHWH), which means the Self-Existent or Eternal.

Verse 3 shows that the Self-Existent One spoke to Jacob, but in relating this event to Leah and Rachael, Jacob first says that it was a messenger from God who spoke to him:

"And the angel of God spoke to me in a dream, saying, Jacob: And I said, Here am I. And he said, Lift up now your eyes, and see, all the rams which leap upon the cattle are ringstraked, speckled, and grisled: for I have seen all that Laben does to you. I am the God of Bethel, where you anointed the pillar, and where you vowed a vow to me: now arise, you get out from this land, and return to the land of your relatives" (Gen.31:11-13 KJV Para.).

The English word God in verse 11 is translated from the Hebrew word Elohiym, which means the Supreme God and is sometimes expressed in its plural form as Gods, as in Genesis 1:26. Therefore, verse 11 could just as easily be translated into the English as, "And the messenger of the Gods spoke to me in a dream."

In verse 13, the English word God is translated from the Hebrew word Elohiym, but in its singular form. This tells us that the God noted in verses 3 and 13 is the Creator God who came as a messenger from the Sovereign God (verse 11).

This account shows that the Creator God did at times personally communicate messages from the Sovereign God to individuals.

THE BURNING BUSH

Did the Creator God actually speak to Moses out of the burning bush or was the spirit-being who spoke to Moses an angelic messenger sent by the Creator God to speak for him?

"Now Moses kept the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian: and he led the flock to the backside of the desert, and came to the mountain of God, even to Horeb. And the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed." (Ex.3:1-2 KJV).
If this text were taken at face value, if this were the only place in the Bible which spoke of this event, and if we did not take into account the Hebrew language of the original text, the only logical conclusion would be that an angel (i.e., a messenger from the Creator God) spoke to Moses out of the bush. An analysis of verses 1 through 5 and other references to this event will reveal that the spirit-being who spoke to Moses out of the burning bush was, in fact, the Creator God.

The English words *angel* and *Lord* in verses 1 and 2 are translated from the Hebrew words *malak* and *Yehovah* (i.e., YHWH), which respectively mean a messenger (specifically, of God) and the Self-Existent or Eternal.

"And Moses said, I will turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt And when the Lord saw that he turned aside to see, God called to him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here I am" (Ex.3:3-4 KJV Para.).

The English words *Lord* and *God* in verses 3 and 4 are translated from the Hebrew words *Yehovah* and *Elohiym*, which respectively mean the self-Existent or Eternal and Supreme God (specifically, of God and plural of gods). Clearly, Moses knew that he was in the presence of a god-being and not a representative of God.

"And he said, Do not draw near: put your shoes off your feet, because the place where you are standing is holy ground" (Ex.3:5 KJV Para.).

Another proof that it is the Creator God who spoke to Moses out of the burning bush is the fact that the ground surrounding the burning bush was holy.

Nowhere is the biblical record can we find anything being holy because of the presence of an angel. Angels occupy heaven which is holy, but an angel cannot by virtue of being a spirit-being make anything holy. The examples in Exodus, chapter 19 of God's presence on the mountain and the sacredness of the tabernacle in the wilderness, and Solomon's temple attest to God's presence imparting a holy quality to where his presence resides. See also 1.Cor.3:16-17.

**Stephen's Account of the Burning Bush**

Acts, chapters 6 and 7 contains the account of Stephen being brought before the Jewish Sanhedrin to defend himself against those who accused him of speaking blasphemous words against Moses, God, the temple, and the law, and teaching things that were in opposition to Jewish tradition.

Speaking of Moses in the wilderness Stephen said, "And when forty years were expired, there appeared to him in the wilderness of mount Sinai an angel of the Lord in a flame of fire in a bush" (Acts 7:30 KJV).
Many people believe that Acts, chapter 7, verse 30 is proof that the spirit-being who spoke to Moses out of the burning bush was an angel. However, the Greek language of verse 30 and the rest of what Stephen said to the council reveals the true identity of the being who spoke to Moses out of the burning bush.

The English word *angel* in verse 30 is translated from the Greek word *aggelos*, which means *to bring information or news; a messenger; especially an angel; by implication, a pastor*. The Greek word *aggelos* could just as easily have been translated as messenger in verse 30.

There is a controversy among Bible Scholars as to whether the words of the Lord were added for readability or were in the Textus Receptus, but not in earlier manuscripts. Whether or not the words of the Lord were in the original text of verse 30 is of no consequence, because the words *angel* and *Lord* (i.e., malak and Yehovah) are in the Exodus account. See Ex.3:2.

Although a linguistic analysis of verse 30 does not reveal the identity of the *aggelos* (i.e., messenger) who spoke from out of the burning bush, what Stephen continues to say does:

"When Moses saw it, he wondered at the sight: and as he drew near to behold it, the voice of the Lord came to him, Saying, I am the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. Then Moses trembled, and did not dare to look more closely at the bush" (Acts 7:31-32 KJV Para.).

The English words *Lord* and *God* in verses 31 and 32 are translated from the Greek words *kurios* and *Theos*, which respectively mean *supreme in authority and a deity*.

Stephen's account of the burning bush parallels the Exodus account. Stephen clearly said that the messenger of the Lord who spoke out of the burning bush identified himself as the Creator God. But how could the Creator God be a messenger of the Lord? And if the Creator God is the messenger, who is the God who sent him?

**Holy Ground**

"Then the Lord said to him, Put off your shoes from your feet: for the place where you stand is holy ground" (Acts 7:33 KJV Para.).

In verse 33, Stephen calls the spirit-being who tells Moses to take his shoes off *Lord* (Greek, *kurios*, i.e., supreme in authority) and says the ground surrounding the bush is holy.

Stephen clearly identifies the spirit-being who spoke out of the burning bush as the Creator God of Israel. He relates what the Creator said to Moses, and then tells the council who sent the God of Israel to Moses:
"I have seen, I have seen the affliction of my people that are in Egypt, and I have heard their groaning, and am come down to deliver them. And now come, I will send you into Egypt. This Moses whom they refused, saying, Who made you a ruler and a judge? The same [i.e., Moses] God sent to be a ruler and a deliverer by the hand of the angel [messenger] which appeared to him in the bush" (Acts 7:34-35 KJV Para.).

Remember that Stephen is being taken to task because he is proclaiming the good news of the Kingdom of God, salvation through Jesus Christ as the Messiah, and revealing the Sovereign God as the Father of Jesus the Christ. The spiritual leaders of the Jews believed in one God who would come and restore national Israel to its former greatness; therefore, they viewed Stephen's words as ridiculous and blasphemous.

In verse 35, we again see that the English word angel is translated from the Greek word ἀγγέλος (i.e., a messenger). Stephen clearly relates the Exodus account of Moses' conversation with the Creator God and reveals to the spiritual leaders of the Jews that the messenger who appeared to Moses was none other than the Creator God sent from the Sovereign God.

The accounts of the burning bush in Exodus, chapter 3 and in Acts 7:30-35 reveal that Moses not only heard a voice from the burning bush but also saw who was speaking to him, which is consistent with other scriptures which record that the Creator God came to earth many times, both in his spirit-form and in his physical-form (Gen.12:7, 18:1-14, 32:30; Ex.13:21, 33:11).

There is no logical reason to ascribe the voice and appearance in the burning bush to a spirit-being other than the Creator God, when the context and language of Exodus 3:1-5 and Acts 7:30-35 clearly identify the one who appeared in the burning bush and spoke out of it as the Creator God.

Although it is true that, in some texts, the phrase the angel of the Lord does speak of a representative of the Creator God, the angel (i.e., messenger) of the Lord does not always refer to the personal representative of the Creator. Sometimes it refers to the Creator himself who is being sent by the Sovereign God to give instructions or an important message.

**Christ's Account of the Burning Bush**

After answering the Sadducees' question about marriage in the Kingdom of God, Christ made the following statement about God, the burning bush, and the resurrection of the dead:

"And as touching the dead, that they rise: have you not read in the book of Moses, how in the bush God spoke to him, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? He is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living: you therefore do greatly err" (Mk.12:26-27 KJV). See also Lk.20:37-38.
Mark records that Jesus who was the Creator God before he came to earth as a human said it was God (Gr. theos; i.e., the supreme Divinity) who spoke to Moses out of the burning bush. Who and what is the most credible source concerning the identity of the spirit-being who appeared in the burning bush and spoke to Moses? Bible scholars, theologians, or Jesus Christ and the Bible?

Although righteous angels are holy, they cannot of themselves make a thing holy in the sense that God's presence resides on or in it. And although God's spirit-energy permeates, controls, and sustains all things, not everything is holy. Only God, through the use of his power, can transform a thing or a person into something that is holy with his spirit presence on or in it. The apostle Paul wrote to the saints at Corinth about the sanctity of their physical body because of the indwelling of the holy spirit:

"Do you not know that you are the temple of God, and that the spirit of God dwells in you? If anyone defiles the temple of God, God shall destroy that person; for the temple of God is holy, which temple you are" (1.Cor.3:16-17 KJV Para.).

"What? Do you not know that your body is the temple of the holy spirit which is in you, which you have of God, and you are not your own?" (1.Cor.6:19 KJV Para.).

The Sovereign God's earthly children are the temple of the living God where the spirit of God resides. His most holy place on earth is now within his elect children.

JOSHUA AND THE ANGEL

Many assume that "the angel of the Lord" who met and spoke with Joshua close to Jericho was an angel sent from the Creator God. But, the language of the text does not describe an angel; it describes a god-being. This messenger was not sent from the Creator God, but was actually the Creator God speaking with Joshua:

"And it came to pass, when Joshua was close to Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, behold, a man stood in front of him with his sword drawn in his hand: and Joshua went to him, and said to him, Are you for us, or for our adversaries?" (Josh.5:13 KJV Para.).

Recognizing that the man before him was a powerful warrior, Joshua wanted to know if he was a friend or foe.

"And he said, No; but as captain of the host of the Lord I am come. And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and worshiped, and asked him, What does my Lord have to say to his servant? And the captain of the Lord's host said to Joshua, take your shoes off your feet; for the place where you stand is holy. And Joshua did so" (Josh.5:14-15 KJV Para.).
There is no argument that this spirit-being comes from God, but who is he? Verses 14 and 15 explain who this spirit-being is and who actually sent him.

In verse 14, the English words *captain*, *host*, and *Lord* are important to the identity of this spirit-being. Captain is translated from the Hebrew word *sar*, which means a *head person* (of any rank or class). Host is translated from the Hebrew word *tsaba*, which means a *mass of persons* (or figuratively, *things*), especially organized for war (an army). Lord is translated from the Hebrew word *Yehovah*, which means *the Self-Existent* or *Eternal*.

The only captain of the Sovereign God’s army mentioned in the Bible is Christ who was the Creator God before he came to earth to become the Savior of mankind. Therefore, the individual speaking to Joshua must be the Creator God.

The first thing that Joshua did as soon as the individual identified himself was fall to the ground and worship him. The English word *worshiped* in verse 14 is translated from the Hebrew word *shachah*, which means to *depress* (i.e., prostrate, especially reflexive, in homage to royalty or God). Joshua fell to the ground before this spirit-being because he knew that he was in the presence of a god-being. He would not have fallen down to worship an angel, because only God is to be worshiped according to biblical law (Ex.20:3-5). The following examples show that men and angels are not to be worshiped:

- When Satan who is a spirit-being offered Christ power, glory, and the nations of this world if he would worship him, Christ rebuked him and said: "For it is written, you shall worship the Lord your God, and him only shall you serve" (Matt.4:10; Lk.4:8).
- When Cornelius first met the apostle Peter, he fell at his feet and worshiped him thinking he was of the spirit realm. But Peter told him that he was only a man and was not to be worshiped (Acts 10:25-26). See also Rev.19:1-10.
- Paul wrote to the saints at Colosse and encouraged them that they should not to let anyone convince them that they would lose their salvation for refusing to worship angels, which is what idolatrous individuals did. (Col.2:18-19).

From his position of respect for a god-being Joshua asks, "What does my Lord have to say to his servant?" Here, the English word *Lord* is translated from the Hebrew word *Adonay*, which is only used as the name of God. This tells us that the spirit-being to whom Joshua is speaking is the Creator God.

Moreover, in verse 15, this individual tells Joshua to take his shoes off because the place where they are standing is holy. The ground is holy because of the presence of this spirit-being, which is further proof that this spirit-being is the Creator God.
Joshua was one of a handful of the original Israelites who came out of Egypt who were allowed to enter the promised land. He clearly understood that only the Creator God was to be worshiped and he knew who the Creator God was and understood the difference between what was holy and was not holy.

In Joshua, chapter six, the Captain of the Lord's hosts gives Joshua the following instructions concerning the destruction of Jericho:

"Now Jericho was shut up because of the children of Israel: no one went out, and no one came in. And the Lord said to Joshua, See, I have given into your hand Jericho, and the king thereof, and the mighty men of valor. And you shall go around the city, all your men of war, and go round about the city once. This you shall do six days. And seven priests shall go before the ark with seven trumpets of rams' horns: and the seventh day you shall go around the city seven times, and the priests shall blow the trumpets. And it shall come to pass, that when they make a long blast with the ram's horn, and when you hear the sound of the trumpet, all the people shall shout with a great shout; and the wall of the city shall fall down flat, and the people shall ascend up every man straight before him" (Josh.6:1-5 KJV Para.).

The word Lord in verse 2 is translated from the Hebrew word Yehovah, which means the Self-Existent or Eternal. This is further proof that the individual speaking to Joshua was the Creator God.

The evidence shows that the spirit-being dressed as a warrior who identified himself to Joshua as the Captain of the Lord's hosts was the Creator God manifesting himself as a man just like he did when he spoke and ate with Abraham as he and the two angels were on their way to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen.18:1-8).

**DID ANGELS ORDAIN THE LAW?**

Popular translations of the Bible interpret what Paul wrote to the Galatians in chapter 3, verse 19 to mean that it was angels who ordained and put into effect God's law, not the Creator God. The following are two of the more popular English translations containing gross mistranslations and interpretations of the Greek language, which give a false impression of what Paul actually wrote:

"Wherefore then serves the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator" (Gal.3:19 KJV).

"What, then, was the purpose of the law? It was added because of transgressions until the Seed to whom the promise referred had come. The law was put into effect through angels by a mediator" (Gal.3:19 NIV)
The King James translation says that the law was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator. The English word *ordained* means *to decide in advance*, which gives the impression that angels had some say in the construction of the law and the authority to decide in advance how the law would be disseminated.

The New International Version says that the law was put into effect through angels by a mediator. In this context, the English word *effect* clearly means *the state of being or becoming operative*, which gives the impression that the Mediator charged the angels with putting the law into effect.

This interpretation effectively removes the Creator God as the law giver and the one who established the law in national Israel.

In order to clearly understand what Paul actually wrote, we must understand the meanings of two more Greek words used in verse 19—aggelos and mesites. Understanding that the English word *angel* is translated from the Greek word *aggelos* (*to bring information or news* or *a messenger*) and that the English word *mediator* is translated from the Greek word *mesites*, (*an internunciator*, or by implication *a reconciler* or *intercessor*) combined with the other Greek words noted, is key to the true meaning of verse 19.

**Christ the Reconciler**

In Paul's opening statements in his letter to the saints at Colosse he says the following, which shows, beyond doubt, that it is Christ who reconciles a person to God the Father:

"For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that you might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; That you might walk worthy of the Lord to all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, to all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness; Giving thanks to the Father, who has made us fit to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: Who has delivered us from the power of darkness, and has translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son" (Col.1:9-13 KJV).

Paul says that there are many things for which he and the others with him pray for and desire for the saints at Colosse. Among these things, is that these individuals will continue to grow spiritually and live according to their calling. Paul also notes their gratitude to God the Father who has saved them and made them a part of Christ's heavenly realm. What follows tells us it is through the redemptive power of Christ's sacrificial blood that a person is able to have their sins forgiven, and that Christ is also the Creator God and the reconciler of all things to God the Father:
"In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins: Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: 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: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell; And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things to himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven" (Col.1:14-20 KJV).

The scriptures clearly show that Jesus the Christ is the prophesied messenger who not only came to proclaim the good news of salvation from the Sovereign God, but also to reconcile mankind to the Sovereign God through his sacrificial blood. A major part of Christ's mission was to establish the Sovereign God's family of kings and priests on earth who, through his guidance, would then proclaim the same message of salvation and reconciliation that he brought from his heavenly Father (Jn.10:10; Matt.28:19-20).

The following is a more literal translation of the Greek language of Galatians 3:19 from the Textus Receptus into English:

"What is the purpose of the law? It was added because of violations until the male seed appeared of whom the announcement was made to herald thoroughly through messengers by the hand of the reconciler" (Gal.3:19 Para.).

Christ who was the Creator God before he came to earth as a human is the reconciler of mankind to the Sovereign God through his sacrificial blood.

**The School Master**

In verse 24 Paul sums up the reason that the law of sacrifice was established as a part of God's worship system for national Israel:

"Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster" (Gal.3:24-25 KJV).

Paul wrote that the sacrificial system performed by the priesthood was the instrument used to bring us to an understanding of the necessity, purpose, and meaning of Christ's sacrifice. The elect of God have learned the lesson taught by the sacrificial system concerning Jesus Christ. They have faith that the sacrifice of Christ has been applied to their sins, so they no longer have a need for the sacrificial system to teach them about justification. After baptism, they stand totally justified before God the Father as righteous individuals under the atoning blood of Christ.
A Shadow of Things to Come

"For if he were on earth, he should not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law: Which serve as an example and shadow of heavenly things. . ." (Heb.8:4-5 Para.). See also Heb.9:7-10.

At the time the letter to the Hebrews was written, there was still a priesthood officiating in the temple at Jerusalem. However, they and the sacrifices that they offered were only a shadow of what existed in heaven, because Jesus Christ who sacrificed his life for the sins of humanity was sitting at the right hand of God the Father as the high priest.

The writer to the Hebrews stated that, after the advent of Jesus Christ, an earthly priesthood to perform animal sacrifices for personal sin was no longer necessary for the elect of God, because the sacrifices for personal sin were only a shadow of a future event—the sacrifice of Christ.

"For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make those that come to offer perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins" (Heb.10:1-4 KJV).

These scriptures prove that there was a need for a perfect sacrifice. The perfect sacrifice of Christ made it possible for an individual to be totally justified by God the Father:

"Wherefore when he comes into the world, he says, Sacrifice and offering you would not, but a body have you prepared me: In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin you have had no pleasure. Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do your will, O God. Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin you would not, neither have pleasure therein; which are offered by the law; Then said he, Lo, I come to do your will, O God. He takes away the first, that he may establish the second" (Heb.10:5-9 KJV).

There is no doubt that the sacrifice of Jesus Christ provided total justification, canceled the first agreement with national Israel, and established a new agreement.

Clearly, righteous angels did not ordain or put into effect the sacrificial law or any other of God's laws for mankind.
Letter to the Hebrews

Because the writer to the Hebrews said, "For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward" (Heb.2:2 KJV), some people believe this verse proves that angels gave God's law. They think that the word, word, in verse 2 refers to God's law. However, word is translated from the Greek word logos, which simply means something said or a word. It does not necessarily refer to God's law.

It is important to read Hebrews 2:1-4 in context to understand what the writer really meant.

"Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. For if the word spoken by angels was sure, and every violation and unwillingness to hear received a just recompense; How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord [Christ], and was confirmed to us by them that heard him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the holy spirit, according to his own will?" (Heb.2:1-4 KJV Para.).

The things the writer to the Hebrews and the members of the early church heard were either spoken to them by Christ himself, the apostles, or the ministers of the early church. An honest analysis of the writer's usage of the word aggelos in the context of verses 1 through 4 does not indicate whether the messenger is a physical person or a spirit-being.

Stephen's Reprimand

In Acts chapter 7, Stephen gives a scathing reprimand concerning the character of the spiritual leaders of Israel in general and the House of Judah in particular before the Jewish Sanhedrin. This resulted in his death at the hands of these spiritual leaders. Within Stephen's reprimand is the following statement concerning the law, which many people believe is proof that angels gave the law to Israel:

"You stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, you do always resist the holy spirit: as your fathers did, so do you. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which showed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom you have been now the betrayers and murderers: Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it" (Acts 7:51-53 KJV).

The English word disposition is a translation of the Greek word diatage, which means institution. And the English word angels is translated from the Greek word aggelos, which means messenger.
Most of the Sanhedrin's members had not only sought to kill Jesus and sanctioned his crucifixion but also authorized men, such as Saul who later became the apostle Paul, to seek out and kill those who followed the teachings of Christ. In Stephen's reprimand, he reminds these men that the law had been explained and instituted by God's messengers.

Who were these messengers who were given the responsibility to explain, teach, and institute the practice of God's precepts, principles, and laws in national Israel? It was Moses, Aaron, the Priesthood and the Levites who were chosen to teach and administer God's law. These were God's messengers to Israel concerning his law. These are the messengers that the Israelites and the Jews of Stephen's day would not pay attention to concerning the practice of God's law.

Righteous angels may on occasion punish people for refusing to follow God's instructions and/or for the violation of his law (1.Chron. 21:11-15; Ezk.9:1-11; Rev.16:8-11), but righteous angels neither determine God's law nor institute it.

**THE CREATOR APPEARS AND SPEAKS**

Although many Bible scholars and theologians believe and teach that the Creator God never actually appeared to anyone and it was only his spirit-messengers that appeared and represented him, the biblical record does not support this belief or teaching. Moreover, the Bible does not support the belief that God's law was given to the Israelites or any other people by angels.

The following are a number of accounts showing that the Creator God not only appeared to people before the advent of Christ but also personally gave the law to the Israelites:

Abram who was called the friend of God (Jms.2:23) had many conversations with the Creator God. One of these conversations is recorded in Genesis, chapter 12 in which the Creator spoke to Abram and told him to leave the country where he lived and that he was going to bless him and curse those who cursed him. Abram did as he was instructed and when he arrived in the plain of Moreh, God appeared and spoke to him again:

"And the Lord appeared to Abram, and said, To your descendants I will give this land: and there he built an altar to the Lord who appeared to him" (Gen.12:6-7 KJV Para).

The English words *Lord* and *appeared* are translated from the Hebrew words *Yehovah* and *ra'ah*, which mean, respectively, the *Self-Existent* or *Eternal* and to *literally see*. These two Hebrew words clearly show that it was the Creator God who spoke to Abram and appeared to him. The biblical record shows that Abram whose name was changed to Abraham personally saw and spoke with the Creator God on many other occasions. See Gen.13:14-17, 15:1-5, 17:1-27, 18:1-33, 21:12.
While instructing Moses in what to say to Pharaoh, the Creator said, "I am the Lord, and I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, by the name of God Almighty, but by my name Jehovah was I not known to them" (Ex.6:2-3 KJV).

The books of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy are replete with accounts in which the Creator God personally appeared and spoke to many people. These books also clearly document that it was the Creator who gave God's law to the Israelites.

THE LAW FROM MOUNT SINAI

"And Moses went up to God, and the Lord called to him out of the mountain, saying, This you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel" (Ex.19:3 KJV Para.).

The English words God and Lord in verse 3 are translated from the Hebrew words Elohiym and Yehovah, which respectively mean the Supreme God and the Self-Existent or Eternal. Clearly the Creator God himself called Moses to the mountain and spoke face-to-face with him. See Ex.33:11.

Moses records the following about this conversation with the Creator God:

"You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you to myself. Now therefore, if you will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then you shall be a peculiar treasure to me above all people: for all the earth is mine: And you shall be to me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel. And Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and laid before their faces all these words which the Lord commanded him. And all the people answered together, and said, All that the Lord has spoken we will do. And Moses returned the words of the people to the Lord" (Ex.19:4-8 KJV).

After the Israelites agreed to do everything the Creator God would ask of them, Moses went back up the mountain where he received the ten foundational commandments of God's law for mankind written in stone by the finger of the Creator God himself (Ex.31:18; Deut.9:10). See also Ex.20:1-21.

"And the Lord spoke to Moses and to Aaron, saying, This is the ordinance of the law which the Lord has commanded, saying, Speak to the children of Israel . . . "(Num.19:1-2 KJV Para.).

The English word Lord in verses 1 and 2 is translated from the Hebrew word Yehovah, which means the Self-Existent or Eternal. Clearly, Moses and Aaron are being spoken to by the Creator God who is the law giver of mount Sinai.
THE PROPHETIC JOSHUA

The third chapter of Zechariah contains the prophecy concerning the conversion of the high priest of the temple in Jerusalem into one of the SovereignFather's earthly sons in his family of king-priests during the end of the age, just a few short years before Christ returns. This prophecy shows the Creator God as the messenger from the Sovereign God and the Creator God using his authority from the Sovereign God to rebuke Satan.

Zechariah 3:1-10 Paraphrased

"Then he [God's messenger] showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord [God's messenger], and Satan standing at his right side to accuse him. The Lord said to Satan, The Lord rebuke you, Satan! The Lord, who has chosen Jerusalem, rebuke you! Is not this [Joshua] a burning stick snatched from the fire? And Joshua was clothed with filthy garments and he stood before the angel" (vs.1-3). See also Amos 4:11.

Although every instance of the English word Lord in verses 1 and 2 are translated from the Hebrew word Yehovah, which means the Self-Existents, or Eternal, the context shows that one Lord is using authority granted to him by another Lord to rebuke Satan. The Lord doing the rebuking is God and the one authorizing this authority is God. But how can this be? This prophecy only makes sense if you understand that the Sovereign God and the Creator God are the two god-beings in the God family at the time this prophecy was recorded.

This prophetic Joshua is called a burning stick pulled out of the fire, which symbolically pictures him as one who is in the process of being destroyed because of his sinfulness; however, God has rescued him from eternal death for his own righteous purpose. Joshua's garments are very dirty, which is another reference to his spiritual condition before his sins are forgiven.

Joshua's Sins Forgiven

Verses four and five show that a prophet from God (the prophetic Zechariah) is directly involved in the events surrounding the high priest's conversion to a son of God under the New Covenant:

"The angel [messenger] said to those who were standing before him, Take off his filthy clothes. Then he said to Joshua, See, I have taken away your sin [lawlessness], and I will clothe you with a change of ceremonial robes. Then I [Zechariah] said, Put a clean turban on his head. So they put a clean turban on his head and clothed him, while the angel of the Lord stood by" (vs.4-5).
The *angel* (messenger) says that he has taken away Joshua's sins. It must be understood that angels do not have the authority to forgive sins. There are only two beings shown in the scriptures who can remove sins—God the Father and Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ does this through the authority given to him by his heavenly Father. Because the Father will not come to earth until his plan for the salvation of humanity has been completed, this messenger must either be Jesus Christ or someone else who has been authorized to give this message of forgiveness to the high priest. The prophet Nathan gave such a message to king David. See 2.Sam.12:13.

"The angel of the Lord [God's messenger] gave this charge to Joshua: This is what the Lord of hosts says: If you will walk in my ways and keep my charge, then you will judge my house and have charge of my courts, and I will give you a place to walk among these standing here" (vs.6-7).

**SUMMARY**

According to the biblical record, there is no doubt, that the Creator God visited earth many times in order to personally deliver instructions and messages to individuals and view the condition of earth and mankind. There is also no doubt that, of all the Sovereign God's creations, the most important to him and to the continued expansion of his kingdom is mankind. This is one of the major reasons he sent the Creator God to earth as his personal representative and messenger who is referred to many times in the biblical record as "the angel of the Lord."

By B.L. Cocherell
SATAN—WHO AND WHAT IS HE?

The majority of those who profess to believe what is written in the Bible fail to grasp that Satan is a real spirit-being who rules this earth and impacts all phases of its governments, politics, philosophies, science, educational systems, and religions. They do not understand that this powerful spirit-being poses a real and present danger to mankind.

Knowing who and what Satan is, his position in the Sovereign God's kingdom, his authority in both the spirit and physical realms of existence, his ultimate goal, and his ultimate fate is extremely important to understanding how this powerful spirit-being fits into God's plan and purpose for his human creation.

The following information is meant to give an overview of exactly who Satan is, his creation, and his delegated authority and power within the physical and spirit realms.

Who is Satan?

According to the Bible, there are a number of spirit-beings who serve God in heaven and have the rank of cherub. From several accounts in the Bible, it is highly likely that Satan was either a cherub who spread his wings over God's throne or of the same cherub rank and order of spirit-beings who perform certain highly important functions in the heavenly realm. See Ex.25:20; 37:9; Ezek.28:14.

The scriptures indicate that certain spirit-beings have authority and responsibilities over nations. For example, Satan is the current ruler of this world (Eph.2:2; 2 Cor.4:1-4) whom Christ will depose at his return (Rev.11:15). The Book of Daniel, shows spirit-beings as princes and kings (i.e., rulers) over Persia and Greece and the archangel Michael as the prince of national Israel (Dan.12:1).

Satan Called a Son of God

In the first chapter of Job, spirit-beings are referred to as sons of God and present themselves before the Creator God:

"Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them" (Job 1:6 KJV).
Some people believe that the Sovereign God had sons in the sense of progeny in his heavenly realm before mankind was created. Moreover, some believe that Christ and Satan are brothers in the Family of God; therefore, in order to explain who the "sons of God" are who presented themselves to God during Job's lifetime, it is necessary to explain who Christ was before his physical birth as a human.

**Christ, The Rock of Israel**

The New Testament clearly documents that Christ is the son of God who was the Creator God before he came to earth to become a human and that, as the Creator God, he created all things for the Sovereign God.

In the following scriptures, the apostle Paul leaves no doubt that he believed Jesus Christ was the Rock and Redeemer of national Israel and he was the God who created all things for the Sovereign God:

"Moreover, brethren, I would not that you should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; And were all baptized to Moses in the cloud and in the sea; And did all eat the same spiritual meat; And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: AND THAT ROCK WAS CHRIST" (1.Corr.10:1-4 KJV).

Because the Creator God of Israel and Jesus Christ are both called the only Redeemer and Savior, logic dictates that they must be the same being. If they are not the same being, there is a problem that cannot be solved using the Bible, because the Bible reveals that the Creator God of Israel and Jesus Christ are the same individual.

The apostle Paul wrote the following to the Ephesian church about his apostleship, Christ as the Creator God, and the Sovereign Father's eternal purpose:

"To me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world has been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: To the intent that now to the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Eph.3:8-11 KJV).

Notice that the Sovereign God created all things by Christ. All things would surely include spirit-beings of the angelic realm of whom Satan is one.
The writer to the Hebrews wrote the following about Christ as the Creator God:

"God, [i.e., the Sovereign God] who at sundry times and in divers manners spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, Has in these last days spoken to us by his Son, whom he has appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds" (Heb.1:1-2 KJV).

The English word "worlds" is translated from the Hebrew word "aion," which means an age; by extension, perpetuity (also past); by implication, the world.

Notice it was through Christ that the Sovereign God created the aion. In this context, the Greek word "aion" could easily refer to the creation of this dimension of existence and all that is within it.

The apostle Paul writes the following to the elect at Colosse about the Sovereign God's call to salvation, being placed into the realm of Christ through his sacrificial blood, and Christ as the Creator God:

"Giving thanks to the Father, which has made us meet [fit] to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: Who has delivered us from the power of darkness, and has translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins: Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature" (Col.1:12-15 KJV).

Paul goes on to explain that it is Christ who created all things for the Sovereign God. Paul also says that Christ is the head of the church and the firstborn of the Sovereign Father's new creation through a resurrection from the dead.

"For by him [Christ who was the Creator God] 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 [Christ], and for him [the Sovereign God]: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he [Christ] is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead: that in all things he might have the preeminence" (Col.1:16-18 KJV).

There are many other scriptures that could be quoted to show that Christ was the Creator God before his birth as a human; however, the scriptures quoted thus far clearly show that it is the Sovereign God who is quoted in the first chapter of Genesis as saying, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness," and it is the Sovereign God who created all things, including spirit-beings of the angelic realm, through the Creator God. See also Rev.4:1-11.
When the sons of God presented themselves before God during Job's lifetime, they were either presenting themselves before the Sovereign God or the Creator God. Moreover, the personage of Christ did not exist at the time of Job; therefore, Christ could not have been Satan's brother as some people believe.

**Christ the Firstborn**

The proof that the personage of Christ did not exist as a spirit entity prior to his becoming human is easily found in both the writings of the prophets and in the New Testament.

The Prophet Isaiah tells us a virgin was to conceive and bear a son who would be called Immanuel (i.e., God with us), as well as Wonderful, Counselor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, and The Prince of Peace.

In Luke's gospel, a messenger from God says the following to the virgin Mary who would become Christ's physical mother:

"The holy spirit shall come upon you, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow you: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of you shall be called the Son of God" (Lk.1:35 Para.).

Luke says that it was the power (i.e., the holy spirit) that came from the Highest which impregnated Mary and performed the process of conception. We are not told how this was accomplished; we are only told that it happened.

The English word *Highest* is translated from the Greek word *Hupsistos*, which in this context denotes the Sovereign of the universe—the *most high, the highest, the supreme* (God). Whoever this being is, he is the Supreme Sovereign above all others (spirit or physical), and is the Father of our Savior. The Sovereign God became a father to Christ when the Creator God was born as an infant human. The Creator God is the father of mankind in the sense that he created mankind for the Sovereign God.

The apostle John wrote the following about the God who became human:

"He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came to his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth" (Jn.1:10-14 KJV). See also Col.1:14-20.
The English words only begotten are translated from the Greek word monogenes, which is derived from the two Greek words monos, meaning sole or single and ginoma, meaning to cause to be generate, (reflexively) to become i.e., come into being. Read the entire first chapter of John's gospel and Hebrews, chapter two for complete details of the process of the Creator God coming to earth and becoming a human being.

Christ was the firstborn of the Sovereign God's new creation of spirit-beings who were destined to become his sons and rule his kingdom under Christ who had been the Creator God and who created all things for him, including Satan, all spirit-beings, and humans. But who were the sons of God spoken of in Job?

"Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them" (Job 1:6 KJV).

The English words the sons of are translated from the Hebrew word ben; meaning a son as a builder of the family name. In the widest sense ben means a literal or figurative relationship, including grandson, subject, nation, quality or condition, etc.). The word ben is a derivative of the Hebrew word banah; a primitive root, which means to build.

Understanding that the Hebrew word ben might better be translated as builders in verse 6 is logical when we consider that the apostle Paul refers to Christ as the firstborn among many brethren through the resurrection from the dead (Rom.8:29; Col.1:15-18), and that Christ is also referred to as the Sovereign Father's only begotten son by the New Testament writers. Therefore, the words the sons of God mentioned in Job 1:6 who are spirit-beings, could easily and more accurately be translated as builders of God.

God the Father's Firstborn

"God, who at sundry times and in different manners spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by his Son, whom he has appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds" (Heb.1:1-2 KJV Para.).

"Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; Being made so much better than the angels, as he has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they" (Heb.1:3-4 KJV).

Verse 5 tells us that the Sovereign God never called and angel his son:

"For to which of the angels did he say, You are my Son; today I have begotten You? And again I will be a Father to him, and he shall be a Son to me. And again when he brought the firstborn into the world, he said let the angels worship him" (Heb.1:5-6 Para.). Quoted from Psalm 2:7. See also Heb.5:5.
The English word son in verse 5 is translated from the Greek word huios, which means a son.

The use of the Greek word huios clearly documents that, before the birth of Christ, no genetic sons of the Sovereign God existed in his heavenly realm.

Here, the writer to the Hebrews speaks of Jesus becoming a physical Son of the Sovereign God at conception and birth, and a spiritual Son of God upon receiving the Father's spirit of adoption at baptism. No spiritual or physical son of God existed before Christ. See Rom.8:14-15; Gal.4:1-5; Eph.1:1-5.

The truth from the scriptures is that, before his human birth, Christ as a son of the Sovereign God did not exist. There were only two beings in the God family prior to the creation of humanity—the Sovereign God who became God the Father after the physical birth of Christ as a human and the Creator God who became Christ at his human birth. Christ was the physical son of the Sovereign God and is now his spiritual son through the resurrection from the dead. Therefore, Christ could not have been Satan's brother.

DESCRIPTIONS OF SATAN

Within various prophetic writings, there are a number of descriptions given of Satan, his power, and his authority, as well as indications concerning how he will be dealt with at the end of his rule on earth.

Three rather long prophecies in which Satan is a central figure are found in the Books of Ezekiel, Isaiah, and Daniel. Each of these prophecies describes Satan as a powerful spirit-being who will be removed from his position of authority and rulership.

THE KING OF TYRUS

The Book of Ezekiel contains a prophecy that speaks of the king of Tyrus; however, the description and qualities of this ruler are clearly not those of a human being, so we can only assume that the ruler being spoken of is a spirit-being:

"Son of man, take up a lamentation upon the king of Tyrus, and say to him, This says the Lord God; You seal up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty" (Ezk.28:12 KJV Para.).

Here, we see a spirit-being with tremendous intellect and exceptional beauty in authority and rulership over Tyrus. The word Tyrus is translated from the Hebrew word tsor, which means a rock or a stone (as if pressed hard or to a point); (by implication, of use) a knife. Tsor could be symbolic of the earth and/or something in the spirit realm.
Some Bible researchers believe that Tyrus is the ancient city of Tyre located on Mediterranean coast. However, it seems unlikely that a being of this importance would only be given authority over a city of such little value as ancient Tyre. It is more likely that this spirit-being ruled something of more importance (perhaps not even in this dimension of existence). Perhaps he ruled over something in the Kingdom of God before the creation of mankind.

"You have been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone was your 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 your tábounirine and of your sockets for jewels were prepared in you in the day you were created" (Ezk.28:13 Para.).

Although the Book of Revelation mentions a garden-like place in heaven, where the tree of life is (Rev.2:7), it is unclear whether Ezekiel 28, verse 13 refers to this heavenly garden or the earthly garden of Eden where Adam and Eve resided for a short time. It is clear, however, that the garden to which this individual had access belonged to God.

"You are the anointed cherub that covers; and I have set you so: you were upon the holy mountain of God; you have walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire" (Ezk.28:14 Para.).

The English word *anointed* is translated from the Hebrew word *mimshach*, which expresses a sense of expansion; outspread (i.e., with outstretched wings). The English word *covers* is translated from the Hebrew word *cakak*, which means to entwine as a screen; by implication, to fence in, cover over, (figuratively) protect.

This magnificent individual was given the responsibility of covering over or spreading his influence over something. Prophetically, mountains are often symbolic of governments or kingdoms. Therefore, because Ezekiel 28 is both commentary and prophecy, it is logical that the holy mountain of God in verse 14 is symbolic of the Kingdom of God.

Notice that this spirit-being has been in the midst of the stones of fire. It is noted in both Psalms and Hebrews that God has made his angels, spirits, and ministers a flaming fire (Psa.104:4; Heb.1:7).

Ezekiel also records that he saw spirit-beings with the appearance of burning coals of fire (Ezk.1:13).

The English word *stones* in verse 14 is translated from the Hebrew word *eben* through a root word that means to build; or a stone. This seems to support the assumption that the spirit-beings who came before God during Job's lifetime were referred to as *builders*.

Verse 14 seems to show us that this individual was created to cover something or was given authority and responsibility among other spirit-beings at the highest level of God's governmental system.
"You were perfect in your ways from the day that you were created, until iniquity [i.e., moral evil] was found in you" (Ezk.28:15 Para.).

This individual was created with perfect character, which indicates that he had the intelligence and wisdom to make virtuous decisions to sustain his perfect character. From the narrative that follows, it can be assumed that this highly intelligent and beautiful spirit-being became corrupt in his thinking; hence, his character became evil.

"By the abundance of your merchandise they have filled the midst of you with violence, and you have sinned: therefore I will cast you as profane out of the mountain of God: and I will destroy you, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire" (Ezk.28:16 Para.).

The English word merchandise in verse 16 is translated from the Hebrew word rekullah, which is a derivative of the root word rakal, which means to travel for trading. Rekullah means to go about, to traffic, or to merchandise. But rakil is another Hebrew word derived from rakal and means slander. This is important because various translations of verse 16 show rakil with vowel marks and some do not, which makes pronunciation and translation of this word suspect.

If the original word was pronounced rakil instead of rekullah it would mean that the text points to this cherub's slanderous activities as being one of the major causes for his expulsion and future punishment.

The English word violence in verse 16 is translated from the Hebrew word chamac; by implication, wrong; by idiom, unjust gain.

The English word sinned in verse 16 is translated from the Hebrew word chata, which means to miss; hence (figuratively and generally), to sin; (causatively) lead astray, condemn.

The usage of the two words chamac and chata seem to indicate that Satan's behavior and his thought process resulted in his being at odds with the reason for his creation; therefore, he could no longer fulfill these functions and responsibilities.

Verse 16 also shows that Satan was a covering cherub, which is a very high ranking spirit-being in the Sovereign God's governmental system.

When the Creator gave Moses his instructions to build the tabernacle and its appurtenances, Moses was instructed to build the Ark of the Covenant (also called the mercy seat) with two cherubim (cherubs): one on each end of the Ark with their wings stretched above and over the Ark as a covering. See Ex.25:10-21.

The writer to the Hebrews says that the tabernacle of the wilderness and its appurtenances were representations of heavenly things (Heb.8:1-6); therefore, the cherubim on the Ark were representations of heavenly spirit-beings whose function was to cover a similar heavenly object and perhaps God's throne itself.
Punishment

"Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty, you have corrupted your wisdom by reason of your brightness: I will cast you to the ground, I will lay you before kings, that they may look upon you" (Ezk.28:17 Para.).

This spirit-being with tremendous intellect, exceptional beauty, and a prestigious position in the Kingdom of God allowed himself to think more highly of himself than he should have. He became arrogant and disdainful toward the Sovereign God, the Creator God, and his fellow servants in the Kingdom of God.

The English word ground in verse 17 is translated from the Hebrew word erets, which means the earth in this context.

"You have defiled the sacred place by the abundance of your evil and your perverted unacceptable behavior and your evil ways of merchandising [or slander]. Therefore, I will bring fire from within you and it shall destroy you and make you ashes on the ground in the sight of all that witness it" (Ezk.28:18 Para.).

This cherub is to be cast out of the heavenly realm into the earth and will be punished in front of rulers.

The only other prophecy that speaks of wicked individuals being ashes on the ground is in Malachi 4:1-3, which foretells the destruction of wicked individuals who will become ashes under the feet of the righteous.

"All they that know you among the people shall be astonished at you: you shall be a terror, and never shall you be any more" (Ezk.28:19 KJV).

A more correct translation of the last part of verse 19 is: "You shall never be a terror anymore."

Because of his rebellion against the Sovereign God, Satan will receive the following three punishments:

- He will be removed from his position of authority and responsibility in the government of God.
- He will be removed from among the stones of fire and not allowed to participate with them in their functions and responsibilities within the Kingdom of God.
- He will be executed and have his life terminated.

THE KING OF BABYLON

There is a prophecy in Isaiah chapter 14, that starts out speaking about national Israel, but in verse 4 it begins a metaphor about Satan using the king of Babylon as its primary focus.
"Take up this proverb against the king of Babylon, and say, How has the oppressor ceased! the golden city ceased!" (Isa.14:4 KJV Para.).

The English word Babylon is translated from the Hebrew word Babel, which means confusion. The English word oppressor is translated from the Hebrew word nagas, which means to drive (an animal, a workman, a debtor, an army); by implication, to tax, harass, tyrannize. The individual spoken of in this metaphor is described as the king of confusion and an individual who terrorizes others.

The English words the golden city are translated from the Hebrew word madhebah. The exact meaning of this word seems to be lost in antiquity, but may have to do with gold, gold making, or exactness. Whatever its meaning, it has nothing to do with a city, but can very easily be applied to Satan, because the prophecy in Ezekiel 28:13 refers to him being covered with precious stones and gold. Ezekiel 28:16 and 18, tell us that this cherub is to be executed and verse 19 foretells that he will one day cease to be a terror forever. Therefore, it seems likely that the king of Babylon spoken of in Isaiah chapter 14, is Satan—the cherub of Ezekiel 28.

"The Lord has broken the staff of the wicked, and the scepter of the rulers. He who smote the people in wrath with a continual stroke, he that ruled the nations [Heb. gowy, i.e., Gentile nations] in anger, is persecuted, and none hinders. The whole earth is at rest, and is quiet: they break forth into singing" (Isa.14:5-7 KJV Para.).

Verses 5-7 are speaking of Satan who terrorizes all of the nations except national Israel (Dan.10:13-21; 12:1). The scriptures tell us that Satan will remain the uncontested ruler of all Gentile nations until Christ returns to depose him and remove his authority and power to rule.

Moreover, verses 5-7 show that, after this ruler of the nations (i.e., Satan) is punished, there will be peace on earth. The prophecies tell us that there will be two periods of total peace after Christ returns.

The first period of peace is during the thousand year reign of Christ, at which time Satan will be restrained from interacting with and influencing mankind (Rev.20:1-3).

The second period of peace will come after Satan has been set free to deceive the nations. Christ will crush these nations and have Satan cast into a lake of fire, which prevents him from ever again interacting with mankind (Rev.20:10).

Although it is only a paraphrase of the original text, the Living Bible captures the sense of what is being said in Isaiah, chapter 14:5-8.
"For the Lord has crushed your wicked power and broken your evil rule. You persecuted my people with unceasing blows of rage and held the nations in your angry grip. You were unrestrained in tyranny. But at last the whole earth is at rest and is quiet! All the world begins to sing! Even the trees of the woods-the fir trees and cedars of Lebanon-sing out this joyous song: "Your power is broken; no one will bother us now; at last we have peace." (Isa.14:5-8 LBP).

Trees are often symbolic of people; therefore, the trees of Lebanon in verse 8 can be symbolic of the people in the geographical area of Lebanon who will rejoice to finally be experiencing peace after Satan is removed from his position as ruler of the world.

"Hell from beneath is moved for you to meet you at your coming: it stirs up the dead for you, even all the rulers of people on earth; it has raised up from their thrones all the kings of the nations. All they shall speak and say to you, Are you also become weak as we? are you become like to us?" (Isa.14:9-10 Para.).

The English word hell in verse 9 is translated from the Hebrew word sheol that simply refers to a hole in the ground, a pit, or a grave. Many times sheol is also translated as grave which makes its meaning clear. See Gen.37:35; 42:38; 44:29-31; 1.Sam.2:6; 1.Kg.2:6; Psa.49:14-15.

Metaphorically speaking, the grave and those in it await the arrival of the king of confusion and terror. Those already in the grave are astonished that this powerful spirit-being who ruled the earth has become as powerless as they.

"Your pomp is brought down to the grave, and the noise of your viols: the worm is spread under you, and the worms cover you" (Isa.14:11 KJV).

This powerful arrogant ruler of the Gentile nations will be reduced to a mere powerless physical being.

The phrase noise of your viols speaks to the sound of a musical instrument that is an intrinsic part of this ruler. This is another indication that this ruler is Satan who is the same spirit-being spoken of in Ezekiel 28:13.

"How are you fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how are you cut down to the ground, which did weaken the nations!" (Isa.14:12 KJV).

The English word Lucifer in verse 12 is translated from the Hebrew word heylel, which has the sense of brightness and is the name of this spirit-being in this context. Here, Satan is described as being bright in appearance.
The English words *weaken* and *nations* are translated from the Hebrew words *chalash* and *gowy*, which respective mean *to prostrate*; by implication, *to overthrow, decay and a foreign nation*; hence, a *Gentile nation*.

Satan's influence over the Gentile nations of this world through their educational and governmental systems and the implementation of his religions and religious philosophies into their societies has reduced their potential for peace, productivity, prosperity, and happiness.

**Rebellion**

"For you have said in your 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" (Isa.14:13-14 KJV Para.).

The English word *throne* in verse 14 is translated from the Hebrew word *kicceh*, which means *a throne* (as canopied). The use of the word *kicceh* denotes that this spirit-being is in a position of authority and rulership over other spirit-beings.

Isaiah, chapter 14, verses 13-14 reveals a powerful, arrogant, and rebellious spirit-being who had deluded himself into thinking that he was more powerful than his maker and could dethrone the Sovereign God and assume his kingdom.

**Satan's Fall from Heaven**

Luke, chapter 10 contains the account of Jesus sending seventy men to various towns to prepare the people for his arrival at a later date. After these men returned from their mission, they told Jesus of their success and the power that they were able to wield over evil spirits:

"And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject to us through your name" (Lk.10:17 KJV).

In reply to these men, Jesus makes the following statement, which seems out of context, unless it relates to his existence before the creation of mankind and his authority to grant supernatural power to whomever he desires:

"And he said to 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. Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject to you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven. (Lk.10:18-20 KJV).
When did Jesus see Satan fall from heaven? It must have been before the creation of mankind, when Christ was the Creator God, that Satan rebelled and was stripped of his heavenly position as a covering cherub and allowed to continue his rule of earth while awaiting his eventual punishment.

Satan's Self-deception

This powerful spirit-being thought that he could remove the Sovereign God from power, and convinced himself that he would become a god-being:

"Yet you shall be brought down to hell [sheol], to the sides of the pit. They that see you shall stare at you, and consider you, saying, Is this the individual that made the earth to tremble, that shook the kingdoms; That caused the earth to be a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof; that did not open the house of captives?" (Isa.14:15-17 Para.).

Verse 15 shows that this powerful spirit-being will be removed from his position of power and authority through which he confused and terrorized people.

There are only four times in the biblical record of the earth that an event of the destructive magnitude noted in verses 16 and 17 could occur:

- The war that destroyed the surface of the earth before the creation of mankind (Jer.4:23-27).
- The great flood that destroyed the surface of the earth in which all but eight people died (Genesis, chapters 6 and 7).
- Just before Christ returns.
- At Christ's return.

Satan is involved in the death and destruction that takes place during all of these events, either through direct participation or through his influence in the spirit or physical realms.

The reference in verse 17 to not opening the house of captives could be referring to Satan's inability to release the spirit-beings being held captive awaiting their punishment for their rebellion, which is noted by both Jude and Peter. See Jude 6-7; 1.Pet.3:19-20; 2.Pet.2:4; the Book of Enoch.

"All the kings of the Gentiles, even all of them, lie in glory, every one in his own house. But you [Satan] are cast out of your grave like an abominable branch, and as the raiment of those that are slain, thrust through with a sword, that go down to the stones of the pit; as a carcasse trodden under feet. You shall not be joined with them in burial, because you have destroyed your land [the earth], and slain your people; the seed of evildoers shall never be renowned [called to by name]" (Isa.14:18-20 KJV Para.).
Here, God shows his utter contempt for Satan and reveals the fate that awaits him and the other spirit-beings that he has corrupted through influencing them to rebel.

Verse 19 assigns the blame for the destruction of the earth to Satan and reveals that, because of his influence, Satan is ultimately responsible for other spirit-beings being punished with death for their rebellion against God. This verse also says that, after Satan and these other evil beings are punished, they will never again be mentioned by name in the Kingdom of God.

"Prepare a slaughter for his [Satan's] children [evil spirits] for the evil of their father [Satan]; so that they will not rise, nor possess the land, nor fill the face of the world with cities. For I will rise up against them, says the Lord of hosts, and cut off from Babel [Confusion] the name, and remnant, and progeny, and the off-spring, says the Lord" (Isa.14:21-22 KJV Para.).

The metaphor of Satan and the spirit-beings that followed him in his rebellion against the Sovereign God seems to end with verse 22. But even though verses 25 through 27 seem to resume the prophecy about end-time events before Christ returns, these verses may also be metaphors for spirit-beings who will be punished along with Satan.

"That I will break the Assyrian in my land, and upon my mountains tread him under foot: then shall his yoke depart from off them, and his burden depart from off their shoulders" (Isa.14:25 KJV).

It is possible that the Assyrian noted in verse 25 metaphorically refers to the spirit ruler of an Assyrian grouping of nations or to one or more spirit-beings who have oppressed mankind and will be removed from earth.

"This is the purpose that is purposed upon the whole earth: and this is the hand that is stretched out upon all the nations. For the Lord of hosts has purposed, and who shall disannul it? and his hand is stretched out, and who shall turn it back?" (Isa.14:26-27 KJV).

Verses 26 and 27 reveal that this prophecy in metaphor contains the Sovereign God's plan to remove Satan and all evil spirits from the earth and bring peace to the earth.

**KING NEBUCHADNEZZAR**

The Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar was at the height of his power and influence over a vast territory when he had a perplexing dream, which he was unable to recall even with the help of his court seers. Daniel ask the king's captain to bring him before the king, because the Creator God had given him the ability to reveal the king's dream and interpret it. Nebuchadnezzar's dream is not only a major key to unlocking the meaning of the Beast but also a key to understanding who from the spirit realm was ruling the Babylonian Empire at that time.
"Daniel spoke before the king and said, The secret which the king has demanded cannot be shown to the king by the wise men, the magicians, the horoscopists, or the fortune-tellers. But there is a God in heaven who reveals secrets, and makes known to king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days." (Dan.2:27-28 Para.).

The first thing that we learn from the king's dream is that it was given to him by God in order to reveal events that would transpire in a time called the latter days (i.e., last or final days). The only latter, last, or final days that have any significance to humanity in biblical prophecy are the days just before Jesus Christ returns to establish his Father's kingdom over the earth. Therefore, this is the context in which the king's dream must be viewed.

The Great Image

"Behold a certain great image! That image stood before you with a brilliant brightness; and its form was dreadful. The head of this image was of fine gold; its breasts and its arms were of silver, its belly and its thighs of bronze; its legs of iron, its feet were partly of iron and partly of clay" (Dan.2:31-33 Para).

The image that the king saw was extraordinarily bright and terrifying to look upon and was composed of metals of decreasing value: from a head that is very valuable to feet of less value, and from the weakness of malleable gold to the brittle strength of iron mixed with clay.

'You' and the Stone

"You continued until a stone was cut out without hands, which struck the image on its feet of iron and clay, and broke them to pieces. Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold were together broken into pieces; and they became like chaff on the summer threshing floors. And the wind carried them away, so that no trace was found of them. And the stone that struck the image became a great mountain [government] and filled the whole earth" (Dan.2:34-35 Para).

There are several interesting and important things to understand in verses 34 and 35:

- Who or whatever is referred to as You in verse 34 could not be King Nebuchadnezzar, because by the time this prophecy takes place, the king would have long since died. Because You is to exist until the stone comes to destroy the image, the implication is that, whoever or whatever You is or was, it will exist during the last days.
- The stone cut out without hands is a clear reference to Jesus Christ; therefore, You and the image will both exist when Christ returns to conquer this entity and/or spirit-being, which is symbolized by the image.
You will continue until the stone strikes the image's feet (i.e., that which supports and moves it about) and this Babylonian system of government will be completely erased from the face of the earth and replaced with the Stone's government—the Kingdom of the true God.

**The King of Kings**

"This is the dream, we will tell the meaning of it before the king. You, O king, are the king of kings. For the God of heaven and earth has given you the kingdom, the power, and the strength, and the honor. And wherever the sons of men, the animals of the field, and the birds of the sky dwell, he has given them into your hand, and has made you ruler over them all. You are the head of gold" (Dan.2:36-38 Para.).

Although Daniel is speaking to the king, Nebuchadnezzar never ruled the entire earth or all the life-forms that inhabit it. Therefore, this king of kings to which Daniel refers is someone else. Although Jesus Christ is called the King of kings, this prophecy is not speaking of him because he only becomes the King of kings at his return and this king of kings was ruling the earth at the time of king Nebuchadnezzar.

The only king of kings who has authority over all the earth until Christ returns to depose him is the present god of this earth—Satan the Devil who is in authority over physical rulers of earth and countless evil spirits. See 2.Cor.4:4.

Nebuchadnezzar's Babylonian empire became a powerful, dominant force in the ancient world because the true God allowed it to exist for his purpose, and it had great leadership. Moreover, physical events regarding the empire were influenced and manipulated by the evil spirit who is referred to as You and king (Dan.2:34-37) and other evil spirits under his authority, in order to further their own aims and goals for the Babylonian empire.

**Satan Rules the Earth**

Many will take exception to the belief that Satan rules the earth, because they know that the earth belongs to God and they believe that he must be ruling it as well. It is true that the earth and all that exists belong to the Sovereign God; however, the scriptures clearly show that the Sovereign God has allowed Satan uncontested rule of this earth until he is deposed by Christ at his coming to establish God's government over the earth.

After Christ's baptism and just before he began his formal ministry, he went off by himself to prepare himself for proclaiming the Kingdom of God through fasting and communing with his heavenly Father. At the end of his forty-day fast, Satan came to him and attempted to convince him to worship and serve him:
"Then was Jesus led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. And when the tempter came to him, he said, If you be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God" (Matt.4:1-4 Para.).

"Then the devil took him into the holy city, and set him on a pinnacle of the temple, And said to him, If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning you: and they shall bear you up in their hands, lest at any time you strike your foot against a stone. Jesus said to him, It is written again, You shall not tempt the Lord your God" (Matt.4:5-7 Para.).

"Again, the devil took him up into an exceeding high mountain, and showed him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; And said to him, All these things will I give you, if you will fall down and worship me" (Matt.4:8-9 Para.).

Christ did not challenge Satan's right to give him the kingdoms of the world. This account is extremely important, because it clearly shows that Satan is indeed the present ruler of the earth with the authority to grant rulership and possession of the nations under his authority and rule to others.

SATAN THE GOD OF THIS WORLD

Although God the Father is Sovereign over all that is and he has given Christ the authority to administer his government in his physical and spirit realms, Satan is allowed to continue his reign over the earth until he is deposed by Christ.

The apostle Paul wrote the following to the church at Corinth concerning the apostles' ministry and the reason that the vast majority of people could not understand the good news of Christ and the Kingdom of God:

"Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not; But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world has blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine to them" (2.Cor.4:1-4 KJV).
The English word god in the phrase the god of this world is translated from the Greek word theos, which means a deity. When theos is preceded by the Greek word ho, as it is in this text, theos takes on the meaning of a supreme deity and identifies Satan as the evil spirit who blinds people to the reality of the true God and his good news message.

Make no mistake, Satan is the current ruler and the god of this present world and will remain its ruler and its god until Christ returns to depose him.

Prince of the Power of the Air

While explaining the spiritual condition of a person before their being called to salvation by the Sovereign God and subsequently being saved from the second death in the lake of fire through the sacrifice of Christ, Paul says that their past condition was due to the influence of the Prince of the power of the air:

"And you has he [God the Father] made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins; Wherein in time past you walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now works in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others" (Eph.2: 1-3 KJV). See also Col.3:6-7.

There are two Greek words in verse 2 that, when understood in context, reveal the tremendous authority and power that this Prince of the Power of the Air wields over the entire earth.

The English word prince in verse 2 is translated from the Greek word archon, which means a first (in rank or power).

The English word power in verse 2 is translated from the Greek word exousia, which means privilege, i.e., (subjectively) force, capacity, competency, freedom, or (objectively) mastery (concretely) magistrate, superhuman, potentate, token of control, delegated influence. The Greek word exousia in the context of verse 2 might be better translated as delegated influence, because it relates to a position of power and authority over a sphere of activity.

The meaning of the Greek words archon and exousia tell us that Paul is speaking of an evil spirit who rules over the atmosphere above the earth and influences people to live in disobedience to the Sovereign God's truth and way of truth.

A logical question to ask is what is so important about the earth's atmosphere that makes it worthwhile for a high ranking spirit-being to have authority, rule, and power over it?
In order to understand why rule of the atmosphere above the earth is important, one must understand that spirit thought and energy is not constrained by physical law. Spirit thought and energy is the power which created this physical dimension of existence and all it contains; therefore, spirit thought and energy can be projected and manifested in the physical realm of existence in many forms.

The atmosphere above the earth is an exceptionally important medium for an evil spirit to rule, because it is through this medium that he can influence vast numbers of people through projecting thoughts and emotions to them. Additionally, control of the atmosphere means a spirit-being who rules it can cause atmospheric disturbances, such as storms and drought.

Therefore, control over the atmosphere and the things contained in it is extremely important to evil spirits and their ability to influence and manipulate mankind and world events.

It seems logical that, because Satan has authority and rulership over the earth (2.Cor:4:3-4), he also has authority and rulership over the earth's atmosphere. However, even if the *power of the air* is a symbolic reference to a spirit-being other than Satan, this would not negate Satan's authority over this individual or the atmosphere, because Satan is clearly in authority over all evil spirits.

**THE GREAT RED DRAGON**

In the Book of Revelation, Satan is described as a great red dragon. This seems to indicate that, after his rebellion against the Sovereign God, he lost his great beauty and his appearance was changed to that of a serpent-like creature.

Revelation, chapter 12 gives some insight into Satan's authority and his power of persuasion over vast numbers of spirit-beings. It also reveals that the powerful cherub described as the great red dragon and the old serpent called the Devil has authority and rule over at least a third of all the angelic spirit-beings in the physical and spirit realms:

"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: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born" (Rev.12:3-4 KJV).

Stars are often symbolic of the angels. In verse 4, the stars refer to evil spirits who are under the authority and control of Satan. Notice that Satan causes a third of all the angels to leave their heavenly habitation and forces them to the earth.
Whether or not this powerful evil spirit described as the great red dragon actually forces other spirit-beings described as stars to earth or is just the cause of them being thrust out of heaven, the result is the same.

The departure of these spirit-beings from heaven seems to occur during the time when Satan attempts to regain access to the Sovereign Father's heavenly realm at the end of the gospel age of salvation, only a few short years before Christ returns. See Rev.12:7-9.

HOW POWERFUL IS SATAN?

The following verses in the Book of Revelation help answer the question of how powerful Satan is:

"And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing" (Rev.5:11-12 KJV). See also Psa.68:17; Dan.7:9-10; Lk.2:10-15.

"Ten thousand times ten thousand" is 100 million and this number coupled with the phrase "thousands of thousands" seems to indicate an innumerable number of angels (See Heb.12:22). Even a third of a hundred million is over thirty million. Millions and perhaps billions of these spirit-beings are already or will be, at some time in the future, in rebellion against the Sovereign God and under the control of Satan. See Rev.12:4.

Satan is powerful enough to influence a third of all the spirit-beings that God has created to follow him. Moreover, he is in authority and rule over the atmosphere above the earth and over all Gentile nations on earth. Satan is extremely powerful and a force to be reckoned with.

A REMOVER OF TRUTH

While explaining how people react to initially receiving the knowledge about God's kingdom and what it entails, Jesus explains through two parables that some hear this information but have no comprehension of what it means to them. Christ says these individuals will progress no further in understanding the things of God's word because this knowledge will be removed from them by an evil-spirit:

"Hear you therefore the parable of the sower. When anyone hears the word of the kingdom, and does not understand it, then the wicked one cometh, and catches away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side" (Matt.13:18-19 Para.). See also Lk.8:5-12.

The English word wicked is translated from the Greek word poneros, which is derived from ponos, which means anguish. Poneros has the meaning of hurtful in the sense of evil.
We are not told what the thought process is, which prevents these individuals from comprehending what they have been offered through the knowledge given to them; we are only told that they do not comprehend it and this information is removed by a hurtful/evil entity.

Salvation

The scriptures concerning the requirements for salvation cannot be reconciled with the facts of history or the rest of the Bible if God the Father and Jesus Christ have been trying to save all of humanity from the time of Adam to this present age. But, because God is not trying to do this before the establishment of his kingdom on earth, the scriptures can be understood to mean what they say.

If God were trying to save all of mankind now, he would save them! God's plan for the salvation of humanity is right on schedule; no human or evil spirit can stop God from fulfilling his purpose for humanity.

God has not been calling all of humanity to salvation because he knows the vast majority will not do what is required to repent and live according to his law. However, at the proper time and during the right sequence of events, he will present this opportunity to all who have not been called to salvation.

"For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the first-fruits; afterwards they that are Christ's at his coming" (1.Cor.15:22-23 KJV).

Surprising as it seems, this is not the only day of salvation for humanity; it is only the day of salvation for those called to salvation in this age. Everyone will someday have the opportunity to understand the way to salvation, but not all at the same time. Every individual who has ever lived and died will have that opportunity. However, until that time arrives, Satan will remain free to deceive humanity and remove the Sovereign God's truth and way of truth from those who are not ready to receive it wholeheartedly.

SATAN THE ACCUSER OF THE BRETHREN

Satan hates mankind because of the basic reason for their being created and the opportunity given to them through the sacrifice of Christ. He also has a special hatred for those of the Sovereign Father's earthly family of king-priests and takes every opportunity to lodge a complaint against them:

"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. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death" (Rev.12:10-11 KJV).
The English word *accuser* is translated from the Greek word *kategoros*, which puts forth the concept of a complainant at law.

Satan clearly knows and understands that the violation of God's law requires that the death penalty be administered to the guilty party. He also knows that the Sovereign Father's earthly children of king-priests sometimes violate his law (Rom.7:1-25) and that their attitudes and behaviors are not always consistent with righteousness. Therefore, he files a formal complaint against them as often as possible in the hope that these violators who are the Sovereign's earthly children will be sentenced to death.

**Intense Hatred of Mankind**

The apostle Peter gave the following warning about Satan to those of the early church. This warning shows us that Satan is a vicious predator who is constantly seeking to destroy mankind: "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, walks about as a roaring lion seeking those he may devour" (1.Pet.5:8 KJV).

Satan clearly understands that humans were created to occupy positions of authority and rulership directly under the Sovereign God and his Son and rule the heavenly host (1.Cor.6:1-4). He understands that eventually he will be deposed as ruler of the earth and that humans made into immortals will inherit the earth and the Kingdom of God.

Make no mistake, Satan has no feelings of ambivalence or benevolence toward humans. Satan hates all humans with an intense hatred. He especially hates those whom the Sovereign God has chosen to be among his firstborn and would, if allowed, destroy each and every one of them.

The following are a number of other reasons that Satan and other evil spirits have an intense hatred for mankind and spend much effort in an attempt to harm and destroy them.

The writer to the Hebrews tells us that human potential is greater than that of angels: "For to the angels has he not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak" (Heb.2:5 KJV).

When the writer to the Hebrews wrote that the world to come would not be under the rule of angels, he was not just speaking of the coming of Christ on earth. He was also speaking of a time far in the future, past this physical realm of existence when the new heavens and the new earth will exist. In the dimension of existence past this physical existence, only immortal members of the God family and eternal spirit-beings loyal to the God Family will exist in the kingdom of God.

If there is to be a physical dimension of existence after this present one, it will be something new and different, because this present one will have vanished from existence as noted in the following three prophecies:
"And all the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll: and all their host shall fall down, as the leaf falls off from the vine, and as a falling fig from the fig tree" (Isa.34:4 KJV).

"The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in all holy conversation and godliness, Looking for and hastening to the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwells righteousness" (2.Pet.3:9-13 KJV).

"And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said to me, Write: for these words are true and faithful" (Rev.21:5 KJV).

These prophecies leave no doubt that this present physical existence and everything in it will someday vanish and the next phase of the Sovereign God's plan for his new creation will begin. A phase in which humans made into spirit sons of God will inherit all things and will rule with Christ in the Kingdom of God.

The Human Potential

"But one in a certain place testified, saying, What is man, that you are mindful of him? or the son of man, that thou visit him? You made him a little lower than the angels; thou crowned him with glory and honor, and did set him over the works of your hands. You have put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him" (Heb.2:6-8 KJV).

Verses 6 through 8 reveal several things, which are extremely important in understanding why Satan and other evil spirits have such an intense hatred for mankind. Although mankind was created inferior to angels in many ways, mankind's potential is far greater than that of angels because mankind was created to have a more prominent and prestigious position in God's realm than angels. The following show the tremendous differences between humans and angels:

- Humans have limited life spans—Angels are eternal
- Humans only exists in the physical dimension—Angels can exist in the physical and spiritual dimensions
- Humans have limited intelligence and knowledge—Angels have superior intelligence and knowledge
• Humans have the potential to become immortal—Angels can never become immortal
• Humans were created to inherit the Kingdom of God as sons of God—Angels were created to serve God and mankind
• Humans have the potential to become a god-being in the family of God—Angels will always be what they are
• Humans are loved by God—Satan and evil spirits are despised by God for their rebellion
• Humans can have their rebellion against God and violations of his law forgiven—Satan and evil spirits will not be forgiven; they will be punished

Loss of Benefits

Satan and those who followed him in rebellion against God were the original inhabitants of the earth with all the benefits thereof. But because of their rebellion, they can no longer have the freedom to use and enjoy the entire earth. Humans now have these benefits and more. According to the Genesis record, the first two humans were given the authority and dominion over the earth and all that it contained:

"And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said to them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth. And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for food. And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for food: and it was so" (Gen.1:26-30 KJV Para.).

Promise of Rulership

The Sovereign God has promised rulership over all things to those who obtain entry into his realm as his immortal sons. This rulership includes the rule over angels.

Humans were created inferior to the angels, but with the potential to become an immortal god-being in the divine family of God—neither animals nor angels have this potential. Mankind's potential is so awesome it is almost beyond our ability to comprehend, because we are physical and can only relate to the physical existence.
Future Responsibilities

Before his death, Jesus told his disciples that he was going to prepare a place for them where his Father resides and he alluded to their future responsibilities as sons of God:

"In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am" (Jn.14:2-3 NIV).

Individuals who successfully obtain immortality will be given major positions of authority and responsibility in the Kingdom of God (Rev.2:26; 3:12). Included in these positions of authority and responsibility is the management of angels to assist them in their administration of the affairs of the kingdom. In his reprimand to the church at Corinth, the apostle Paul wrote the following about their behavior and future responsibilities in the Kingdom of God:

"Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints? Do you not know that the saints shall judge the world? And if the world shall be judged by you, are you unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Don't you know that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life?" (1.Cor.6:1-3 KJV).

The reason that the elect of God are being trained and prepared through trials, tests, hardship, persecution, tribulation, study, and prayer is to grow in grace and knowledge, so that they will be able to fulfill an office of a king and a priest to rule and teach God's truth to those who have never heard or understood the way to salvation. The elect of God will be the examples, leaders, and teachers for the rest of humanity who have never had an opportunity for salvation.

Satan and other evil spirits clearly know and understand that they were created to serve the God Family and humans who were created to become members of the God Family. And they clearly know and understand that they have lost the opportunity to participate in the Kingdom of God for all eternity because of their rebellion.

We can only speculate as to other reasons why Satan and other evil spirits have such an intense hatred for mankind. Perhaps they hate mankind for no other reason than that they are envious of mankind's opportunity to become immortal god-beings and rule over them. Whatever the reason for their hatred of mankind, the fact is that their hatred for mankind is absolute and they will attempt to harm and destroy mankind at every opportunity.
SUMMARY

Satan's rule of the earth began before the creation of mankind and has continued through the centuries. Although Satan still has rulership over the earth, neither he nor the spirit-beings who followed him in his rebellion against the Sovereign God will be allowed to continue their rule and reign of terror indefinitely.

The writer to the Hebrews and the apostle John record that angelic beings will not rule in the world to come; Christ and those who have been transformed into the Sovereign God's immortal sons will rule it:

"It is not to angels that he has subjected the world to come, about which we are speaking. But there is a place where someone has testified: "What is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him? You made him a little lower than the angels; you crowned him with glory and honor and put everything under his feet." In putting everything under him, God left nothing that is not subject to him. Yet at present we do not see everything subject to him. But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, now crowned with glory and honor because he suffered death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone. In bringing many sons to glory, it was fitting that God, for whom and through whom everything exists, should make the author of their salvation perfect through suffering" (Heb.2:5-10 NIV). See also Phil.2:5-11.

"But to you I say, and to the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak: I will put upon you none other burden. But that which you have already hold fast till I come. And he that overcomes, and keeps my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father. And I will give him the morning star. He that has an ear, let him hear what the spirit says to the churches" (Rev.2:24-29 KJV).

According to the prophetic sequence of events documented in the Bible, Satan's reign of terror over mankind will soon come to an end and the next phase of God's plan for mankind will begin.

The Beginning of the End of Satan's Rule

"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 deceives the whole world; he was cast out into the earth, and his angels [i.e., evil spirits under his control] were cast out with him" (Rev.12:7-9 KJV). See also Phil.2:5-11.
During this war, the great red dragon (Satan the Devil) is defeated and cast out of heaven along with the evil spirits under his control. This means that Satan and these evil spirits will no longer have access to the Sovereign God's heavenly realm or its spirit dimension of existence.

Although Satan and the millions and perhaps billions of spirit-beings under his control lose access to the Sovereign God's spirit dimension as a result of this war, they will still have access to the physical dimension, hence the following joyous announcement and grim warning to mankind.

"Therefore rejoice, you heavens, and you that dwell in them. Woe to the inhibitors of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down to you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has but a short time" (Rev.12:12 KJV).

Satan and all evil spirits will eventually be removed as an obstacle to peace and harmony in the kingdom of God. However, until this day comes, these evil spirits are still free to adversely impact people who are ignorant of their great intellect and power and the methods through which they deceive gullible, naive, and uninformed individuals.

Because Satan and other evil spirits are a real and present danger, anyone who is serious about their salvation cannot afford to be ignorant of the methods clearly set forth in the biblical record through which these evil beings can be defeated.

By B.L. Cocherell
CHAPTER SIX

ANGELS ARE NOT IMMORTAL

Although many people believe and teach that angels are immortal, there are several prophecies about the impending punishment of Satan and other evil spirits that point to one climactic event, far into the future, during which Satan and other evil spirits will have their lives terminated. At this time, they will cease to exist in any dimension of God's vast realm.

ETERNAL AND IMMORTAL LIFE

There is a huge difference between eternal life and immortal life. Before you can begin to understand the subject of eternity and immortality, you must understand who controls eternity and immortality and what constitutes being eternal and immortal.

In Paul's acknowledgment of the majesty of God, he reveals that the God he refers to is the Sovereign God:

"Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen" (1 Tim. 1:17 KJV).

Here, the English word King is translated from the Greek word baslou, which conveys the sense of one who is the foundation of power (i.e., the sovereign authority).

Paul also says that this sovereign God is eternal, immortal, and invisible, and must be given honor and glory forever. In this verse, the English word eternal is a translation of the Greek word aion, which means ages (i.e., perpetuity or eternal). The English word immortal is a translation of the Greek word aphantos, which means will not decay, continuance of life, or ever-living.

The God Paul refers to in this verse is God the Father—the Sovereign God who has authority and control over all that exists and all that is eternal or immortal.

As Paul continues to instruct Timothy, he says the following:

"I charge you before God [God the Father] who makes all things alive, and before Christ Jesus, who gave a good witness for God to Pontius Pilate, that, you keep the commandment, spotless and blameless, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ; Who in his own time will reveal the blessed and only potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords; the only One who has immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach to; whom no man has seen, nor can see: to whom be honor and power everlasting. Amen" (1 Tim. 6:13-16 Para.).
Verses 13 through 16 show that God the Father is sovereign over all things, including Jesus Christ and the qualities of life defined as eternal and immortal. Moreover, these verses reveal that there is a God who has the power to give life to all things, and that this God is someone other than Jesus Christ.

Verses 14 and 15 show that it is Jesus Christ who reveals the Sovereign God who is "the only potentate, King of kings and Lord of lords." Although Jesus Christ is also called the King of kings and Lord of lords, he is never called the only potentate. In these verses, the English word, potentate is a translation from the Greek word dunastes, which means one of great authority.

Jesus was to reveal the one with great authority. And the only being who is greater than Jesus is God the Father. Jesus refers to God the Father as the sovereign over all things in heaven and earth:

"You have heard how I said to you, I go away, and come again to you. If you loved me, you would rejoice, because I said I go to the Father: for my Father is greater than I" (Jn.14:28 KJV).

"And the Father himself, which has sent me, has borne witness of me. You have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape" (Jn.5:37 KJV).

In verse 16, Paul also reveals that the Sovereign God (God the Father) is the only potentate, King of kings, and Lord of lords has all authority and control over immortality. The English word has in verse 16 is a translation of the Greek word eho, which means to hold, to possess, or to own. Moreover, the English word immortality in verse 16 is a translation of the Greek word athanasia, which means deathlessness, never dying, a continuance of life.

No Man has Seen the Sovereign God

"No man has seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he has declared him" (Jn.1:18 KJV).

Here, John cannot be referring to the Mighty One of ancient Israel, because men did see, hear, and speak to him face-to-face; John is speaking of the Sovereign God—God the Father.

It is clear from what Paul says in 1.Timothy 1:17 and 6:13-16 that God the Father not only is eternal and immortal but also has sovereign authority and control over the conditions of existence defined as eternal life and immortality. The following are qualities of the Sovereign God to whom Paul refers:

• He is eternal.
• He is immortal.
• He is invisible.
• He is the only wise God.
• He is able to give life.
• He is the only potentate (monarch).
• He is superior to all other kings and lords in heaven and earth.
• He is revealed by Jesus Christ.
• He has absolute authority and control over eternal and immortal life.
• He lives in unapproachable light.
• No person has seen or can see him.

What is the difference between eternal life and immortal life?
• Eternal life is a continuance of life that is sustained by God the Father and is conditional, based on obedience to God and his law.
• Immortal life springs forth from itself; it is not dependent on any other source to sustain it because it is self-sustaining.

Who Controls Life and Death?

Jesus says that God the Father has reserved to himself the power to destroy spirit-beings, as well as humans who violate his principles, precepts, and laws:

"And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" (Matt.10:28 KJV).

Although the Creator God who became Jesus Christ had authority and control over life and death (Deut.32:39-40; 1.Sam.2:6; 2.Kg.5:7), God the Father has absolute control over all life:

"For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son gives life to whom he is pleased to give it. Moreover, the Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son, that all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father . . ." (Jn.5:21-23 NIV).

The God Who Cast Off Immortality

The apostle John reveals that, as the Creator God, Jesus cast off his immortality to become human and experience life and death as a human:

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men. (Jn.1:1-4 KJV).

"And the light shined in the darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not. . .He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. . .And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father) full of grace and truth" (Jn.1:5, 10, 14 KJV). See also Matthew, chapters 1-4.
Despite the many scriptures that speak of Jesus being a member of the God family, many people still feel that he was only a human being who did not pre-exist. John records Jesus telling the Jews of his pre-existence:

"Jesus said to them, (amen amen lego humon prim abraham gynomai ego eimi [I am]) Truly, truly, I say to you, Before Abraham was, I AM. Then took they up stones to cast at him: but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by" (Jn.8:58-59 KJV).

The Jews tried to kill Jesus because he said he was the "I Am" who had existed before Abraham, so they believed he was committing blasphemy by claiming to be the Creator God of Abraham.

"I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go to the Father" (Jn.16:28 KJV). See also Jn.3:13.

Here, Jesus says that he came from the Father into the world and would leave the world again. What did Jesus mean by "again"? If we understand that Jesus was the Creator God (Jn.1:1-12; Heb.1:1-3), this statement is not a mystery. The word again is translated from the Greek word palin, which means once more, repetition, or again. As the Creator and the God of ancient Israel, he came to earth many times. Remember, Abraham, Jacob, Moses, and many others talked with, ate with, and fellowshipped face-to-face with the Creator.

Clearly, Jesus had existed as the Creator God before he created humanity. Moreover, he set aside his position as second in authority in the God family to become a human being. This is shown in his prayer to the Father before his death and resurrection:

"And now, O Father, glorify you me with your own self with the glory which I had with you before the world was" (Jn.17:5 KJV). See Jn.8:38-59; 17:24.

**Jesus, The God Who Died**

Despite the fact that there are many scriptures clearly stating that Jesus was totally dead, some still believe the totality of Jesus did not really die. In the first chapter of Revelation, the apostle John records his encounter with Jesus Christ who says he is the God Alpha and Omega who lived and died (Rev.1:8):

"And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying to me, Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am he that lives, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death" (Rev.1: 17-18 KJV). See also Rom.6:8-10; Acts 2:22-32, 3:14, 26.
The Greek Interlinear Bible translates the phrase was dead, in verse 18 as I became dead. The Greek word used for dead here is corpse. The Alpha and Omega says he was a dead body, but is now alive forever.

"And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write: These things says the first and the last: who became dead [was a corpse], and lived" (Rev.2:8 Para.). Again, the Alpha and Omega (the Savior) says he was totally dead at one time.

"But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man" (Heb.2:9 KJV).

"Your attitude should be the kind that was shown to us by Jesus Christ, who, though he was God, did not think it was wrong to be as the Sovereign God. Jesus did not cling to his rights as God, but laid aside his power and glory, taking on the form of a man: And humbled himself even further, by allowing himself to unjustly be put to death as a criminal on the cross" (Phil.2:5-8 Para.).

Jesus Christ, the Creator of all things (Jn.1:1-3), was an immortal spirit-being who inherently possessed the highest form of existence: life which springs forth from itself, never dying or decaying. A being who was not subject to death emptied himself of his glory, power, and immortality to become a mortal man. Then, he allowed his creation to murder him. Not only did this immortal being voluntarily give up his life but also died an agonizing physical death and completely ceased to exist as a living entity for a short time. See Lk.24:1-7.

"Paul an apostle, not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead" (Gal.1:1KJV). See also Acts 4:10, 5:30, 10:40; 13:30.

Jesus was completely dead; he ceased to exist. All that remained of him was the spirit and physical records of his existence. Even these could have been completely destroyed and erased if the Father had willed it (Matt.10:28; Lk.12:4-5). It is important to understand that Jesus would have remained dead forever—never to live again—if his Father had not resurrected him from the dead.

It is also important to understand the enormity of what had taken place during Jesus' life and at his death. During this time, God the Father was the only eternal and immortal being in existence.

CAN SPIRIT-BEINGS DIE?

The Bible says that God the Father and Jesus Christ are immortal and the Father controls who is given eternal life and immortality. Presently the only immortal spirit-beings are God the Father and Jesus Christ.
Although many people believe that all spirit-beings are immortal because they are composed of spirit, this is not true. As Jesus explains the punishment that will be given to those who refuse to live righteously after they are called to salvation, he reveals the punishment reserved for Satan and other evil spirits:

"Then shall he say also to them on the left hand, Depart from me, you cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matt.25:41 KJV).

Why is a fire prepared for Satan and the evil spirits under his control? It makes no sense to prepare a fire to cast evil spirits into unless they can be harmed by this fire.

**Angelic Beings are Eternal, not Immortal**

Many assume that angels have immortal life and cannot die because of the following statement Jesus made about those accounted worthy of eternal life not being subject to death and being equal to the angels:

"And Jesus answering them said, The children of this world marry, and are given in marriage: But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, do not marry, nor are given in marriage: Nor can they die any more: for they are equal to the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection" (Lk.20:34-36 Para.).

In verses 34 and 35, Jesus is only answering the Sadducees' question of marital status in the Kingdom of God; he is not addressing the question of eternal life or immortality. He explains that marriage is only for humans and is not necessary in the spirit realm. Angels are created beings, which do not procreate as humans do. Likewise, when the children of God are transformed into spirit-beings, they will neither marry nor procreate.

Verse 36 does not say angelic beings are immortal. It just says that the resurrected saints will be in a condition similar to the angels. However, unlike the angels who have eternal life which can be destroyed, people who participate in the first resurrection are given immortal life as sons of God. Because these children of God will be immortal, they will have life that springs forth from itself which never dies or decays and is not dependent on any other source to sustain it. Therefore, they cannot die (1.Tim.1:17, 6:12-16; 1.Cor.15:50-56).

Angels are not immortal spirit-beings; they are eternal beings, which have their life sustained by the power of God. Eternal life can be terminated, which is documented by the many scriptures that show the destruction of evil spirits.
Spirit-beings Can Die

Spirit-beings are subject to death under certain conditions. God the Father has ultimate power and authority over all that he has caused to be created, including evil spirits. However, evil spirits want us to believe that they are immortal beings which will live forever. Nevertheless, they are not immortal; they are only eternal.

While explaining the necessity for a child of God to have faith with works, the apostle James makes an interesting statement about evil spirits and their fear of God:

"What does it profit, my brethren, though a man says he has faith, and has not works? Can faith save him? If a brother or sister is naked and destitute not having daily food, and one of you says to them, depart in peace, be warmed and filled, and does not give them the things which are needful to the body. What does it profit? Therefore, faith, without works, is dead, being alone. Yes, man may say, You have faith, and I have works: show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works. You believe that there is one God; you do well: the devils also believe, and tremble" (Jms.2:14-19 KJV Para.).

What is it that evil spirits know about God that would make them tremble in fear? This question is answered in Mark's account of Jesus meeting a man in a synagogue who was possessed with a demon:

"And there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit; and he cried out, Saying, Let us alone; what have we to do with you, you Jesus of Nazareth? are you come to destroy us? I know you, you are the Holy One of God" (Mk.1:23-24 KJV; Lk.4:33-35).

In verse 24, the English word destroy is a translation of the Greek word appolumi, which means to destroy, fully, complete destruction, to perish, or to die. This same word is used many times to describe the utter destruction of individuals and places (Matt.10:28, 12:14, 21:41; Lk.17:29). All of these examples of the word apollumi are used to convey utter or complete destruction. Both the Hebrew and the Greek words for destroy used throughout the Bible mean the destruction and cessation of existence.

The question the demon asked Jesus is important because it tells us three essential facts:

1. Evil spirits know they can be destroyed.
2. Some evil spirits know they are going to die for their rebellion.
3. Jesus has the power to destroy evil spirits.
SATAN'S PUNISHMENT

"And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season" (Rev.20:1-3 KJV). See also Isa.24:21-22.

At the beginning of the millennium, this powerful evil being will be bound and held in a prison for a thousand years, after which he will be released for a short time. But what will happen to him after his release? Will he be allowed to continue his existence or will he be destroyed?

"When the thousand years are over, Satan will be released from prison and will go out to deceive the nations in the four corners of the earth—Gog and Magog—to gather them for battle. In number they are like the sand on the seashore. They marched across the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of God’s people, the city he loves. But fire came down from heaven and devoured them. And the devil, who deceived them, was thrown into the lake of burning sulfur, where the beast and the false prophet had been thrown. They will be tormented day and night for ever and ever" (Rev.20:7-10 NIV).

If this translation of verse 10 is taken at face value, it seems to say that Satan will be cast into a lake of fire to be tortured for eternity. But, does the phrase for ever and ever mean an eternity in the original Greek language?

For Ever and Ever

The English phrase for ever and ever in verse 10 is a gross mis-translation of the original Greek phrase eis tous aionas ton aionon, which means, to the ages of the ages. The following is a more correct translation of verse 10:

"And the devil who deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and false prophet were. And shall be tormented day and night until the age of ages"(Rev.20:10 Para.).

Satan will not endure everlasting punishment; he will have his existence terminated and cease to exist forever. The age spoken of in verse 10 is the termination of an age. It is the time when the existence of physical humans on earth will end. Moreover, it is a time when a new age will begin and the mystery of what God is doing here on earth will be totally revealed.
Satan Will Die

After Adam and Eve had eaten the forbidden fruit, the Creator God gave a prophecy about the termination of Satan's existence:

"And I will put enmity [separation] between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed: it shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel" (Gen.3:15 KJV). The woman's seed is a reference to Christ.

The Hebrew word for bruise is shoof, which means to crush or strike at. Because Satan is referred to as a serpent, it makes sense that Satan is the serpent that would try to destroy the Savior. Almost all Bible scholars agree that this verse is speaking about the Savior who will come and triumph over Satan. Satan would strike at the heel and damage it a little bit. But, Christ will crush the head of Satan and destroy him.

God the Father and Jesus Christ have total power and authority over all that is and only allow Satan to do things which will not interfere with or alter their plan for humanity. Satan can do nothing that God does not allow him to do.

"And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen" (Rom.16:20 KJV).

The Greek word suntribo translated as bruise in verse 20 means to crush or to completely shatter. In other words, it means to destroy.

"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 KJV). See also 2.Thes.2:8. This scripture shows that Jesus Christ is in authority over Satan and that Jesus has the power to destroy him.

In verse 14, the English word destroy is a translation of the Greek word katargeo. It comes from the root argeo, which means to render entirely useless. It can also mean to abolish, to cease, to vanish away, or to utterly destroy. Christ will completely destroy Satan.

There is nothing in the Greek word katargeo that indicates anything other than destruction; it does not show that Satan will continue to live. Indeed, it indicates he will be utterly destroyed. Verse 14 also shows that Jesus has the power to destroy Satan.

Satan the Lawbreaker

"You are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father you will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it" (Jn.8:44 KJV).
Satan and other evil spirits were thrown out of God's government because of rebellion and sedition (Ezk.28; Rev.12:1-9). They are against the law of God and will not willingly conform to it. Moreover, Satan and other evil spirits willfully break God's law, obeying only that which God imposes upon them by force; otherwise, Satan and other evil spirits would be free to destroy humanity. See Job 2:1-6.

A Covering Cherub Will Die

Ezekiel, chapter 28 contains the prophecy about the physical king of Tyrus and the destruction of the evil cherub who possessed him:

"Son of man, take up a lamentation upon the king of Tyrus, and say to him, Thus says the Lord God; You seal up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty. You have been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone was your 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 your tabrets and of your pipes was prepared in you in the day that you were created. You are the anointed cherub that covers . . ." (Ezk.28:12-14 KJV).

Verses 13-14 do not describe the physical King of Tyrus; they describe someone completely different. The only kind of being that could fit this description has to be from the spirit realm of existence. These verses show the magnificence and beauty of a powerful spirit-being who was created to hold a powerful position within the Kingdom of God.

"And I have set you so: you were upon the holy mountain of God; you have walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. You were perfect in your ways from the day that you were created, till iniquity [lawlessness] was found in you. By the multitude of your merchandise they have filled the midst of you with violence, and you have sinned: therefore I will cast you as profane out of the mountain of God: and I will destroy you, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire" (Ezk.28:14-16 KJV).

The English word destroy in verse 16 is a translation from the Hebrew word abad. In the Old Testament this word is translated as destroyed, perished, and to destroy and to perish. As it is used in Ezekiel 28, the word abad cannot mean anything other than total destruction. These scriptures prove beyond doubt that this powerful spirit-being will have his life terminated and will cease to exist.

"Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty, you have corrupted your wisdom by reason of your brightness: I will cast you to the ground, I will lay you before kings, that they may behold you. You have defiled your sanctuaries by the multitude of your iniquities, by the iniquity of your traffic; therefore will I bring forth a fire from the midst of you, it shall devour you, and I will bring you to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold you. All
they that know you among the people shall be astonished at you: you shall be a terror, and never shall you be any more” (Ezk.28: 17-19 KJV).

A more correct translation of the last part of verse 19 is: "You shall never be a terror anymore."

The fire that will come from within this powerful spirit-being will consume him; he will be destroyed and turned to ashes. The judgment and punishment for this spirit-being has already been made—his fate is sealed. He will be destroyed by fire for his rebellion. Remember, the penalty for committing willful sin is death (Rom.6:23).

It is important to understand that the Lake of Fire in which evil spirits and humans will be cast is a physical place that burns with physical fire. Because both evil spirits and people will be destroyed by the same physical fire (Matt.25:40-41; Rev.20:7-10) and turned to physical ashes which will be trodden under the feet of the righteous (Mal.4:1-3), it seems likely that God will change evil spirits into physical beings before they are destroyed by this fire.

IS THERE A FATE WORSE THAN DEATH?

We have learned that evil spirits can be destroyed; however, is there a fate worse than death reserved for some evil spirits? The answer seems to be yes. There is a punishment which is far worse than death:

"When he [Jesus] arrived at the other side in the region of the Gadarenes, two demon-possessed men coming from the tombs met him. They were so violent that no one could pass that way. "What do you want with us, Son of God?" they shouted. "Have you come here to torture us before the appointed time?"
Some distance from them a large herd of pigs were feeding. The demons begged Jesus, "If you drive us out, send us into the herd of pigs" (Matt.8:28-31 NIV). See also Lk.8:26-33.

What did these demons fear? Did they fear death or something worse than death? They asked Jesus if he had come to torture them before their appointed time, but to what torture and what time were they referring? Perhaps, some of these evil beings will suffer a fate far worse than death.

Raging Waves and Wandering Stars

Jude’s letter is mainly a warning to the elect about the false brethren who were among them, but it also includes information regarding two types of punishments for evil spirits, neither of which is the punishment reserved for incorrigibly wicked humans, which is the second death in the lake of Fire:
"I will therefore put you in remembrance, though you once knew this, how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not. And the angels that kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness to the judgment of the great day [See 2.Pet.2:4]. Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire" (Jude 5-7 KJV).

What Jude reminds them of was common knowledge at that time. These people understood the historical events surrounding ancient Israel and they knew what the fate of rebellious spirit-beings was to be.

Verse 6 shows that some of these rebellious angels are chained in a prison of darkness until the day they will be punished by fire. However, in verse 13, Jude makes a statement about a second group of rebellious angels. His statement explains what torture the demons who met Jesus at the tombs were afraid of:

"Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever" (Jude 13).

The following translation of specific words from the original Greek text in verse 13 provides more insight into the severity of this punishment:

- Wandering: (Greek planetes: From a root word which means a rover or a planet).
- Blackness: (Greek zophos: blackness, darkness as shrouding like a cloud).
- Darkness: (Greek skotos: obscurity, or darkness).
- Ever: (Greek aion: properly, an age; by extension, perpetuity)

Because there is no reference to the death of these evil spirits, the indication is that this prison of blackness and darkness is a place they will never leave. Moreover, it is probably where they will be confined to wander alone forever.

For a sentient being, there could be no greater or torturous punishment than to be totally cut off from all other beings and left alone with one's thoughts in total darkness forever. This is the torment that demons fear more than death. Some demons are already experiencing this torture, which is indicated in Jude 6 and 2.Pet.2:4.
Another Dimension

There are scriptures that say no evil will be allowed in the new heavens, the new earth, or the Holy City (See 2.Pet.3:10-13; Rev.21:1-27). This seems to contradict the scriptures that say some of the demons will be punished by being left alive in total darkness. However, not allowing any evil presence in the new heavens and earth does not preclude the existence of another dimension of existence outside the one God's family occupies (See 1.Pet.3:18-20; 2.Pet.2:3-5).

The current physical and spirit realms are an example of two separate dimensions of existence that exist concurrently; therefore, there is no reason to believe that God cannot design and create as many separate dimensions of existence as he deems necessary for whatever purpose he desires.

It is obvious from the scriptures that all spirit-beings do not have immortal life. If they did, they could not be destroyed. All spirit-beings besides the Father and those of the New Creation can only possess eternal life as long as they are obedient to the Father. Although the majority of evil spirits will be destroyed in a Lake of Fire (Matt.25:41), it seems some will suffer a fate worse than death for their rebellion against God.

SUMMARY

The Sovereign God has the power to destroy what he has caused to come into existence. He has this power over all he has created, including Satan and the evil spirits who have rebelled against him.

Although Satan and other evil spirits have deceived the vast majority of people into thinking that they are immortal beings and will live forever, it is obvious from the scriptures that Satan and evil spirits do not have immortal life; they are not self-existent or self-sustaining and they live only because their life is sustained by the Sovereign God's power.

God's prophetic plan for humanity is right on schedule and Satan's death is sure; he and other evil spirits will die for their rebellion against the Sovereign Father. The fulfillment of prophecies concerning Satan's death and the punishment of all evil spirit-beings and wicked humans will bring to a close the Sovereign Father's plan for his human creation which began with the first two humans in the garden of Eden. We are not told what will happen after Satan's death; however, the apostle Paul said, "But as it is written, Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for them that love him" (1.Cor.2:9 KJV).

Whatever the Sovereign Father has planned for the future after the final climactic event that destroys all evil from his kingdom, we can be sure that it will be extremely interesting, exciting, and enjoyable.

By B.L. Cocherell

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CHAPTER
SEVEN

WORSHIP OF ANGELS FORBIDDEN

Throughout mankind's history, all societies in one way or another have had within them the worship of inanimate objects, imaginary gods, the sun, moon, stars, and spirits who have appeared in various forms. Sometimes this worship is expressed nationally, sometimes by small influential groups, and sometimes by individuals, but always for the purpose of seeking benefits from an object or an entity thought to have supernatural powers.

Before the Great Flood

During the first age of mankind, Enoch records that some of the rebellious spirit-beings who roamed the earth in human form and had human wives had also changed their appearance and led mankind to worship them and other evil spirits as gods:

"And Uriel said to me: Here will stand the souls of those angels who have united themselves with women, and having assumed many different forms, have defiled mankind, and have led them astray so that they brought offerings to the demons as to gods, namely on the day when the great judgment, on which they will be judged, shall be consummated" (Enoch 19:1, Book 1, Watchers).

Enoch also records that rebellious angels also taught mankind powerful, forbidden knowledge through which they practiced sorcery, witchcraft, and the making of powerful metal images. See Enoch 65:6, Book 2, Parables.

What Enoch recorded about the making of images and the worship of false gods by people who lived before the great flood is also confirmed by the writer of the Book of Jasher:

"And it was in the days of Enoch that the sons of men continued to rebel and transgress against God, to increase the anger of the Lord against the sons of men. And the sons of men went and they served other gods, and they forgot the Lord who had created them in the earth: and in those days the sons of men made images of brass and iron, wood and stone, and they bowed down and served them. And every man made his god and they bowed down to them, and the sons of men forsook the Lord all the days of Enoch and his children; and the anger of the Lord was kindled on account of their works and abominations which they did in the earth" (Jasher 2:3-4).
Worship of Angels at Colosse

The apostle Paul cautioned the saints at Colosse against being duped into worshiping angels. Apparently, some individuals within the congregation were both worshiping angels and attempting to convince others to do the same. Paul issued the following warning about this behavior:

"Let no one trick you into losing your reward through their false humility and the ceremonial observance of angels. These people are intruding into things which they have not seen, and are carnal minded and full of vanity. These have lost contact with Christ, to which all of us who are of his body are joined, because we are joined together by his strong ligaments, and our growth is from the nourishment and strength we get from God" (Col.2:18-19 Para.).

Two Laws to Diligently Practice

After the Creator freed the Israelites from bondage in Egypt, which practiced the worship of many gods in different forms, the Creator gave the Israelites the following two laws to diligently practice:

"I am the Lord your God, who has brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make yourselves any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: You shall not bow down yourself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; And show mercy to thousands of them who love me and keep my commandments" (Ex.20:2-6 KJV Para.).

Through Moses, God gave the following instructions about what the Israelites should do with individuals who violated his law prohibiting the worship of other gods:

"If there is found among you, within any property which the Lord your God gives you, man or woman, that has wrought wickedness in the sight of the Lord your God, in transgressing his covenant, And has gone and served other gods, and worshiped them, either the sun, or moon, or any of the host of heaven, which I have not commanded; And it is told to you, and you have heard of it, and have inquired diligently, and, it is true, and the thing is certain, that such abomination is wrought in Israel. Then you shall bring that man or that woman, which has committed that wicked thing, to your gates, even that man or that woman, and shall stone them with stones, till they die. At the mouth of two witnesses, or three witnesses, shall one that is worthy of death be put to death; but at the mouth of one witness one shall not be put to death. The hands of the witnesses shall be first on them to put them to death, and afterward the hands of all the people. So you shall put the evil away from among you" (Deut.17:2-7 KJV Para.). See also Deut.4:14-19.
The English word *host* in verse 3 is translated from the Hebrew word *tsaba*, which means large group of individuals, (figuratively, *things*) especially an *army*. In the context of verse 3, the word *tsaba* seems to refer to the spirit-beings created by God who occupy the heavenly realm.

Throughout the history of ancient Israel, the Israelites continually violated the first two foundational commandments given to them. Even today, Israelites who are scattered throughout the world continue to violate these two laws nationally and individually by worshiping and serving many gods, which is actually the worship of evil spirits by proxy.

There are numerous biblical accounts which show a spirit-messenger sent from God instructing the individuals to whom they were speaking not to worship them. The following are a few of these accounts.

**Manoah and His Wife**

The following is part of the account of Manoah's wife being told by God's spirit-messenger that she would bear a son. After this message was confirmed to Manoah by the angel, Manoah made the following request to the angel:

"And Manoah said to the angel of the Lord, let us detain you, until we have made a doe goat ready for you. And the angel of the Lord said to Manoah, Though you detain me, I will not eat of your bread: and if you will offer a burnt offering, you must offer it to the Lord. For Manoah did not know that he was an angel of the Lord" (Judg. 13:15-16 KJV Para.).

The angel would not allow himself to be worshiped, because God is the only one worthy of worship.

**Israel's Worship of Heavenly Hosts**

Historically, the nation of Israel departed from the worship of the Creator God many times and were repeatedly warned by him about the consequences of practicing a false worship system. One of Israel's major departures from God's worship system was their tendency to worship and serve gods represented by the heavenly bodies and to ignore the Creator God who created and positioned the planets and stars to serve humanity (Gen.1:14-18).

One of the problems in determining if the host of heaven noted in a number of scriptures is referring to the stars or to the created spirit-beings who occupy the heavenly realm is that the identifying phrase *host of heaven* seems to be used to describe both stars and spirit-beings.

"Manasseh was twelve years old when he began to reign, and reigned fifty and five years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Hephzi-bah. And he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord, after the abominations of the heathen, whom the Lord cast out before the children of Israel. For he built up again the high places
which Hezekiah his father had destroyed; and he reared up altars for Baal, and made a grove, as did Ahab king of Israel; and worshiped all the host of heaven, and served them. And he built altars in the house of the Lord, of which the Lord said, In Jerusalem will I put my name. And he built altars for all the host of heaven in the two courts of the house of the Lord” (2.Kgs.21:1-5 KJV). See also Jer.8:1-3.

The English word host in verse 5 is translated from the Hebrew word tsABA, which means a mass of persons (or figuratively, things), especially organized for war (an army).

Because the word tsABA can also mean a mass of things, it is not readily apparent if the host of heaven worshiped by the House of Judah under king Manasseh were celestial bodies or spirit-beings. However, it is apparent in the account of King Josiah ordering the removal of the false worship system from Judah that the "host of heaven" refers to spirit-beings as gods.

King Josiah of Judah

In the eighteenth year of Josiah's reign, he ordered the high priest to remove all the vessels for the worship of the god Baal and other false gods and burn them outside Jerusalem. He also ordered the removal of priests of these false gods who were being worshiped in Judah:

"And the king commanded Hilkiah the high priest, and the priests of the second order, and the keepers of the door, to bring forth out of the temple of the Lord all the vessels that were made for Baal, and for the grove, and for all the host of heaven: and he burned them without Jerusalem in the fields of Kidron, and carried the ashes of them to Bethel. And he put down the idolatrous priests, whom the kings of Judah had ordained to burn incense in the high places in the cities of Judah, and in the places round about Jerusalem; them also that burned incense unto Baal, to the sun, and to the moon, and to the planets, and to all the host of heaven" (2.Kgs.23:4-5 KJV).

In many of the biblical text that refer to the worship of the host of heaven, it could be assumed that the host of heaven means the stars; however, in verse five, the sun, moon, and planets are noted in addition to all the host of heaven.

The English word planets in verse 5 is translated from the Hebrew word mazzalah, which means a constellation (i.e., Zodiac sign). This is a clear reference to the stars; therefore, the "host of heaven" in this context seems to clearly refer to spirit-beings who occupy the heavenly realm.

Satan Asks Christ to Worship Him

Satan who is the present ruler of this world and the god that most people worship either directly (or ignorantly by proxy) desires to be worshiped and served. This is the primary reason he rebelled against the Sovereign God and attempted to dethrone him. However, righteous
spirit-beings who are loyal to the Sovereign God and his firstborn son, the Savior of mankind, know and understand that only an immortal god-being in the Sovereign God's family is worthy of worship and service.

After Christ's baptism and just before he began his formal ministry, he went off alone to prepare himself for the proclaiming of the Kingdom of God through fasting and communing with his heavenly Father. At the end of his forty day fast, Satan came to him and attempted to convince him to worship and serve him:

"Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. "All this I will give you," he said, "if you will bow down and worship me." Jesus said to him, "Away from me, Satan! For it is written: 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only" (Matt.4:8-10 NIV). See also Lk.4:5-8.

Jesus who was the Creator God before he came to earth as a human reminds Satan of the first two of God's foundational commands which humans must obey.

**Given Over to Worship the Host of Heaven**

As Stephen stood before the Jewish Sanhedrin and recounts national Israel's beginnings, he reprimands these spiritual leaders for following the unrighteous example of their forefathers. Stephen also tells them that the Creator God of Israel was Christ and that, because of Israel's worship of idols, they were deceived into worshiping the host of heaven:

"And they made a calf in those days, and offered sacrifice to the idol, and rejoiced in the works of their own hands. Then God turned, and gave them up to worship the host of heaven; as it is written in the book of the prophets, O you house of Israel, have you offered to me slain beasts and sacrifices by the space of forty years in the wilderness?" (Acts 7:41-42 KJV).

The English word *host* in verse 41 is translated from the Greek word *stratia*, which is a derivative of *stratos* (an army as encamped; i.e., an army) (figuratively) the angels, the celestial luminaries. It seems clear from the language and the context of Acts 7 that the *host of heaven* refers to spirit-beings who are being worshiped.

**Devil Worship by Proxy**

In his letter to the Corinthians, the apostle Paul speaks to the question of having a close association with evil and the saint's participation in the Passover. Paul says the things the Gentiles sacrificed to their idols were, in fact, sacrificed to devils:
"What say I then? that the idol is anything, or that which is offered in sacrifice to idols is anything? But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that you should have fellowship with devils. You cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: you cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and the table of devils" (1.Cor.10:19-21 Para.).

The Apostle John Reprimanded

The apostle John is reprimanded twice in a vision (once in Revelation 19 and once in Revelation 22) for attempting to worship an individual and an angel. As these two reprimands are analyzed, keep in mind that what John is seeing and hearing is not reality, but a vision of what will take place in the future:

"And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all you his servants, and you that fear him, both small and great. And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigns" (Rev.19:5-6 KJV Para.).

In verses 5 and 6, John hears a voice coming from a throne saying to praise God. In order to understand who is speaking and who is to be praised, it is necessary to review the Greek words used for God in these verses.

In verse 5, the English word God is translated from the Greek word theos, which means a deity. In verse 6, the English words Lord God are respectively translated from the Greek words kurios and theos. Kurios is derived from kuros (supremacy); supreme in authority. Kurios (as noun) means controller and theos means a deity. Moreover, the English word omnipotent in verse 6 is translated from the Greek word pantokrator; which means God (as absolute and universal sovereign). Therefore, there should be no doubt that the being to be worshiped is the Sovereign God.

It is also important to remember that Christ sits on a throne at the right hand of his heavenly Father. Therefore, the voice coming from the throne seems to be that of Christ. This makes perfect sense, because he is the representative of the Sovereign God. Even if the voice is not his, what follows in verses 9 and 10 still makes sense; in that, the Sovereign Father is to be worshiped above even Christ.

After hearing the information about the marriage of Christ to the Church, John is given the following instruction by an unnamed individual:

"And he said to me, Write, Blessed are they which are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he said to me, These are the true sayings of God" (Rev.19:9 KJV).
Upon hearing this instruction, John falls at the feet of the individual speaking to him and is immediately reprimanded:

"And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said to me, See you do it not: I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy" (Rev. 19:10 KJV).

Remember this is a vision and not reality. The individual appearing in this vision tells John that he is a fellow servant and is one of the brethren who has the testimony of Jesus. This tells us that the individual being manifested in the vision has the outward appearance of a man, like the twenty-four elders noted in Revelation, chapter 4.

Because God the Father, Christ, and God's messengers also have the outward appearance of men, we have no way of knowing if John initially thought the individual speaking to him in the vision was God the Father, Christ, or one of their spirit-servants. What we do know for sure is that the apostle John clearly understood that he was not to praise, honor, or worship and serve anyone other than God the Father and Christ.

In another account, one of the seven angels with the seven vials full of the seven last plagues spoke with John and showed him the heavenly Jerusalem descending out of heaven and its glory. After this vision, John records the following:

"And I John saw the things, and heard them. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which showed me these things" (Rev. 22:8 KJV).

In verse 8, the English word angel is translated from the Greek word aggelos, which means to bring information or news or a messenger.

Remember, this was only happening in a vision. We have no way of knowing who John thought the messenger speaking to him was until the messenger reveals his identity:

"Understand this, do not, for I am your fellow-servant, and of your brethren the prophets, and of them that keep the sayings of this book: worship God" (Rev. 22:9 KJV Para.).

The Individual described as a messenger tells John that he represents one of John's fellow-servants and of the brotherhood of prophets. This tells us that this individual has the outward appearance of a man.

Although it is not written, we can assume that the individuals noted in Revelation 19:9-10 and 22:8-9 who appeared in the vision in the form of men must have appeared in a glorified form. This is most likely why John wanted to honor them with a high degree of respect.
The apostle John clearly understood he was not to praise, honor, worship, or serve anyone other than God the Father and Christ. Therefore, he must not have fallen down to honor or worship the visions of these individuals appearing as men noted in Revelation 19:9-10 and 22:8-9 in a way that would violate God's law of worship.

The English word *worship* in both texts is translated from the Greek word *proskuneo*; a probable derivative of the words *pros* and *kuon* which respectively can mean *respect toward* and *dog*. Therefore, meaning *to kiss, like a dog licking his master's hand; to fawn or crouch, (i.e., literally or figuratively) prostrate oneself in homage (do reverence to, adore)*.

It seems that, in John's mind, he was showing these individuals the high degree of respect that he felt God's representatives deserved. In no way was the apostle John honoring and worshiping these individuals as he would the Sovereign God or Christ. However, the individuals in the visions knew that the degree of respect John was showing them was not appropriate and was far above what they were due as God's servants; therefore, they reprimanded John.

**Respect, But Not Worship**

God's word clearly shows that proper respect is to be shown for all constituted authority, whether or not the human or spirit-being wielding this authority is righteous or unrighteous. However, respect for constituted authority is not to be confused with worship, because the two are entirely different things.

In his instructions about the judges and priests of Israel, the Creator God left no doubt that constituted authority must be respected and the punishment for not respecting constituted authority was death:

"You must act according to the decisions they give you at the place the Lord will choose. Be careful to do everything they direct you to do. Act according to the law they teach you and the decisions they give you. Do not turn aside from what they tell you, to the right or to the left. The man who shows contempt for the judge or for the priest who stands ministering there to the Lord your God must be put to death. You must purge the evil from Israel. All the people will hear and be afraid, and will not be contemptuous again" (Deut. 17:10-13 NIV). See also Acts 23:1-6; Rom. 13:1-4; 2 Pet. 2:9-14; Titus 3:1-2.

**Respect for Spirit-beings**

The scriptures tell us that man was created inferior to all spirit-beings and of lesser authority, power, and intellect than spirit-beings. Because of the functions, responsibilities, and positions of authority delegated to them by God, spirit-beings must be shown proper respect, but they are not to be worshiped.
In Jude's cryptic letter to the elect, he urges them to contend for The Faith Once Delivered and warns of individuals who secretly came into the congregations to discredit The Faith. He then writes the following in the context of the rebellious angels and their punishment, which gives us some insight into authority and respect for authority within the ranks of the angels:

"Likewise also these filthy dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities. Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, does not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke you. But these speak evil of those things which they do not know: but what they know naturally, as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves" (Jude 8-10 KJV Para.). See also Zech.3:1-7.

These evil people show disrespect for authority, which angels who are mightier than humans do not do among their ranks.

The English word disputed in verse 9 is translated from the Greek word dialegomai, which means to discuss (in argument or exhortation). We are not told anything about the conversation between Michael and Satan, except that there was a discussion about the body of Moses and Michael showed respect for Satan's authority and invoked the authority of God to settle the issue being discussed. A similar show of respect for Satan's authority is noted in Zechariah 3:1 concerning Joshua the high priest.

One thing that should be understood about angels is that they are all subject to the authority of the Sovereign God and the Creator God who became the Messiah. Although the scriptures document conflict among the angels, the scriptures also document a system of authority, function, and responsibility.

**SUMMARY**

The spirit-beings God has created to serve him are to be shown a high degree of respect (even Satan and other evil spirits are to be respected), but not worshiped. These spirit-beings are to be shown respect because they are all superior to humans. They are a higher life-form than mankind, more intelligent and more powerful than mankind. Additionally, a righteous spirit-being who is loyal to the Sovereign God and his son, the Savior, represent them and the Kingdom of God to mankind. However, no spirit-being or human is to be honored, worshiped, and shown the kind respect that is due the Sovereign God and his son.
Worship of Devils

Many people believe that the worship of demons, devils, and evil spirits is not wide-spread; however, according to biblical prophecy, the worship of these spirit-beings is so pervasive in the end of the age that it is one of the major reasons for God's wrath being poured out on the earth and mankind.

Beginning in Revelation 9:15, is a prophecy of four spirit-beings who are sent to slaughter one-third of humanity in preparation for Christ's return and the establishment of the Sovereign God's government on earth. After this great slaughter, we are told the following about the worship of devils:

"And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk: Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts" (Rev.9:20-21 KJV).

Even after the slaughter of billions of people, those who are left alive will refuse to change from their worship of devils and inanimate objects. Moreover, these defiant and rebellious individuals will still refuse to acknowledge the Sovereign God and Christ. These people also refuse to begin living in accordance to God's law of worship and other laws set forth in the Bible to govern human attitudes and behavior.

The worship of angels or any other god or object is strictly forbidden by God's commandments:

"I am the Lord your God, who has brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make yourselves any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: You shall not bow down yourself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; And show mercy to thousands of them who love me, and keep my commandments" (Ex.20:2-6 KJV Para.).

Make no mistake, the penalty for worshipping angels is the second death in the Lake of Fire from which there is no return:

"He that overcomes shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone: which is the second death" (Rev.21:7-8 KJV).

By B.L. Cocherell
INTRODUCTION TO CHAPTERS 8-12

Historical records clearly show that many people believe they have encountered, in one form or another, both good and evil spirit-beings described as angels or demons.

Because interactions with both righteous and unrighteous spirit-beings are recorded many times in the biblical record and these interactions continue to this day, it makes sense that, in order to avoid being deceived by an evil spirit masquerading as a messenger from God, you should know from the biblical perspective how angelic messengers sent from God appear in a physical form and how these messengers interact with people.

This section focuses on the functions, responsibilities, and appearance of spirit-beings in the heavenly and physical realms, as well as their interaction with human beings.

Chapter 8: Heavenly Hosts and God's Army
Chapter 9: Form and Appearance
Chapter 10: Cherubim, Seraphim, and other Spirit-Beings
Chapter 11: Powers and Principalities
Chapter 12: Angels as Stars
Spirit-beings who are either loyal or disloyal to the Sovereign God and the Creator God (i.e., Jesus Christ) are often collectively described in the Bible as the host of heaven, the heavenly host, hosts, or host.

The English word *host* which refers to spirit-beings in the Old Testament is translated from the Hebrew word *tsaba*, which is taken from a Hebrew word meaning a *mass of persons* (or figuratively) *things*, especially regarding beings organized for war (*an army*). The English word translated as *host* in the New Testament is the Greek word *stratia*, which is a derivative of *stratos* (*an army: as encamped; camp-like*, i.e., *an army*; or (figuratively) *the angels*, or the celestial luminaries).

There are over 280 references in the Bible to the hundreds of millions (perhaps billions) of spirit-beings who serve God and comprise the host of the heavenly realm. These spirit-beings serve in many individual and collective functions and sometimes serve as individual warriors or as a vast army of spirit-beings sent to do battle in either the physical or the heavenly realm. This chapter contains a few of the many accounts in the biblical record of God's spirit-warriors interacting with people and other spirit-beings.

**Esau Meets an Army of Angels**

After twenty years of separation, Jacob's brother Esau was still extremely angry with him for taking his birthright from him. Esau was so angry with Jacob and had such hatred for him that he probably would have killed him as he was returning to see his father Isaac if God had not intervened on Jacob's behalf.

The biblical record does not tell us why Esau's anger was tempered toward his brother Jacob; however, the Book of Jasher, which is referred to in Joshua 10:13 and 2 Samuel 1:18 contains an explanation. Chapter 32 of the Book of Jasher records the reason Esau was willing to temper his anger toward his brother, and chapter 33 fills in many details of the meeting between Esau and his brother:

"And the Lord heard the prayer of Jacob on that day, and the Lord then delivered Jacob from the hands of his brother Esau. And the Lord sent three angels of the angels of heaven, and they went before Esau and came to him. And these angels appeared to Esau and his people as two thousand men, riding upon horses furnished with all sorts of war instruments, and they appeared in the sight of Esau and all his men to be divided into four camps, with four chiefs to them" (Jasher 32:27-29).
According to the Book of Jasher, these four divisions of angelic warriors were sent one at a time to confront Esau and the four hundred men that were with him.

"And one camp went on and they found Esau coming with four hundred men toward his brother Jacob, and this camp ran toward Esau and his people and terrified them, and Esau fell off the horse in alarm, and all his men separated from him in that place, for they were greatly afraid. And the whole of the camp shouted after them when they fled from Esau, and all the warlike men said, Surely we are the servants of Jacob, who is the servant of God, and who then can stand against us? . . ." (Jasher 32:30-32).

The Book of Jasher says that, as Esau stands before these angelic warriors, there is the following exchange between Esau and the angels:

"And Esau said to them, O then, my lord and brother Jacob is your lord, whom I have not seen for these twenty years, and now that I have this day come to see him, do you treat me in this manner? And the angels answered him saying, As the Lord lives, were not Jacob of whom you speak your brother, we had not let one remaining from you and your people, but only on account of Jacob we will do nothing to them" (Jasher 32:32-33).

The Book of Jasher shows that after the first two thousand angelic warriors allowed Esau to pass on his way to meet Jacob, three subsequent groups of two thousand warriors met him in the same manner. After his encounter with these warriors, it seems that Esau was convinced he should not attempt to harm Jacob:

"And when Esau beheld the evil which the four angels had done to him and to his men, he became greatly afraid of his brother Jacob, and he went to meet him in peace. And Esau concealed his hatred against Jacob, because he was afraid for his life on account of his brother Jacob, and because he imagined that the four camps that he had come upon were Jacob's servants" (Jasher 32:39-40).

This account in the Book of Jasher not only tells us that God hears the prayers of those who respect him and truly worship and serve him but also that he will intervene with the necessary force in order to help an individual carry out his instructions to fulfill a promise he has made to an individual. Moreover, this account shows that God's army of spirit-beings is highly organized and has a command structure.

The Captain of the God's Host

As the Israelites were close to the city of Jericho and preparing to wage war against it, Joshua sees a warrior standing near him with his sword drawn:
"And it came to pass, when Joshua was close to Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, behold, a man stood in front of him with his sword drawn in his hand: and Joshua went to him, and said to him, Are you for us, or for our adversaries?" (Josh.5:13 KJV Para.).

Recognizing that the man before him was a powerful warrior, Joshua wanted to know if he had a friend or foe before him.

"And he said, No; but as captain of the host of the Lord I am come. And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and worshiped, and asked him, What does my Lord have to say to his servant? And the captain of the Lord's host said to Joshua, take your shoes off your feet; for the place where you stand is holy. And Joshua did so" (Josh.5:14-15 KJV Para.).

In verse 14, the warrior identifies himself as the Captain of the host of the Lord. The English words captain, host, and Lord are important to the identity of this spirit-being, because these words are translated from the Hebrew words šār, tsāḇā, and Yehovah, which respectively mean, a head person (of any rank or class), a mass of persons (or figuratively, things), especially organized for war (an army), and the Self-Existent or Eternal.

As soon as this warrior identified himself to Joshua, he fell to the ground in a worshipful manner. From this position of respect, Joshua asks, "What does my Lord have to say to his servant?" Here, the English word Lord is translated from the Hebrew word Adonay, which is only used as the name of God. This tells us that the spirit-being to whom Joshua is speaking is a God. Moreover, in verse 15, this warrior tells Joshua to take his shoes off because he is standing on holy ground. The ground is holy, because of the presence of this spirit-being, which is further proof that this spirit-being is the Creator God.

In chapter 6, the Captain of the Lord's hosts gives Joshua the following information about the destruction of Jericho:

"And the Lord said to Joshua, See, I have given into your hand Jericho, and the king thereof, and the mighty men of valor" (Josh. 6:2 KJV Para.).

The word Lord in verse 2 is translated from the Hebrew word Yehovah, which means the Self-Existent or Eternal. The evidence shows that the spirit-being who identified himself to Joshua as the Captain of the Lord's hosts was the Creator God manifesting himself as a man dressed as a warrior. See chapter 4, The Angel of The Lord for a detailed explanation of Joshua's encounter with the Creator God at Jericho.
Elisha's Protection

During one of the conflicts between Israel and the Syrians, the prophet Elisha twice warned the king of Israel to avoid a place where the Syrians were preparing an ambush. When the Syrian king found out that it was Elisha who had been warning the Israelites, he sent a large group of soldiers to capture him:

"When the servant of the man of God got up and went out early the next morning, an army with horses and chariots had surrounded the city. "Oh, my lord, what shall we do?" the servant asked. "Don't be afraid," the prophet answered. "Those who are with us are more than those who are with them."And Elisha prayed, "O Lord, open his eyes so he may see."Then the Lord opened the servant's eyes, and he looked and saw the hills full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha" (2.Kgs.6:15-17 NIV).

Elisha was not afraid of the Syrian army or anyone else who would attempt to harm him, because he knew that he was being protected by righteous spirit-beings who were more powerful than any physical army of men. See also Matt.26:52-54.

Sennacherib's Army Destroyed

The killing of all the officers in Sennacherib's Assyrian army, plus the killing of 185,000 of his soldiers by one angelic warrior shows the tremendous power of these spirit-beings:

"And it came to pass that night, that the angel of the Lord went out, and slaughtered one hundred and eighty-five thousand Assyrians in the camp: and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses. So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed for his own country, and dwelled in Nineveh" (2.Kgs.19:35-36 KJV Para.). See also 2.Chron.32:1-22; Isa.37:1-38.

There are some powerful lessons in all three of the accounts about Sennacherib's invasion of Judea: 1) Do not show disrespect for the true God; 2) The true God is all powerful; and 3) Just one of God's spirit-warriors is capable of quickly destroying an entire army.

The Temple; 66 A.D.

The Jewish historian Josephus recorded several dramatic witnesses and events that foretold the end of the temple worship system at Jerusalem. On the twenty first of Jyar, in 66 A.D. just before sunset, chariots and soldiers in armor were seen running about in the clouds around the city (War, Book 6. ch.5).

The display of an angelic army above Jerusalem was a clear warning of the impending destruction of Jerusalem and the temple worship system. The Jews did not heed this and the many other warnings given to them, so in 70 A.D., the Romans invaded Jerusalem and destroyed the temple, which ended the sacrificial worship system in Jerusalem.
War in Heaven

At some point in the future just prior to the return of Christ, there will be a great battle in the heavenly realm between righteous and unrighteous spirit-beings:

"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 deceives the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him" (Rev.12:7-9 KJV).

The archangel Michael seems to be the highest ranking commander of the Sovereign God's army under Christ (Rev.19:11-16). Verses 7-9 also tell us that Satan and the hundreds of millions (perhaps billions) of spirit-beings who followed him in his first attempt to dethrone the Sovereign God will again attempt to exert their influence over the Sovereign God. However, this time they will be entirely expelled from the heavenly realm and forced to retreat to earth:

"Therefore rejoice, you heavens, and you that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabiters of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down to you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has but a short time" (Rev.12:12 KJV).

Defeated in his attempts to dethrone the Sovereign God and cast out of the heavenly realm, Satan will be extremely angry because he will no longer have access to the heavenly realm of existence. This also means that he will have only a short time before he will be punished for his rebellion. When Satan is denied what he wants and is about to be punished for his disobedience, in a rage, he will come to earth to take out his anger on the physical creation and mankind.

Christ Returns to Earth

Christ is the supreme commander of his Father's army of spirit-warriors and when Christ returns to establish his heavenly Father's government over the earth, he will return with an army of spirit-warriors armed with weapons of destruction far beyond anything mankind can begin to imagine:

"And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he does judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of his mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treads the winepress of the
fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And he has on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, King of Kings, and Lord of Lords" (Rev.19:11-16 KJV). See also 1.Tim.6:14-15; Rev.17:12-14.

The apostles Paul and Jude wrote the following about Christ's return in order to comfort and encourage the elect:

"And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day" (2.Thess.1:7-10 KJV).

"And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him" (Jude 14-15 KJV). See Matt.25:31-34; Rev.19:10-16.

**Soldiers Melt Away**

Another example of God’s power is shown in a prophecy recorded by the prophet Zechariah concerning the armies which come against Jerusalem during the end of the age events:

"And this shall be the plague wherewith the Lord will smite all the people that have fought against Jerusalem: Their flesh shall consume away while they stand upon their feet, and their eyes shall consume away in their holes, and their tongue shall consume away in their mouth" (Zech.14:12 KJV).

The English words *consume away* are translated from the Hebrew word *maqaq*, which means *to melt*; figuratively, *to flow, dwindle, vanish.* As these soldiers stand, their flesh melts off their bones. This is just a small example of the awesome power that God has at his disposal.

We humans are clueless as to how spirit-beings wage war in the spirit realm; however, the biblical record shows that the earth's surface was destroyed in a war between God and Satan and the spirit-beings who followed him in rebellion. The many biblical accounts of Gods spirit-warriors destroying people clearly show that their weapons are much more powerful and selective than anything known to mankind.
Unimaginable Destruction

The prophet Isaiah recorded the following prophecy about the end of human rule on earth and the unimaginable destruction, anguish, and terror that will follow the arrival of Christ as he leads his heavenly Father's army of spirit-beings into battle:

"The burden of Babylon, which Isaiah the son of Amoz did see. Lift you up a banner upon the high mountain, exalt the voice to them, shake the hand, that they may go into the gates of the nobles. I have commanded my sanctified ones, I have also called my mighty ones for my anger, even them that rejoice in my highness" (Isa.13:1-3 KJV).

Babylon is symbolic of this world's governmental and religious systems that will exist in opposition to the Sovereign God and Christ just before Christ returns. It is against these systems that the Sovereign God's army composed of his newly created immortal children and the heavenly host prepare to wage war:

"The noise of a multitude in the mountains, like as of a great people; a tumultuous noise of the kingdoms of nations gathered together: the Lord of hosts musters the host of the battle. They come from a far country, from the end of heaven, even the Lord, and the weapons of his indignation, to destroy the whole land. Howl you; for the day of the Lord is at hand; it shall come as a destruction from the Almighty" (Isa.13:4-6 KJV).

Christ not only sends angels to pour out devastating plagues on the earth in order reduce its population in preparation for his invasion but also sends his army of spirit-warriors to destroy the last remnants of military resistance to his millennial rule.

"Therefore shall all hands be faint, and every man's heart shall melt: And they shall be afraid: pangs and sorrows shall take hold of them; they shall be in pain as a woman that travaileth: they shall be amazed one at another; their faces shall be as flames" (Isa.13:7-8 KJV).

Although there have been horrific wars waged on earth among humans with all types of horrible atrocities perpetrated against people, never in human history has there been a war that has unleashed such anguish and terror as the one that will come with the invasion of earth by Christ and his army of spirit-beings.

"Behold, the day of the Lord comes, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate: and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it. For the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light: the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine" (Isa.13:9-10 KJV).
All who survive the many plagues that will be poured out on earth in an effort to persuade mankind to repent of their evil ways and obey and worship the true God will witness the coming of Christ and his vast army as they unleash their awesome weapons of destruction on the earth and kill most of what is left of mankind.

"And I will punish the world for their evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; and I will cause the arrogance of the proud to cease, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible. I will make a man more precious than fine gold; even a man than the golden wedge of Ophir. Therefore I will shake the heavens, and the earth shall remove out of her place, in the wrath of the Lord of hosts, and in the day of his fierce anger" (Isa.13:11-13 KJV).

Only a small remnant of mankind will be left alive after Christ and his army of spirit-beings invade the earth and conquer all military resistance. Many biblical prophecies show that, after order is established, this small remnant will begin rebuilding the earth under the guidance of the Sovereign Father's family of immortals from Jerusalem.

SUMMARY
The Sovereign God is all powerful and with just a thought he can bring something into existence, as noted in the Book of Genesis. Therefore, it is logical to assume that he has no need for an army of spirit-beings to destroy that which is evil from the earth. So, why does God need angelic warriors and an army of spirit-beings?

One reason for angelic warriors interacting with mankind concerns relating to humans and teaching lessons to us in a way that we can understand in our present existence. Another seems to be that this is how the Sovereign God has determined to deal with insurrections and maintain order throughout his vast and ever expanding kingdom.

By B.L. Cocherell
CHAPTER NINE

FORM AND APPEARANCE OF GOD’S SPIRIT MESSENGERS

Historical and biblical records clearly show that many people believe they have encountered messengers from God in one form or another, and many people today believe angelic beings have appeared to them and interacted with them in one way or another.

Interactions with both righteous and unrighteous spirit-beings is historical and biblical fact and these interactions continue to this day. In order not to be deceived by an evil spirit masquerading as a messenger from God, it is extremely important for people who are serious about their salvation to clearly understand how angelic messengers sent from God appear in a physical form and how they interact with people.

This chapter discusses what the biblical record shows concerning the physical appearance of both righteous and unrighteous spirit-beings and how angelic messengers from God conduct themselves.

It is important to understand that information or instructions conveyed through a messenger sent from God will never contradict the biblical record and will always be consistent with this record and the Sovereign God’s plan for mankind. However, this cannot be said for information or instructions conveyed by evil spirits to people. Therefore, it is vital for people who believe the Bible is God’s word to test what a spirit tells or shows them against the foundational aspects of the Sovereign God’s truth, his way of truth, his plan for mankind, and how angelic messengers from God manifest and conduct themselves when interacting with people.

In order to determine how messengers from God manifest themselves, we must use only the biblical accounts as our guide, because all other accounts are suspect.

The biblical record shows that when righteous angelic messengers from God appear to interact with a person, these messengers always manifest themselves in the form of a male human, but never as a woman, an animal, a bird, a ball of light, a shadowy/hazy figure, or in some other mysterious way.

Sometimes an angelic messenger's physical form and appearances is indistinguishable from that of a normal man, but sometimes their physical form and appearance is that of a man with various visible enhancements, such as skin coloration, brightness, and clothing unlike that of a normal man. See Heb.13:1-2; Dan.10:4-6; Lk.24:4.
Hospitality to Strangers and Angels

The writer to the Hebrews gives the following instruction and cautionary reminder to the members of the Sovereign Father's earthly family of king-priests about attitude and behavior toward people:

"Let brotherly love continue. Do not forget to be hospitable: for some have unwittingly entertained angels" (Heb.13:1-2 Para.).

This tells us that, when necessary, angelic messengers sent from God can and do appear as ordinary looking men in physical appearance and dress.

APPEARANCES BEFORE THE ADVENT OF CHRIST

There are many biblical accounts that deal with appearances of God's messengers who were sent to people before the advent of Christ to perform extremely important tasks, give important messages, guide God's plan for mankind, and keep prophecy on schedule.

God, Angels, Abraham, and Lot

In the book of Genesis, there are two interesting accounts of the Creator God and angels interacting with people. The first account shows the Creator God and two angels visiting with Abraham, and the second account is of the two angels who go to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah visiting with Abraham's nephew Lot. In these accounts, we see the Creator God and the two angels appearing as ordinary, physical men:

"And the Lord appeared to him [Abraham] in the plains of Mamre: as he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day; And he looked up, and saw three men standing by each other: and when he saw them, he ran to meet them, and he bowed himself toward the ground, And said, My Lord, if now I have found favor in your sight, please do not pass by your servant" (Gen.18:1-3 KJV Para.).

The English word Lord in the first verse of this account is translated from the Hebrew word Yehovah, which means the self-Existent or Eternal. This tells us that one of these three whom Abraham saw was the Creator God in the form of a man.

The English word men in the second verse of this account is translated from the Hebrew word iysh, which means a man as an individual or a male person. This tells us that the Creator God and the two spirit-beings with him appeared to Abraham as ordinary men.

In verse three, when Abraham addressed one of the men as, "my Lord", the English word translated as Lord is the Hebrew word adown, which is from an unused root (meaning to rule); sovereign, i.e., controller (human or divine). This tells us that Abraham is addressing one of these individuals using a highly respectful greeting. At this point in the narrative, there is no indication that Abraham knows it is the Creator God and two angels with whom he is he speaking.
"Please, let a little water be fetched, to wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree: And I will fetch a morsel of bread, and comfort your hearts; after that go on your way: now that you are with your servant. And they said, do, as you have said. And Abraham hurried into Sarah’s tent, and said to her, Quickly prepare three measures of fine meal, knead it, and make cakes on the hearth. And Abraham ran to the herd, and fetched a young calf, gave it to a young man who quickly dressed it. And he took butter and milk and the calf which he had dressed, and set it before them; and stood by them under the tree, while they ate" (Gen.18:4-8 KJV Para.).

Because this type of food preparation takes a considerable amount of time, there would have been ample time for conversation while waiting for the food to be cooked and served.

"And they [the Creator God and the angels] said to him [Abraham], Where is your wife Sarah? And he said, There in the tent. And he [the Creator God] said, I will certainly return to you according to the time of life; and, lo, your wife Sarah shall have a son. And Sarah heard it in the tent door, which was behind him. Now Abraham and Sarah were very old; and Sarah was past the child bearing age. Therefore, Sarah laughed to herself, saying, After I am old shall I have pleasure, my lord being this old also?" (Gen.18:9-12 KJV Para.).

If Abraham did not know that he was entertaining the Creator God and two angels before the Creator promised to return his and Sarah’s ability to have a child, he certainly would have surmised as much as the conversation continued:

"And the Lord [Yehovah] said to Abraham, Why did Sarah laugh, saying, As old as I am, can I bear a child? Is anything too hard for the Lord? When it is time I will return your youthful life force, and Sarah shall have a son. Because she was afraid, Sarah said, I did not laugh, And he [the Creator] said, No, you did laugh" (Gen.18: 13-15 KJV Para.).

The English word Lord in verses 13 to 15 of this account is translated from the Hebrew word Yehovah, which means the self-Existent or Eternal. This shows that it is the Creator God speaking to Abraham and his wife.

When the Creator and the two angels were finished eating, they got up and began to go toward Sodom, and Abraham walked along with them. As they were walking toward Sodom, the Creator God said the following to the two angels with him:
"Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do; Seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? Because I know him, I know that he will instruct his children and his descendants, and they shall keep the way of the Lord to do justice and judgment; that the Lord may bring on Abraham that which he has promised to him" (Gen.18:17-19 KJV Para.).

At this point, the Creator spoke to Abraham and said:

"Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous; I will go down now, and see whether they have done everything that has been reported to me; and if not, I will know. And the men turned, and went toward Sodom: but Abraham still stood before the Lord" (Gen.18:20-22 KJV Para.).

The English word men in verse 22 is translated from the Hebrew word iysh, which means a man as an individual or a male person. This reinforces the fact that the two angels who were with the Creator God appeared outwardly as men.

The Creator God tells Abraham that he was on his way to see if things were as bad in Sodom and Gomorrah as had been reported to him. There was probably more to the explanation that God gave to Abraham about why he was going to investigate the behavior of the people of Sodom and Gomorrah, because as soon as the two angels left for Sodom, Abraham begins to question him about its destruction. He questions the Creator about how many righteous people found in Sodom and Gomorrah it would take for him to change his mind about destroying these cities.

After God told Abraham that he would not destroy the cities if he could find ten righteous people in them, the Creator went on his way and Abraham returned to his lodging.

In this account, we not only see the Creator God and two angels appearing in the form of men but also see them eating and enjoying a meal in the company of humans.

**Two Angels and Lot**

"And the two angels came to Sodom in the evening; and Lot sat at the entrance gate of Sodom: and Lot seeing them rose up to meet them; and bowed himself with his face toward the ground; And said, I ask you, my lords, please come to your servant's house, and stay the night, and wash your feet, and you can rise early, and go on your way. And they said, No; We will stay in the street all night" (Gen.19:1-2 KJV Para.).

The English word angels in verse one of this account is translated from the Hebrew word mal'ak, which is from an unused root meaning to dispatch as a deputy; a messenger; specifically, of God.
In verse two, when Lot addresses the men as "my lords," the English word translated as Lords is the Hebrew word adown, which is from an unused root (meaning to rule); sovereign, i.e., controller (human or divine). This tells us that Lot is addressing these individuals using the same highly respectful greeting that Abraham used when he greeted the Creator God and these same two angels in human form.

At this point in the narrative there is no indication that Lot knew these two individuals were angels sent from God to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah and its inhabitants if they were found to be as sinful as had been reported.

"And Lot persisted in asking them to stay in his home, and they went with him and entered into his house; and he made them a feast, and baked unleavened bread, and they ate" (Gen.19:3 KJV Para.).

It is obvious that Lot did not recognize that these two individuals he met at the city gate were spirit-beings sent from the Creator God, because these angels only told him of their mission well after they had eaten a meal with him and his family:

"But before they retired for the night, the men of the city Sodom surrounded Lot's home, both old and young, all the people from every quarter: And they called to Lot, and said to him, Where are the men which came in to you this night? bring them out to us, that we may know them. And Lot went out, and shut the door after him, And said, I beg you, brethren, do not so wickedly' (Gen.19:4-7 KJV Para.).

"Listen, I have two daughters which have not known a man; Please let me bring them out to you, and you do to them as is good in your eyes: but do nothing to these men; for they are under my roof. And they said, Stand back. And they said again, This fellow came in to sojourn among us and now he thinks he can pass judgment on us: now we will deal worse with you, than with them. And they pressed hard against Lot and almost broke the door' (Gen.19:8-9 KJV Para.).

"But the men grabbed Lot and pulled him into the house with them and shut the door. Then they struck all the men who were at the door with blindness, so that they could not find the door" (Gen.19:10-11 KJV Para.).

There is little doubt that Lot and his family now knew that these two men who were guests in their home were not just ordinary men. In verses 12 and 13 the angels tell lot and his family why they had come to Sodom:

"And the men said to Lot, Have you any here besides these? son in law, sons, or daughters, whoever you have in the city, bring them out of this place. Because we will destroy this place, because its cry is loud before the face of the Lord [Yehovah]: and the Lord has sent us to destroy it" (Gen.19:12-13 KJV Para.).
The rest of the account shows that because of their hesitancy to leave Sodom, the angels had to grab the hands of Lot, his wife, and daughters and pull them out of the city in order to prevent them from being killed with the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah.

In this account, we see that the two angels who went to Sodom were not recognized as spirit-beings by Lot or anyone else in the city. Moreover, it was only after they revealed themselves through using their supernatural power and telling Lot and his family why they were sent to Sodom that they were recognized as spirit-beings in human form. Again, we see that spirit-beings who manifest themselves in the form of men can walk, talk, and eat food just like humans.

**Balaam and the Angel of the Lord**

The Book of Numbers, chapter 22, contains the account of the Moabite king Balak sending messengers to persuade the Mesopotamian prophet Balaam to use his power to curse the Israelites in order to remove them from the land. The Creator God tells Balaam to neither go with the messengers nor curse the Israelites because they are a blessed people (Num.22:12). After Balaam refuses Balak's initial offer, Balak offered him a larger bribe. This time the Creator tells him that, if the king's messengers come a third time, he must go with them, but follow the Creator's instructions (verses 20-21).

The narrative does not tell us what specific instructions God gave Balaam. But, from what follows and Balaam's confession that he had sinned (verse 34), we can assume that Balaam did not intend to follow the Creator's instructions, or that something he said or did caused God to become extremely angry with him and send an angel to prevent him from continuing his journey.

As Balaam rides alone with the princes of Moab, God's angelic messenger arrives and blocks his path. The account tells us that the ass sees the angel who is invisible to Balaam standing with his sword drawn. Verses 23 through 30 records the animals attempt to save Balaam's life and the conversation between Balaam and the ass. In verse 31, the angel makes himself visible to Balaam and explains why he has come:

"Then the Lord opened Balaam's eyes, and he saw the angel of the Lord standing in the way, with his sword in his hand: and he bowed his head, and fell flat on his face. And the angel of the Lord said to him, Why have you stricken your ass these three times? Behold, I oppose you, because your way is perverse before me: And the ass saw me, and turned from me three times: unless she had turned from me, I would surely have killed you, and saved her alive. And Balaam said to the angel of the Lord, I have sinned; for I did not know that you stood in the way against me: now therefore, if it displeases you, I will turn and go back" (Num.22:33-34 KJV Para.). See also 2 Pet.2:9-22.
The English word *perverse* in this text is translated from the Hebrew word *yarat*. The exact meaning of this word is lost to us today, but some scholars think that it could mean *hurl*, *rush*, *obnoxious* or *to be rash*. Whatever the exact meaning of this word, it is clear that God was extremely displeased with Balaam's attitude and behavior, and the spirit-messenger would have killed Balaam if he had not changed his attitude.

In this account we learn the following:

- A spirit-being is sent to stop a person from doing something that God has forbidden.
- A spirit-being can make themselves invisible to a human, but visible to an animal.
- Righteous spirit-beings have the ability to enter and exit this physical dimension of existence as they deem necessary.
- A spirit-being can give an animal the ability to speak in a human voice.
- A spirit-being can kill a person without showing himself.
- Some spirit-beings carry weapons in the form of a sword.
- Spirit-beings sent from God have the authority to speak for him in order to give instructions to people.

**Samson's Mother and Father**

Before his conception, Samson's future mother and father encountered a messenger sent from God to inform them of Samson's birth and his mission in life. This encounter is especially interesting, because it tells us not only that angelic messengers sometimes return to confirm and stress the importance of a message from God but also that angels are not to be worshiped:

"And the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the Lord; and the Lord delivered them into the hand of the Philistines forty years. And there was a certain man of Zorah, of the family of the Danites, whose name was Manoah; and his wife was barren, and did not bear. And the angel of the Lord appeared to the woman, and said to her, Behold now, you are barren, and do not bear: but you shall conceive, and bear a son' (Judg.13:1-3 KJV Para.).

"Now therefore beware, I beseech you, and drink no wine nor strong drink, and do not eat any unclean thing: For, lo, you shall conceive, and bear a son; and no razor shall come on his head: for the child shall be a Nazarite to God from the womb: and he shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines' (Judg.13: 4-5 KJV Para.).

"Then the woman came and told her husband, saying, A man of God came to me, and his appearance was like the appearance of an angel of God, and very frightening: but I did not ask him from where he came, neither did he tell me his name" (Judg.13:6 KJV Para.).
The English words man and angel in verse six are translated respectively from the Hebrew words iysh (i.e., an individual or a male person, a man) and mal'ak (i.e., to despatch as a deputy; a messenger; specifically, of God).

The English word God in verse six is translated from the Hebrew word Elohiym, which is the plural of god, but specifically used to denote the supreme God. Occasionally it is applied by way of deference to magistrates, and sometimes as a superlative.

The use of the two Hebrew words iysh and mal'ak reinforces the fact that angels appear as men, but sometimes with an appearance that is extraordinary and frightening. Moreover, because Manoah's wife recognized the man as an angel of God, it seems to indicate that appearances of messengers sent from God was a common occurrence at that time in history.

This messenger sent from God appeared in the form of a man, but with a major difference in his appearance, which made it apparent that he was not an ordinary human.

"But he said to me, Behold, you shall conceive, and bear a son; and do not drink wine nor strong drink, neither eat any unclean thing: for the child shall be a Nazarite to God from the womb to the day of his death" (Judg.13:7 KJV Para.).

"Then Manoah entreated the Lord [Yehovah], and said, O my Lord [Adonay], let the man [iysh] of God [Elohiym] which you sent come again to us, and teach us what we shall do to the child that shall be born. And God listened to the voice of Manoah; and the angel of God came again to the woman as she sat in the field: but Manoah her husband was not with her" (Judg.13:8-9 KJV Para.).

At the request of Manoah, God's messenger returned.

"And the woman hurried, and ran, and told her husband, and said to him, Behold, the man has appeared to me, that came to me the other day. And Manoah got up, and went with his wife, and came to the man, and said to him, Are you the man who spoke to the woman? And he said, I am. And Manoah said, Now let your words come to pass. How shall we order the child, and how shall we care for him?" (Judg.13:10-12 KJV Para.).

Manoah asked God's messenger to perform what he had promised and provide guidance concerning the child's treatment.

"And the angel of the Lord said to Manoah, All that I said to the woman let her observe. She may not eat anything that comes of the vine, neither let her drink wine or strong drink, nor eat any unclean thing: all that I commanded her let her observe" (Judg.13:13-14 KJV Para.).
The English phrase *let her observe* is translated from the Hebrew word *shamar*, which means *guard* (generally, to protect, attend to). The angel cautioned Manoah to carefully follow the instruction given to his wife about what she must not eat or drink while pregnant.

"And Manoah said to the angel of the Lord, let us detain you, until we have made a doe goat ready for you. And the angel of the Lord said to Manoah, Though you detain me, I will not eat of your bread: and if you will offer a burnt offering, you must offer it to the Lord. For Manoah did not know that he was an angel of the Lord" (Judg. 13:15-16 KJV Para.).

There a number of important things to note in verses 15 and 16:

- The angel was capable of eating, but would not for a reason known only to him.
- The angel would not allow himself to be worshiped, because God is the only one who may be worshiped.
- Manoah thought he was speaking to a god-being.

"And Manoah said to the angel of the Lord, What is your name, that when your sayings come to pass we may honor you? And the angel of the Lord said to him, Why do you ask my name, seeing it is secret?" (Judg.13:17-18 KJV Para.).

The English word *name* in verses 17 and 18 is translated from the Hebrew word *shem*, which conveys the idea of definite and conspicuous position; an appellation, as a mark or memorial of individuality; by implication honor, authority, character. The English word *secret* is translated from the Hebrew word *pil'iy*, which means remarkable.

Manoah wanted to know who had given them this promise of a son; so that, he and his wife could give him the credit and show their gratitude. Very few of God's angelic messengers are named in the biblical text and none of these are shown to accept personal credit for what they do or for the promises or messages they bring. This is why God's messenger responded to Manoah in the way he did.

"So Manoah took a young female goat for a meat offering, and offered it upon a rock to the Lord: and the angel did wondrously; and Manoah and his wife saw it. For it came to pass, when the flame went up toward heaven from off the altar, that the angel of the Lord ascended in the flame of the altar. And Manoah and his wife saw it, and fell on their faces to the ground" (Judg.13:19-20 KJV Para.).

The angel ascended up in the flame that was consuming the offering. This was probably done to give more credibility to the message that the angel had delivered and to make a lasting impression on Manoah and his wife.

"The angel of the Lord did not appear again to Manoah and his wife. Then Manoah knew that he was an angel of the Lord" (Judg. 13:21 KJV Para.).
Verse 21 tells us that, after Manoah saw the angel ascend in the flame, he was convinced that the man he saw and spoke with was a messenger from God (Yehovah). But, in the next verse, Manoah says he is afraid that he and his wife will die because they have seen God:

"And Manoah said to his wife, We shall surely die, because we have seen God. But his wife said to him, If the Lord were pleased to kill us, he would not have received a burnt offering and a meat offering at our hands, neither would he have showed us all these things, nor would he at this time have told us things, such as these" (Judg.13:22-23 KJV Para.).

It is possible that, although Manoah was convinced that the spirit-being he and his wife saw and spoke with was a messenger from Yehovah, he must have also thought this messenger was a god-being (i.e., elohiyim; plural of god). Moreover, Manoah may have thought that, because he and his wife had seen his face, they would die. The reason Manoah might have thought this is that, when Moses asked to see the Creator God's glory, God said to him, "You can not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live" (Ex.33:20). However, God was speaking of a human seeing him in his glorified form and not in his physical form as a man. See Gen.32:29-30.

**Daniel's Encounters with God's Messengers**

The prophet Daniel was a man to whom God revealed many mysteries and prophecies: some dealt with people and events of his day and others were to come to pass far in the future.

In Daniel's accounts of encounters with angelic messengers sent from the Creator God, these messengers are always in the form of a man when they appear to him either physically or in a vision.

**The Writing on the Wall**

The Book of Daniel contains the account of Belshazzar showing his disrespect for the Creator God by bringing the sacred vessels which his father Nebuchadnezzar had taken from the temple of God at Jerusalem to a banquet he was hosting.

At this banquet, Belshazzar, his family, and guests profaned these sacred vessels by drinking from them while praising their gods. As Belshazzar and his guests were drinking and praising their gods, the fingers of a man's hand appear and write a cryptic note on the wall of the king's palace:

"In the same hour came forth fingers of a man's hand, and wrote over against the candle-stick upon the plaster of the wall of the king's palace: and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote" (Dan.5:5 KJV).

The English word man's in verse five is translated from the Aramaic word enash, which means a man.
The usage of the word enash clearly describes a feature that is distinctive to a man, not a woman, an animal, or some other creature. This is important because it is a part of a pattern in which the male form is used exclusively when angelic messengers from God manifest themselves to people in a physical form.

Verses 6 through 16 of this account tell us that the king called for the astrologers and others skilled in the mystical arts to decipher what had been written on the wall. When these individuals could not decipher the writing, the king sent for Daniel. Daniel tells the king that he should have known from what the God of the Israelites had done to his father Nebuchadnezzar not to show disrespect for this God:

"And you his son, O Belshazzar, have not humbled your heart, though you knew all this; But have lifted yourself up against the Lord of heaven; and they have brought the vessels of his house before you, and you, and your lords, your wives, and your concubines, have drunk wine in them; and you have praised the gods of silver, and gold, of brass, iron, wood, and stone, which do not see, or hear, or know: and the God in whose hand are your breath and all your ways, you have not glorified: Therefore, a part of a hand was sent from him; and this writing was written" (Dan.5: 22-24 KJV Para.).

The point of this example is that God chose to use the form of a man's finger to write the cryptic prophetic message on the wall that would be interpreted by Daniel.

"And this is the writing that was written, MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN. This is the interpretation of the thing: MENE: God has numbered your kingdom, and finished it. TEKEL: You are weighed in the balances, and are found wanting. PERES: Your kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians" (Dan.5:25-28 KJV Para.).

Although delivered as a cryptic message by a supernatural method, the message was revealed in a clear and concise manner to Belshazzar through Daniel.

It is important to note that, when God sends a message to a specific person or a group of people, he will give them an understanding of the message. See Dan.12:9-13; Matt.13:10-17.

**Gabriel**

In the third year of the reign of king Belshazzar, Daniel sees a vision similar to one he had seen before. In the following account, the angelic messenger Gabriel is sent to explain the vision to Daniel:
"And it came to pass, when I, even I Daniel, had seen the vision, and sought for the meaning, then, behold, there stood before me as the appearance of a man. And I heard a man's voice between the banks of Ulai, which called, and said, Gabriel, make this man to understand the vision. So he came near where I stood: and when he came, I was afraid, and fell upon my face: but he said to me, Understand, O son of man: for at the time of the end shall be the vision" (Dan.8:15-17 KJV). See also Dan.9:21–23.

In the English phrase the appearance of a man, the word man is translated from the Hebrew word geber, which can mean a valiant man or a warrior; generally, a person.

Daniel also hears a man's voice speaking to Gabriel. This is more evidence that God's messengers to mankind are always manifested in the male gender when interacting with other spirit-beings and when in the presence of humans.

In the Book of Daniel, chapter nine, the angelic messenger Gabriel is told to give Daniel an understanding of the things he is being shown, and in the tenth chapter, Daniel is given a vision in which he sees a spirit-being in the form of a man with unique features:

"And in the four and twentieth day of the first month, as I was by the side of the great river, which is Hiddekel; Then I lifted up my eyes, and looked, and behold a certain man clothed in linen, whose loins were girded with fine gold of Uphaz: His body also was like the beryl, and his face as the appearance of lightning, and his eyes as lamps of fire, and his arms and his feet like in color to polished brass, and the voice of his words like the voice of a multitude" (Dan.10:4-6 KJV). See also Ezk.40:1-4.

The English word man in verse five is translated from the Hebrew word iysh, which means a man as an individual or a male person. The English words a certain man in verse five are translated from the Hebrew words iysh echadin iysh, which mean man one man. The Hebrew words iysh echadin iysh clearly document the messenger sent from God appeared as a man.

"And I Daniel alone saw the vision: for the men that were with me saw not the vision; but a great quaking fell upon them, so that they fled to hide themselves" (Dan.10:7 KJV).

Clearly, this is no physical man that Daniel sees. This is a spirit-being manifesting himself in the form of a man, but with unique features, such as skin coloration, a bright radiance to his face, bright flaming eyes, and a unique voice. None of these traits are characteristic of a normal physical man.
Daniel was given many visions of prophetic events to record about the end of the age and he was eager to know exactly what these mysterious things he saw meant and when they would come to pass. However, he did not need to understand the details surrounding these events or the exact time of their fulfillment, because these events would not affect him or the people of his day, all that he needed to know was that he was to record these events and that they were for the future:

"And he [the angelic messenger] said, Go your way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end. Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried; but the wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand. And from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that makes desolate set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days. Blessed is he that waits, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days. But go you your way till the end be: for you shall rest, and stand in your lot at the end of the days" (Dan.12:9-13 KJV).

It is important to again note that, when God sends a message meant for a specific person or a group of people, those for whom the message is meant will be given an understanding of this message. The message Daniel recorded was not meant for him, but for specific individuals who would live during a specific time in history and they will be given an understanding of this message. See Dan.12:9-13; Matt.13:10-17.

**What about Prophecy?**

The Bible records many coded and cryptic prophetic messages delivered by angelic messengers sent from the Creator God, but not understood by the person who received them.

The Sovereign God claims that what is recorded in the Bible by his prophets and servants are his words. Within this book, God claims sovereignty over all things that exist and over all humans and their eternal destiny.

The Bible is the only book on earth which can clearly demonstrate that its inspiration is supernatural in origin and that it is from a supreme being who exists outside this physical realm. One way it does this is by predicting personal and world events before they happen with incredible accuracy and then bringing these events to pass in every detail within a specified time-frame. The fulfillment of prophecy is a major proof of God's existence and that he has sovereign authority and power over his creation. Some of these prophecies were personally given by the Creator God and some were given to individuals by angelic messengers sent from the Creator.

The Bible and the historical record both document the fact that many people have been led astray, disappointed, and suffered hardships because of their belief in a false prophet's predictions or belief in a prophetic event which did not happen when they thought it should.
Prophecy must always be kept in perspective or you can be easily led astray by false prophets, deceptive teachings, (See Eph.4:14) or evil spirits masquerading as God's messengers. A healthy scepticism about a person's interpretation of biblical prophecy or the prophetic utterances of a person, a spirit entity, or a disembodied voice will serve you well and perhaps prevent you from making a mistake that will have a negative impact on your life.

The Slaughter in Jerusalem

In Ezekiel, chapter nine, Ezekiel is shown a prophetic vision in which he sees spirit-beings being gathered to begin a great slaughter in Jerusalem because of the people's worship of false gods and their contempt for the Sovereign God. In this vision, he is also shown that many of God's elect who inhabit Jerusalem at that time will be sealed for protection against God's wrath:

"He cried also in my ears with a loud voice, saying, Cause them that have charge over the city to draw near, even every man with his destroying weapon in his hand. And, behold, six men came from the way of the higher gate, which lies toward the north, and every man a slaughter weapon in his hand; and one man among them was clothed with linen, with a writer's inkhorn by his side: and they went in, and stood beside the brazen altar " (Ezk.9:1-2 KJV).

Verse 2 shows six spirit-beings (in the form of men) who have weapons in their hand come and stand next to a brazen altar. Among these six men, one has distinctive clothing and a writer's inkhorn.

The English words men and man in verses 1 and 2 are translated from the Hebrew word iysh; which means a man as an individual or a male person. The use of the word iysh, clearly shows that these spirit-beings with weapons in their hands have the form of men.

The Creator Appears to Ezekiel in a Vision

In Ezekiel chapter 43, Ezekiel is taken in a vision to the temple of God that will be built sometime after Christ has returned and has conquered the earth.

"Then the man brought me to the gate facing east, and I saw the glory of the God of Israel coming from the east. His voice was like the roar of rushing waters, and the land was radiant with his glory. The vision I saw was like the vision I had seen when he came to destroy the city and like the visions I had seen by the Kebar River, and I fell face-down" (Ezk.43:1-3 NIV). See also Ezk.3:22-23.

"And the glory of the Lord came into the house by the way of the gate whose prospect is toward the east. So the spirit took me up, and brought me into the inner court; and, behold, the glory of the Lord filled the house. And I heard him speaking to me out of the house; and the man stood by me" (Ezk.43:4-6 KJV).
The English word *man* in verse six is translated from the Hebrew word *iysh*, which means *a man as an individual or a male person*. Verse 7 clearly documents that it is none other than the Creator God himself in the form of a man who is speaking to Ezekiel:

"And he said to me, Son of man, the place of my throne, and the place of the soles of my feet, where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel for ever, and my holy name, shall the house of Israel no more defile, neither they, nor their kings, by their whoredom, nor by the carcases of their kings in their high places" (Ezk. 43:7 KJV).

New Testament

The two accounts in the New Testament concerning the promised birth of John who would prepare the way for Christ, as well as the promise of Christ's birth show that the spirit-being Gabriel who appeared to the prophet Daniel as a man also appeared to the priest Zacharias and to Mary to give them detailed information about these important births.

**Zacharias Meets Gabriel**

"There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the course of Abia: and his wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elisabeth. And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. And they had no child, because that Elisabeth was barren, and they both were now well stricken in years' (Lk.1:5-7 KJV).

"And it came to pass, that while he executed the priest's office before God in the order of his course, According to the custom of the priest's office, his lot was to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord. And the whole multitude of the people were praying without at the time of incense" (Lk.5:8-10 KJV).

"And there appeared to him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense. And when Zacharias saw him, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him" (Lk.1:11-12 KJV).

The English word *angel* in verse 11 is translated from the Greek word *aggelos*, which means *messenger* in this context.

Zacharias was probably afraid because the temple was being guarded to prevent anyone but priests from entering the sanctuary where only priests were to perform their duties. Clearly, the individual Zacharias saw should not have been in the temple.
"But the angel said to him, Fear not, Zacharias: for your prayer is heard; and your wife Elisabeth shall bear you a son, and you shall call his name John. And you shall have joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at his birth. For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the holy spirit, even from his mother's womb" (Lk.1:13-15 KJV).

From the instructions that Gabriel gave Zacharias concerning John, it seems that John would be a Nazarite from birth like Samson.

"And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God. And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord' (Lk.1:16-17 KJV).

"And Zacharias said to the angel, Whereby shall I know this? for I am an old man, and my wife well stricken in years. And the angel answering said to him, I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God; and am sent to speak to you, and to show you these glad tidings. And, behold, you shalt be dumb, and not able to speak, until the day that these things shall be performed, because you do not believe my words, which shall be fulfilled in their season" (Lk.1:18-20 KJV).

This account and others in the biblical text show that messengers sent from God are authorized to take certain actions in order to validate their message. In this account, Gabriel uses his discretionary authority and power to remove Zacharias' ability to speak as a reprimand and as a proof that what he has told Zacharias is true.

**Gabriel Sent to Mary**

"And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. And the angel came in to her, and said, Hail, you that are highly favored, the Lord is with you: blessed are you among women. And when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be. And the angel said to her, Fear not, Mary: for you have found favor with God" (Lk.1:26-30 KJV).

From this narrative of verses 26 through 30, we can assume that Mary did not recognize Gabriel as anyone other than an ordinary man dressed in ordinary clothing with a very strange greeting.
"And, behold, you shalt conceive in your womb, and bring forth a son, and shall call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give to him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end' (Lk.1:31-33 KJV).

"Then said Mary to the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? And the angel answered and said to her, The holy spirit shall come upon you, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow you: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of you shall be called the Son of God' (Lk.1:34-35 KJV).

"And, behold, your cousin Elisabeth, she has conceived a son in her old age: and this is the sixth month with her, who was called barren. For with God nothing shall be impossible. And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it to me according to your word. And the angel departed from her" (Lk.1:36-38 KJV).

The Women at the Tomb

The accounts of the women who went to the tomb to anoint Christ's body with additional ointment and spices show God's messengers interacting with people while in the form and appearance of men, but with unique features and clothing.

"In the end of the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the sepulcher. And, behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat on it. His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow: And because they were afraid of him the guards quivered and became as dead men" (Matt.28:1-4 KJV Para.).

As the women stood before tomb wondering how they were going to get it open so that they could anoint Christ's body, there was a great earthquake and an angel appeared as lightning dressed in bright white clothing and rolled back the stone that covered the entrance to the tomb.

The following accounts give us a clear description of the spirit-beings whom the women saw as they entered the tomb where the body of Christ had been placed.

"And the angel said to the women, do not be afraid: for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay" (Matt.28:5-6 KJV Para.).
The translators of the King James Version of the Bible included the Textus Receptus wording of verse 6, whereas many other translators have not. This is interesting because in the King James Version of verse 6, the English word Lord is translated from the Greek word kurios, which means supreme in authority (i.e., as noun, controller). The use of the word kurios shows the angel's acknowledgment that Jesus is a member of the God Family as a god-being.

"And entering into the sepulcher, they were surprised to see a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment; And he said to them, Do not be afraid: you seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified: he is risen; he is not here: see the place where they laid him" (Mk.16:5-6 KJV Para.).

In Mark's account, the women enter the tomb and are surprised to see a young man dressed in white seated in the tomb.

The English word white in verse 5 is translated from the Greek word leukos, which can mean radiant, bright, or light. The spirit-being these women saw appeared to them as a young man wearing a long garment of exceptional brightness.

"Now upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came to the sepulcher, bringing the spices that they had prepared, and certain others with them. And they found the stone rolled away from the sepulcher. And they entered in, and did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. And it came to pass, as they were much perplexed thereabout, behold, two men stood by them in shining garments" (Lk.24:1-4 KJV).

The English word shining in verse four is translated from the Greek word astrapto, which means to flash as lightning.

In Luke's account, there are two spirit-beings whose appearance and form is like men wearing sparkling, bright, white clothing. In the following account by John, Mary Magdalene sees two angels in the tomb dressed in white clothing:

"But Mary stood outside the sepulcher weeping; and as she wept, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulcher. And saw two angels in white sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. And they say to her, Woman, why do you weep? She said to them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him" (Jn.20:11-13 KJV Para).

From these and many other biblical accounts of God sending spirit-messengers to perform a task or relay a message to an individual or group, it is apparent that these messengers can appear as ordinary men in ordinary clothing. They can also appear as men clothed in sparkling, bright, white garments with a bright radiance to their faces, both of which are not characteristic of a normal, physical man.
There are absolutely no biblical accounts of angelic massagers sent from God manifesting themselves as a woman, an animal, a bird, a ball of light, a shadowy/hazy figures or any other mysterious manifestation.

**Christ Appears to John in Vision**

If we want to know what Jesus Christ who was the Creator God (Jn.1:1-3; Heb.1:1-3) and the Sovereign Father look like in their glorified form, we need only to read what the apostle John was told to record about the appearance of Christ in his glorified form:

"I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou see write in a book . . . And I turned to see the voice that spoke to me and I saw seven golden lamp-stands; And in the midst of the seven lamp-stands one like the Son of man . . . His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; And his feet like fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters . . . and his appearances was as the shining sun . . . and he said to me, do not be afraid; I am the first and the last. I am he that lives, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore . . ." (Rev.1:10-18 KJV Para.).

"To the angel of the church in Thyatira write; These things says the Son of God, whose eyes are like a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass" (Rev.2:18 KJV Para.). See also Rev.19:11-13.

John says that Jesus Christ has bright white hair, eyes that look like fire, feet the color of hot liquid brass, a voice like rushing water and a radiant sun-like appearance. Because Jesus is the express image of the Father according to the writer of the Book of Hebrews (Heb.1:1-3), we can assume that God the Father looks similar to his firstborn son. Therefore, in their glorified form, both have the form and shape of men.

**Christ Appears to Mary Magdalene**

After Mary's conversation with the two angels sitting in the tomb where Christ had been placed after being crucified, Mary turns around to leave and sees a man near the tomb who she does not recognize as Jesus until he speaks to her:

"And when she had said this, she turned, and saw Jesus standing there but did not recognize him, Jesus said to her, Woman, why do you weep? whom do you seek? She, supposing him to be the gardener, said to him, Sir, if you have taken him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away. Jesus said to her, Mary. She turned herself, and said to him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master" (Jn.20:14-16 KJV Para). See also Lk.24:13-43

Christ appeared as an ordinary man in ordinary clothing after his resurrection.
SUMMARY

The biblical evidence shows that the Sovereign God and the Creator God who became Christ also have the form and appearance of men:

"And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth" (Gen.1:26 KJV).

Man was patterned after the likeness of God and it appears from the biblical evidence that all spirit-beings, other than those who serve in special functions at God's throne, are created in the image of God's outward appearance.

The Sovereign God's loyal spirit-servants are not constrained by the physical laws of this dimension of existence in the same way humans are; therefore, they can move between the heavenly and physical realms at will and can remain invisible to humans or appear to them in their glorified form or as ordinary men in contemporary clothing.

All of the biblical evidence shows that spirit-messengers sent from God manifest themselves in the form and appearance of men, whether in a glorified form or in a physical form. They never appear as women or animals or in secretive ways, such as glowing orbs of light, or hazy apparitions. Moreover, messages sent from God are clearly presented to the recipient, if not, these messages are interpreted by an angel or a person like Daniel, like when he interpreted the message written on the wall for Belshazzar. Otherwise, God's spirit-messengers do not communicate with people through images, physical devices, or other mysterious methods.

By B.L. Cocherell
CHAPTER TEN

CHERUBIM, SERAPHIM, AND OTHER SPIRIT-BEINGS

The Bible notes that there are four groups of spirit-beings in attendance at the heavenly temple: the cherubim, the seraphim, the four beasts, and spirit-beings in the form of men. This chapter will discuss these four groups of spirit-beings.

THE CHERUBIM

The Bible first mentions cherubim in the Book of Genesis. After the eviction of Adam and Eve from the garden of Eden, God stationed cherubim and a flaming sword east of the garden to prevent Adam and Eve from returning and eating the fruit of the Tree of life, which would have enabled their life-function to be sustained forever:

"And the Lord God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever: Therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from where he was taken. So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life" (Gen.3:22-24 KJV).

No description of cherubim is given in this account, but the account does show that these cherubim are extremely powerful and were given extremely important responsibilities to perform. It is likely that these cherubim and the flaming sword continued to prevent entry into the garden until the Creator destroyed the garden along with the earth's surface in the great flood.

The Bible next mentions cherubim in the Book of Exodus in the instructions given to Moses on the building of a tabernacle:

"And you shall make two cherubims of gold, of beaten work shall you make them, in the two ends of the mercy seat. And make one cherub on the one end, and the other cherub on the other end: even of the mercy seat shall you make the cherubims on the two ends thereof. And the cherubims shall stretch forth their wings on high, covering the mercy seat with their wings, and their faces shall look one to another: toward the mercy seat shall the faces of the cherubims be" (Ex.25:18-20 KJV).

In this description, we can only determine that cherubim have wings and a face.
But how did the craftsmen who made the cherubim know what they looked like? This information must have been revealed to them or cherubim regularly interacted with people at that time in history. See Ex.31:1-6.

In the instructions to make the curtains and the veil for the tabernacle, the Creator gave specific instruction to place images of cherubim on the curtains and the veil of separation:

"Moreover you shall make the tabernacle with ten curtains of fine twined linen, and blue, and purple, and scarlet: with cherubims of cunning work shall you make them" (Ex.26:1 KJV).

"And you shall rear up the tabernacle according to the fashion thereof which was shown you in the mount. And you shall make a veil of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen of cunning work: with cherubims shall it be made: And you shall hang it upon four pillars of shittim wood overlaid with gold: their hooks shall be of gold, upon the four sockets of silver" (Ex.26:30-32 KJV). See also Ex.36:7-9, 35-36.

When Solomon built the temple at Jerusalem, cherubim were represented throughout its interior, on its ledges, and on the temple doors.

Not only were cherubim represented on the veil of separation between the sanctuary and the holy of holies (1.Kgs.7:29,36) but also two statues of cherubim, which had a height of about 25 feet and a wing span of about twenty-four feet, were placed with their wings spread over the ark of the covenant within the holy of holies (2.Chron.5:7-8):

"And within the oracle he made two cherubims of olive tree, each ten cubits high. And five cubits was the one wing of the cherub, and five cubits the other wing of the cherub: from the uttermost part of the one wing to the uttermost part of the other were ten cubits. And the other cherub was ten cubits: both the cherubims were of one measure and one size. The height of the one cherub was ten cubits, and so was it of the other cherub. And he set the cherubims within the inner house: and they stretched forth the wings of the cherubims, so that the wing of the one touched the one wall, and the wing of the other cherub touched the other wall; and their wings touched one another in the midst of the house. And he overlaid the cherubims with gold" (1.Kgs.6:23-28 KJV).

"And he carved all the walls of the house round about with carved figures of cherubims and palm trees and open flowers, within and without. And the floor of the house he overlaid with gold, within and without. And for the entering of the oracle he made doors of olive tree: the lintel and side posts were a fifth part of the wall. The two doors also were of olive tree: and he carved upon them carvings of cherubims and palm trees and open flowers, and overlaid them with gold, and spread gold upon the cherubims, and upon the palm trees.
So also made he for the door of the temple posts of olive tree, a fourth part of the wall. And the two doors were of fir tree: the two leaves of the one door were folding, and the two leaves of the other door were folding. And he carved thereon cherubims and palm trees and open flowers: and covered them with gold fitted upon the carved work” (1.Kgs.6:29-35 KJV).

Although there are over fifty references to cherubs and cherubim from Genesis through second Chronicles, we can only determine up to this point that cherubim have wings and a face. However, from what is recorded in the Book of Hebrews, it is clear that all of the various sacrifices and rituals of the earthly temple system of worship given to ancient Israel were symbolic of some part of the Father’s heavenly worship system. Moreover, all of the objects in the court of the earthly tabernacle and within the sanctuary were symbolic of things in heaven:

"Now concerning the things which we have spoken of this is the sum: We have a high priest, who is setting at the right hand of the Majesty whose throne is in the heavens; and he is the servant of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle which was built by the Lord, not by man. For every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices; therefore, it is of necessity that this man have something also to offer. Because if he were on earth, he would not be a priest, because there are priests that make offerings according to the law: And these serve as an example and shadow of heavenly things. As noted when God cautioned Moses before he built the tabernacle, saying, be careful that you make all these things according to the pattern that you were shown on the mountain” (Heb.8:1-5 Para.).

The temple system of worship that the Creator God gave to ancient Israel was patterned after the Sovereign God's heavenly temple and its system of worship. Moreover, this is the pattern that will be used for all future worship of the Sovereign God after Christ returns.

Because the scriptures show that, after Christ returns, God will be worshiped, served, and communicated with through a temple and its accompanying sacrifices and rituals, those who desire to worship the Sovereign God should understand the literal and symbolic meanings associated with this temple system of worship of which cherubim are a part.

The biblical record shows that there are a number of spirit-beings who serve the God of heaven and have the rank of cherub. The following scriptures show us that the Creator God spoke to Moses from between the cherubim on the ark of the covenant, and that the cherubim are central figures at God's throne in heaven:

"And when Moses went into the tabernacle of the congregation to speak with him, then he heard the voice of one speaking to him from off the mercy seat that was upon the ark of testimony from between the two cherubim: and he spoke to him" (Num.7:89 KJV).
"And David arose, and went with all the people that were with him from Baale of Judah, to bring up from there the ark of God, whose name is called by the name of the Lord of hosts that dwells between the cherubim" (2.Sam.6:2 KJV). See also 1.Sam.4:4; Isa.37:16-17.

"The Lord reigns; let the people tremble: he sits between the cherubim; let the earth be moved. The Lord is great in Zion; and he is high above all the people. Let them praise your great and terrible name; for it is holy" (Psa.99:1-3 KJV). See also Psa.80:1-2.

Ezekiel Described the Cherubim

Within the many prophetic events recorded by Ezekiel, there are a number of spirit-beings described which Ezekiel either saw with his own eyes or in visions. Ezekiel's accounts contain much more complete descriptions of cherubim than any of the other biblical accounts.

For the sake of clarity, it is important to understand that the God-being referred to in Ezekiel, chapters 1,8,9, and 10 is the Creator God who became Jesus Christ and is the God who carries out the Sovereign God's instruction concerning the events which prepare the earth for Christ's coming to rule the earth.

Ezekiel Chapter One

In the following account, which takes place by the river Chebar in Mesopotamia, Ezekiel sees a vision of God in which the Creator God speaks to him. In this vision he also sees God's portable throne and the spirit-beings who transport it:

"Now it came to pass in the thirtieth year, in the fourth month, in the fifth day of the month, as I was among the captives by the river of Chebar, that the heavens were opened, and I saw visions of God. In the fifth day of the month, which was the fifth year of king Jehoiachin's captivity, The word of the Lord came expressly unto Ezekiel the priest, the son of Buzi, in the land of the Chaldeans by the river Chebar; and the hand of the Lord was there upon him' (Ezk.1:1-3 KJV).

"And I looked, and, behold, a whirlwind came out of the north, a great cloud, and a fire infolding itself, and a brightness was about it, and out of the midst thereof as the color of amber, out of the midst of the fire" (Ezk.1:4 KJV).

Ezekiel sees a powerful whirlwind coming from the north and a cloud of infolding fire with a bright aura of luminescence surrounding it as bright, orange-yellow rays similar to the color of amber or bronze radiate from this cloud of infolding fire.
Four Living Creatures

"Also out of the midst of it came the shape of four living creatures. And this was their appearance; they had the shape of a man. And every one had four faces, and every one had four wings" (Ezk.1:5-6 KJV Para.).

"And their feet were straight feet; and the sole of their feet was like the sole of a calf's foot: and they sparkled like the color of burnished brass. And they had the hands of a man under their wings on their four sides; and they four had their faces and their wings. Their wings were joined one to another; they turned not when they went; they went every one straight forward" (Ezk.1:7-9 KJV).

Ezekiel sees four spirit-beings which appear to have the shape of men. But these spirit-beings seem to have animal-like feet, hands under their wings, four wings each, and it seems like they have four faces each. We know that the spirit-beings Ezekiel is describing are cherubim because he refers to them in chapter 10 while again describing the Creator God's portable throne.

"As for the shape of their faces, they four had the face of a man, and the face of a lion, on the right side: and they four had the face of an ox on the left side; they four also had the face of an eagle. Thus were their faces: and their wings were stretched upward; two wings of every one were joined one to another, and two covered their bodies" (Ezk.1:10-11 KJV Para.).

Because slightly different Hebrew words are used to indicate the number "four" in verses 10 and 11, it is extremely difficult at this time in history to translate these two verses correctly. There is much speculation as to how the faces of these spirit-beings are arranged or even if each has four faces, two faces, or one face each. The writer to the Hebrews seemed to have the same dilemma when he wrote, "Over it the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercyseat; of which we cannot now speak particularly" (Heb.9:5).

The ark remained in the temple which Solomon built until its destruction by Nebuchadnezzar's Babylonian empire, but what happened to the ark afterward is unknown. According to some sources, king Josiah hid the ark before the Babylonian invasion. According to one midrash, Josiah had a hole dug under the storehouse for wood on the Temple Mount and buried it there (Yoma 53b). Another account says that Solomon set aside a cave near the Dead Sea in which to hide the ark, and Josiah hid the ark there (Miamonides, Laws of the Temple, 4:1). With the disappearance of the ark and the passing of centuries, an accurate description of the cherubim which were set atop it has been lost.
"And they went every one straight forward: whither the spirit was to go, they went; and they turned not when they went. As for the likeness of the living creatures, their appearance was like burning coals of fire, and like the appearance of lamps: it went up and down among the living creatures; and the fire was bright, and out of the fire went forth lightning. And the living creatures ran and returned as the appearance of a flash of lightning' (Ezk.1:12-14 KJV).

Verses 15 through 25 describe the movements of the four spirit-beings, the sound they make when they move from one place to another, and the transportation device on which God's throne sits.

"Now as I beheld the living creatures, behold one wheel upon the earth by the living creatures, with his four faces. The appearance of the wheels and their work was like unto the color of a beryl: and they four had one likeness: and their appearance and their work was as it were a wheel in the middle of a wheel. When they went, they went upon their four sides: and they turned not when they went. As for their rings, they were so high that they were dreadful; and their rings were full of eyes round about them four. And when the living creatures went, the wheels went by them: and when the living creatures were lifted up from the earth, the wheels were lifted up. Whithersoever the spirit was to go, they went, thither was their spirit to go; and the wheels were lifted up over against them: for the spirit of the living creature was in the wheels. When those went, these went; and when those stood, these stood; and when those were lifted up from the earth, the wheels were lifted up over against them: for the spirit of the living creature was in the wheels. And the likeness of the firmament upon the heads of the living creature was as the color of the terrible crystal, stretched forth over their heads above. And under the firmament were their wings straight, the one toward the other: every one had two, which covered on this side, and every one had two, which covered on that side, their bodies' (Ezk.1:15-23 KJV).

"And when they went, I heard the noise of their wings, like the noise of great waters, as the voice of the Almighty, the voice of speech, as the noise of an host: when they stood, they let down their wings. And there was a voice from the firmament that was over their heads, when they stood, and had let down their wings:' (Ezk.1:24-25 KJV).

Beginning in verse 26, Ezekiel describes a throne above the heads of the four living creatures and a God-being who is sitting on this throne:

"And above the firmament that was over their heads was the likeness of a throne, as the appearance of a sapphire stone: and upon the likeness of the throne was the likeness as the appearance of a man above upon it. And I saw as the color of amber, as the appearance of fire round about within it, from the appearance of his loins even upward, and from the appearance of his loins even downward, I saw as it were the appearance of fire, and it had brightness round about" (Ezk.1:26-27 KJV).
Ezekiel Chapters Eight and Nine

The prophet Ezekiel is shown many visions of prophetic events that have their fulfillment during the end of the age just prior to Christ's return. What follows in chapters eight and nine is presented in order to show the continuity of these prophetic events, which reveal the Creator God in his glorified form resembling a man, as well as the close association of cherubim with God's throne.

Ezekiel Chapter Eight

Ezekiel, chapter eight contains the account of Ezekiel's vision of the Creator God in his glorified form.

"And it came to pass in the sixth year, in the sixth month, in the fifth day of the month, as I sat in my house, and the elders of Judah sat before me, that the hand of the Lord God fell there upon me. Then I beheld, and lo a likeness as the appearance of fire: from the appearance of his loins even downward, fire; and from his loins even upward, as the appearance of brightness, as the color of amber" (Ezk.8:1-2 KJV).

In verse 2, the English word loins is translated from the Hebrew word mothen; from an unused root, which means to be slender; properly, the waist or small of the back; only in plural the loins. The usage of the Hebrew word mothen tells us that the shape Ezekiel sees is the shape of a human.

Clearly, this is not a physical man that Ezekiel sees. Ezekiel sees the shape of a human who has a bright orange-yellow like color similar to the color of amber or bronze, and he describes him as the Lord God.

"And he put forth the form of an hand, and took me by a lock of my head; and the spirit lifted me up between the earth and the heaven, and brought me in the visions of God to Jerusalem, to the door of the inner gate that looks toward the north; where was the seat of the image of jealousy, which provokes to jealousy. And, behold, the glory of the God of Israel was there, according to the vision that I saw in the plain" (Ezk.8:3-4 KJV).

Ezekiel is taken in a vision to Jerusalem where something evil resides. There, he again sees the Creator God in his glorified form and refers to the time that he was at the river Chebar where the Creator told him to go into the plain where he would speak with him. See Ezk.3: 22-23; 43:1-3.
Ezekiel Chapter Nine

In Ezekiel, chapter nine, Ezekiel is shown a prophetic vision in which he sees spirit-beings in the form of men being gathered to begin a great slaughter in Jerusalem because of the people’s rejection of the true God and their worship of false gods. In this vision, Ezekiel is also shown that a spirit-being will mark many of God’s elect who inhabit Jerusalem at that time in order to protect them against his wrath.

"He cried also in my ears with a loud voice, saying, Cause them that have charge over the city to draw near, even every man with his destroying weapon in his hand. And, behold, six men came from the way of the higher gate, which lies toward the north, and every man a slaughter weapon in his hand; and one man among them was clothed with linen, with a writer's in khorn by his side: and they went in, and stood beside the brazen altar " (Ezk.9:1-2 KJV).

In verse 2, there are six spirit-beings who have a weapon in their hand and who come and stand next to a brazen altar. Notice that, among these six who appear in the form of men, there is one who is wearing distinctive clothing and has a writer's in khorn by his side.

The English words men and man in verses 1 and 2 are translated from the Hebrew word iyysh, which means a man as an individual or a male person. The use of the word iyysh clearly shows that these six spirit-beings with weapons in their hands have the form of men.

"And the glory of the God of Israel was gone up from the cherub, whereupon he was, to the threshold of the house. And he called to the man clothed with linen, which had the writer's in khorn by his side; And the Lord said to him, Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof" (Ezk.9:3-4 KJV).

Because of the difficulty in determining the exact meaning intended by the use of some Hebrew words in verse 3, it difficult to determine exactly what Ezekiel is describing. Perhaps, he is describing the awe- some splendor radiating from the cherub or he could be describing the Creator God in his glorified form rising from a cherub.

"And to the others he said in my hearing, Go you after him through the city, and smite: let not your eye spare, neither have you pity: Slay utterly old and young, both maids, and little children, and women: but come not near any man upon whom is the mark; and begin at my sanctuary. Then they began at the ancient men which were before the house. And he said to them, Defile the house, and fill the courts with the slain: go you forth. And they went forth, and slew in the city" (Ezk.9:5-7 KJV).

The other five angels who are standing by, are told to follow the one with the in khorn and begin the slaughter among the inhabitants of Jerusalem who have not been marked for survival.
"And it came to pass, while they were slaying them, and I was left, that I fell upon my face, and cried, and said, Ah Lord God! will you destroy all the residue of Israel in your pouring out of your fury upon Jerusalem? Then said he to me, The iniquity of the house of Israel and Judah is exceeding great, and the land is full of blood, and the city full of perverseness: for they say, The Lord has forsaken the earth, and the Lord sees not. And as for me also, my eye will not spare, neither will I have pity, but I will recompense their way upon their head" (Ezk.9:8-10 KJV).

The question that Ezekiel asked and the answer that he received tells us that, although the inhabitants of Jerusalem are the primary focus of these angels of death, the rest of the houses of Israel and Judah and the Sovereign Father's rebellious and sinful elect children who are scattered among the nations are also being slaughtered because of their contempt and rejection of the true God and his law.

"And, behold, the man clothed with linen, which had the inkhorn by his side, reported the matter, saying, I have done as you have commanded me" (Ezk.9:11 KJV).

The time setting of Ezekiel 9:1-11, is right before the Day of the Lord in which God will pour out his wrath upon all humanity. From this point in time, until Christ returns, the faithful servants of God will be separated from the rest of humanity and protected from the wrath of God. However, the elect who have not been faithful will suffer along with the rest of humanity as God's wrath is poured out upon the earth, the sea, and the wicked in order to complete the preparation of the earth for its invasion by Christ and his army of spirit-beings.

Ezekiel Chapter Ten

Ezekiel 10:1 shows the same sapphire throne described in Ezekiel 1:26. In this description, the spirit-beings who transport God's throne are clearly described as cherubim:

"Then I looked, and, behold, in the expanse that was above the head of the cherubim there appeared over them as it were a sapphire stone in the appearance and shape of a throne" (Ezk.10:1 KJV Para.).

In verse 2, the Creator again speaks to the same spirit-being dressed in linen who has the inkhorn noted in Ezekiel 9: 3,4, and 11.

"And he spoke to the man clothed with linen, and said, Go in between the wheels, even under the cherub, and fill your hand with coals of fire from between the cherubims, and scatter them over the city. And he went in, in my sight" (Ezk.10:2 KJV).

The scattering of these coals of fire over the city of Jerusalem shows that even after the great slaughter in Jerusalem, God has not finished his punishment. What follows next is a more detailed description of God's portable throne and the cherubim which are with it:
"Now the cherubims stood on the right side of the house, when the man went in; and the cloud filled the inner court. Then the glory of the Lord went up from the cherub, and stood over the threshold of the house; and the house was filled with the cloud, and the court was full of the brightness of the Lord's glory' (Ezk.10:3-4 KJV).

"And the sound of the cherubims' wings was heard even to the outer court, as the voice of the Almighty God when he speaks. And it came to pass, that when he had commanded the man clothed with linen, saying, Take fire from between the wheels, from between the cherubims; then he went in, and stood beside the wheels' (Ezk.10:5-6 KJV).

"And one cherub stretched forth his hand from between the cherubims to the fire that was between the cherubims, and took thereof, and put it into the hands of him that was clothed with linen: who took it, and went out. And there appeared in the cherubims the form of a man's hand under their wings" (Ezk.10:7-8 KJV).

Verses 7 and 8 show cherubim and a spirit-being in the form of a man interacting with each other in order to perform a task given to them by the Creator.

Verses 9 through 14 contain a cryptic description of the transportation device on which the portable throne of the Creator God is carried. Many individuals have tried to explain and illustrate what this device looks like; however, Ezekiel's description lacks the necessary details to know exactly what it looks like or how it functions.

"And when I looked, behold the four wheels by the cherubims, one wheel by one cherub, and another wheel by another cherub: and the appearance of the wheels was as the color of a beryl stone' (Ezk.10:9 KJV).

"And as for their appearances, they four had one likeness, as if a wheel had been in the midst of a wheel. When they went, they went upon their four sides; they turned not as they went, but to the place whither the head looked they followed it; they turned not as they went' (Ezk.10:10-11 KJV).

"And their whole body, and their backs, and their hands, and their wings, and the wheels, were full of eyes round about, even the wheels that they four had. As for the wheels, it was cried to them in my hearing, O wheel" (Ezk.10:12-13 KJV).

After the description of the cherubim in verse 12, Ezekiel notes that each of the transportation devices has eyes on it. In verse 14, he seems to be saying that each one also has four faces on it:

"And every one had four faces: the first face was the face of a cherub, and the second face was the face of a man, and the third the face of a lion, and the fourth the face of an eagle" (Ezk.10:14 KJV).
The English word *face* in verse 14 is translated from the Hebrew word *paniym*, which means the *face* (as the part that turns) and is used in a great variety of applications (literally and figuratively).

Because we know that these spirit-beings are the same ones noted in Ezekiel, chapter 1, it is logical to assume that the first face of the cherub mentioned is that of the ox, because the other three faces of these spirit-beings are mentioned (man, lion, eagle). See Ezk. 1:10. Moreover, the following verses support the fact that these are the same creatures.

"And the cherubims were lifted up. This is the living creature that I saw by the river of Chebar. And when the cherubims went, the wheels went by them: and when the cherubims lifted up their wings to mount up from the earth, the same wheels also turned not from beside them' (Ezk.10:15-16 KJV).

"When they stood, these stood; and when they were lifted up, these lifted up themselves also: for the spirit of the living creature was in them. Then the glory of the Lord departed from off the threshold of the house, and stood over the cherubims' (Ezk.10:17-18 KJV).

"And the cherubims lifted up their wings, and mounted up from the earth in my sight: when they went out, the wheels also were beside them, and every one stood at the door of the east gate of the Lord's house: and the glory of the God of Israel was over them above' (Ezk.10:19 KJV).

"This is the living creature that I saw under the God of Israel by the river of Chebar; and I knew that they were the cherubims. Every one had four faces apiece, and every one four wings; and the likeness of the hands of a man was under their wings. And the likeness of their faces was the same faces which I saw by the river of Chebar, their appearances and themselves: they went every one straight forward" (Ezk.10:20-22 KJV).

**Cherubim in the New Temple**

In Ezekiel, chapter 41, there are descriptions and dimensions of the temple that will be built for the worship of God after Christ returns. Verses 16 through 26 describe the temple doors, door lintels, posts, and walls, all of which are to have carvings of palm trees and cherubim:

"The door posts, and the narrow windows, and the galleries round about on their three stories, over against the door, covered with wood round about, and from the ground up to the windows, and the windows were covered; To that above the door, even unto the inner house, and without, and by all the wall round about within and without, by measure' (Ezk.41:16-17 KJV).
"And it was made with cherubims and palm trees, so that a palm tree was between a cherub and a cherub; and every cherub had two faces; So that the face of a man was toward the palm tree on the one side, and the face of a young lion toward the palm tree on the other side: it was made through all the house round about. From the ground unto above the door were cherubims and palm trees made, and on the wall of the temple" (Ezk.41:18-20 KJV).

In the description of cherubim which are carved in relief, only the face of a lion and the face of a man are mentioned. In verses 23-25, we see that the temple and the sanctuary had two doors and these doors will also have cherubim and palm trees carved on them:

"And the temple and the sanctuary had two doors. And the doors had two leaves apiece, two turning leaves; two leaves for the one door, and two leaves for the other door. And there were made on them, on the doors of the temple, cherubims and palm trees, like as were made upon the walls; and there were thick planks upon the face of the porch without" (Ezk.41:23-25 KJV).

It cannot be determined from the biblical record whether or not the description of cherubim noted in Ezekiel, chapter 41 is describing a different class of cherubim or if these are the only faces of cherubim to be represented in the temple.

THE SERAPHIM

The only clear description of seraphim in the biblical record is found in the Book of Isaiah. In a vision, Isaiah is taken to God's throne where he sees seraphim in attendance and is given a commission to proclaim a prophecy concerning national Israel and the end of the age before Christ returns:

"In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphim: each one had six wings; with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew" (Isa.6:1-2 KJV Para.).

The English word seraphim is translated from the Hebrew word saraph that is a derivative of a root word that means to be on fire. The word saraph figuratively means a poisonous serpent; and specifically, a saraph or a creature of a copper color.

"And one called to another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory. And the posts of the vestibule shook at the voice of him that called, and the house was filled with vapor" (Isa.6: 3-4 KJV Para.).

Here, we see one seraphim calling to another with a loud voice praising the Lord of hosts. Along with this praise, the posts of the vestibule shake and vapor fills the area.
In a vision, Isaiah sees the seraphim taking a hot coal from the heavenly altar, putting it in his hand, bringing the coal to him, and touching his lips with it, thus removing the iniquity of his lips:

"Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts. Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar: And he laid it on my mouth, and said, Lo, this has touched your lips; and your iniquity is taken away, and your sin purged" (Isa.6:5-7 KJV Para.).

Verses 1 through 7 tell us that seraphim can fly and have six wings, a face, and hands. Additionally, they perform functions concerning spiritual purity.

**THE FOUR BEASTS**

After the apostle John hears the messages to the seven churches, he is brought to a heavenly throne and told that he will be shown things that will come to pass prior to and during Christ's return to govern the earth. It is at the heavenly throne that he sees and describes four spirit-beings which seem to reassemble the ones Isaiah saw in a vision:

"After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up here, and I will show you things which must be hereafter. And immediately I was in the spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne. And he that sat was to look on like a jasper and a sardine stone: and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight similar to an emerald" (Rev.4:1-3 KJV Para.).

The spirit-being sitting on this throne is the Sovereign God, not the Creator God. We know this because Ezekiel describes the Creator God in his glorified form as exhibiting the brightness and color of fire (Ezk. 1:26-27 KJV). The God described in verse 3 exhibits the color of a jasper stone which is an opaque red or yellow and the color of sardine stone which is blood red or sometimes a flesh-color.

"And round about the throne were four and twenty seats: and on the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold. And out of the throne proceeded lightning and thundering and voices: and there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God " (Rev.4:4-5 KJV Para.).

In a vision, the apostle John sees 24 elders who are described elsewhere in the Book of Revelation as being members of the Sovereign Father's royal family of kings and priests who will reign on the earth with Christ.
"And before the throne there was a sea of glass like to crystal: and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four beasts full of eyes before and behind" (Rev.4:6 KJV).

The English word beast is translated from the Greek word ζῶον; a derivative of ζάω meaning to live. Ζῶον basically means a live thing.

Verse 6 describes four spirit-beings with many eyes at the Sovereign God's throne.

"And the first beast was like a lion, and the second beast like a calf, and the third beast had a face as a man, and the fourth beast was like a flying eagle. And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come. And when those beasts give glory and honor and thanks to him that sat on the throne, who lives for ever and ever" (Rev.4:7-9 KJV).

Verse 7 tells us that each of these beings is like a different beast, but one has a face like a man.

Note: The English word calf in verse 7 is translated from the Greek word μοσχὸς which means a young bullock.

In verse 8, we see that each of these spirit-beings described has six wings and a face, just as the seraphim that Isaiah saw. However, the spirit-beings in verse 8 also have many eyes and perhaps are not seraphim, but are a different class of spirit-beings serving at God's throne.

SUMMARY

The Cherubim

The biblical record shows that cherubim are high ranking spirit-beings who perform important functions and responsibilities within the heavenly realm in close association with the Sovereign God, the Creator God (i.e., Christ), and their heavenly thrones.

In Psalm 18:10, David says that God rode on a cherub (See also 2.Sam.22:1-11). In other texts, the Creator God is shown sitting upon a throne among cherubim and being transported by them on his portable throne.

Cherubim are shown to be intimately involved in the worship and service to the Sovereign God and Christ in the heavenly temple, and the likenesses of cherubs are noted as being depicted in the tabernacle in the wilderness, the temple that Solomon built, and the future temple during Christ's reign on earth.

As noted in the Book of Genesis, cherubim were dispatched to prevent access to the Garden of Eden and the Tree of Life after Adam and Eve were evicted from it.
No cherubim are shown in the biblical record to interact with mankind, except the cherubim who guarded Eden and the cherub of great authority known as Satan, who according to Ezekiel's record spread his wings over God's throne before his rebellion against the Sovereign God. See Ex.25:20; 37:9; Ezk.28:14 and Chapter 5, Satan-Who And What Is He?

The Six Spirit-beings in the Form of Men

The six spirit-beings in the form of men noted in Ezekiel, chapter nine, interact with the cherubim in order to carry out the punishment of the people and city of Jerusalem. These six are the only spirit-beings shown in these visions who actively interact with mankind in the physical realm.

The Seraphim and the Four Spirit-beings

From the description of the seraphim, we can only know for certain that each has a face, feet, and six wings; whereas, the apostle John describes the four spirit-beings in his vision as having distinctive facial features, many eyes, and six wings each.

Besides having a face and six wings in common, the seraphim and the four spirit-beings are shown to praise the one whom Isaiah records as "the King, the Lord of hosts" and whom John calls "Lord God Almighty." This seems to indicate that the one being praised is the Supreme Sovereign God for whom the Creator God made everything.

Insight Into The Heavenly Realm

The visions of Ezekiel, Isaiah, and the apostle John in which they see and describe various spirit-beings who are at the heavenly temple and inhabit the Sovereign God's realm provide insight into what these spirit-beings are and that they are intimately involved in the worship and service to the Sovereign God and the Creator God who became the Messiah. Moreover, these visions show us that these spirit-beings also seem to be intimately involved in the Sovereign God's plan and purpose for mankind.

By B.L. Cocherell
The cryptic comments and references by Peter and Paul about angels, authorities, dominions, principalities, powers, thrones, rule, and rulers allude to the heavenly realm in which exists a hierarchy of spirit-beings and entities with authority and power, of which a number are in opposition to the Sovereign God's orderly system of government.

The following are summaries of Peter and Paul's comments and references:

- The apostle Peter wrote that Christ is in heaven at the right hand of God the Father and that the authorities and powers are subject to him. See 1.Pet.3:22.
- To the elect at Rome, Paul wrote that neither angels, principalities, powers or creature can separate them from the love of Christ. See Rom.8:36-39.
- To the elect at Corinth Paul wrote, that Christ will have rendered all rule, authority, and powers useless when he delivers the kingdom to his heavenly Father. See 1.Cor.15:19-28; 1.Pet.3:12-22.
- To the elect at Ephesus, Paul wrote that the elect are engaged in a spiritual battle with principalities, powers, the rulers of the darkness of this world, and spiritual wickedness in high places. Therefore, the elect must equip themselves with the armor God provides them in order to stand against these threats to their salvation. See Eph.3:8-12; 6:10-13.
- To the elect at Colosse, Paul wrote that God had created all the visible and invisible things, which include thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers, and that Christ had qualified to permanently remove these principalities and powers from any authority or influence. See Col.1:11-20; 2:8-19.

Just what is being referred to by Paul and Peter in these comments? Are these spirit-beings or are these just functions and responsibilities within the governmental structure of the heavenly realm?

According to many biblical accounts, there are spirit-beings who are in positions of authority and rulership in both the heavenly and the physical dimensions of existence, and these beings have authority to access and exercise influence within both realms. Moreover, the biblical record shows that both righteous and unrighteous spirit-beings have the ability to interact with mankind and can have a positive or a negative impact on us.
As we will see, authorities, dominions, principalities, powers, thrones, rule, and rulers are descriptions of various positions, functions, and responsibilities of spirit-beings within the Kingdom of God.

Spirit-beings within the heavenly realm are clearly divided into two distinct groups of individuals with distinct limitations placed on their authority and power. These two groups are the righteous spirit-beings and the evil spirit-beings.

Righteous spirit-beings are those who are loyal to the Sovereign God and Christ and perform their various functions and responsibilities in conformity to God's will in matters concerning God's kingdom, God's earthly family of king-priests, the physical creation, and mankind.

Evil spirits are those who have rebelled against the Sovereign God and Christ and are still free to operate and govern within their original sphere of responsibility, but with extreme limitations placed on their authority and power to interact with God's kingdom, God's earthly family of king-priests, the physical creation, and mankind.

It is important to understand that, although both good and evil spirit-beings of the angelic realm have great authority and power, none have independent authority of their own; all are under the authority of the Sovereign God and Jesus Christ and must adhere to the instructions and laws which govern their existence, functions, and responsibilities. See Psa.103:20-21;104:1-4; Heb.1:13-14.

ANGELS, PRINCIPALITIES, AND POWERS

The apostle Paul explains the following to the elect at Rome about the security they have because of the love their heavenly Father and their Savior have for them:

"As it is written, For your sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom.8:36-39 KJV).

Clearly, no physical thing or evil spirit can separate a person from their heavenly Father if that person has a harmonious relationship with him.

The following definitions of the words angels, principalities, and powers used in Romans 8:38 will help to more clearly explain what the spirit entities are which are actively attempting to separate the Sovereign Father's earthly children from him and from the salvation that he has offered through his Son.
Angels

In Romans 8:38, the English word *angels* is translated from the Greek word *aggelos*, which means *a messenger*, especially an angelic spirit-being.

Because righteous angels are to minister to the elect and watch over them (Heb.1:13-14), the angels spoken of by Paul can only be those who are attempting to destroy the Sovereign Father's earthly children through various means. Paul warned Timothy of these evil spirits when he wrote the following:

"Now the spirit speaks expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils" (1.Tim 4:1 KJV).

Principalities

The English word *principalities* in Romans 8:38 is translated from the Greek word *arche*, which is a derivative of the Greek word *archomai*, which means *to commence* (in order of time). *Arche* means (properly, abstract) *a commencement*, or (concretely) *chief* (in various applications of order, time, place, or rank).

In verse 38, Paul is speaking of high ranking spirit-beings who are first in order of rank among their peers. These principalities are more than likely high ranking spirit-beings who rebelled against the Sovereign God, either with Satan or at a later time.

Powers

In Romans 8:38, the English word *powers* is translated from the Greek word *dunamis*, which means *force* (literally or figuratively); i.e., especially, *miraculous power* (usually by implication, *a miracle* itself):

In verse 38, Paul speaks of powers in the same context as the other spirit entities and other things which cannot separate the elect from their heavenly Father. Therefore, these powers seem also to be high ranking spirit-beings.

Satan Delegates Power and Authority

The following prophecy in the Book of Revelation is particularly enlightening because it speaks of an evil spirit delegating his power and authority to another evil spirit:

"And the beast which I saw was like to a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority" (Rev.13:2 KJV).
The dragon (i.e., Satan) gives the entity described as the beast supernatural power (Greek *dunamis*) and his seat (i.e., Greek *thronos*; meaning *a stately seat (a throne);* by implication, *power* or (concretely) *a potentate*).

Along with supernatural power and a position of rulership, the dragon also gives the beast the authority to exercise his power and rulership. Logically, one cannot give what one does not possess. Therefore, because the dragon has a high position of power and authority, he also has the power and authority to delegate some of this power and authority to others, thus placing them in a position of authority and rulership below himself. Satan can do this because he is the present god and ruler of the earth (2.Cor:4:3-4).

"And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast. And they worshiped the dragon which gave power to the beast: and they worshiped the beast, saying, Who is like to the beast? who is able to make war with him?" (Rev.13:3-4 KJV).

The English word *power* in Revelation 13:4, is translated from the Greek word *exousia,* which means privilege, (i.e. (subjectively) force, capacity, competency, freedom, or (objectively) mastery (concretely) magistrate, superhuman, potentate, token of control, delegated influence.

The Greek word *exousia* might be better translated *delegated influence* in verse 4 when we consider that the Dragon delegated a position of power and authority to the beast:

"And there was given to him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given to him to continue forty and two months. And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven. And it was given to him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations" (Rev.13:5-7 KJV).

Verse 7 clearly shows that this individual not only has a position of rulership but also the authority to exercise his power and rulership.

**Prince of the Power of the Air**

While explaining to the elect at Ephesus about their spiritual condition prior to their being called to salvation by the Sovereign God and subsequently being saved from the second death in the lake of fire through the sacrifice of Christ, Paul writes that their past condition was due to the influence of the prince of the power of the air:
"And you has he [i.e., God the Father] made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins; Wherein in time past you walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now works in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others" (Eph. 2:1-3 KJV).

There are two Greek words in verse 2 that, when understood in context, reveal the tremendous authority and power that this prince of the power of the air wields over the entire earth.

The English words prince and power are translated from the Greek words archon and exousia. Archon means a first (in rank or power) and exousia means (subjectively) force, capacity, competency, freedom, or (objectively) mastery (concretely) magistrate, superhuman, potentate, token of control), delegated influence. In the context of Ephesians 2:2, the meaning of these Greek words tell us that Paul is speaking of an evil spirit who rules over the atmosphere above the earth and this evil spirit influences people to live in disobedience to the Sovereign God's truth and way of truth.

The Greek word exousia translated as power in verse 2 might be better translated as delegated influence because it relates to a position of power and authority over a sphere of activity that this spirit-being has been given or allowed to have.

But, what is so important about the earth's atmosphere that would make it worthwhile for a high ranking spirit-being to have authority, rule, and power over it?

In order to understand why rule of the atmosphere above the earth is important, it must be understood that spirit thought and energy is not constrained by physical law and can manipulate this physical existence in ways humans cannot. Spirit thought controlling spirit-energy is the power which created this physical dimension of existence and all that it contains. Therefore, spirit thought and energy can be projected and manifested in the physical realm of existence in many forms.

The atmosphere above the earth is an exceptionally important medium for an evil spirit to rule, because it is through this medium that he can influence vast numbers of people through projecting thoughts and emotions to them. Additionally, control of the atmosphere means that a spirit-being who rules it can cause atmospheric disturbances, such as storms and drought.

Therefore, the control and the ability to manipulate the atmosphere and the things contained within it is extremely important to evil spirits and their ability to influence and manipulate mankind and world events.
It seems logical that, because Satan has authority and rulership over
the earth (2.Cor:4:3-4), he also has authority and rulership over the
earth's atmosphere. However, if the Power of the Air is a symbolic
reference to a spirit-being other than Satan, this would not negate Satan's
authority over this individual or the atmosphere, because Satan in clearly
in authority over all evil spirits.

**REVEALED KNOWLEDGE**

Within the New Testament there are many scriptures that speak of
mysteries, which are revealed to those who are called to salvation during
the gospel age. In his letter to the Ephesians, Paul writes about hidden
mysteries being revealed to spirit-beings through the church. But, what
are the things being revealed to these spirits and why were they kept
secret?

In Ephesians 3:1-9, Paul explains that he has been given insight into
God's secrets. These are the secrets that the Sovereign God who created
all things through Christ had hidden from mankind in the past and which
Paul was now preaching to the general public as an explanation and
witness of the Sovereign God's plan of salvation:

"To me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given,
that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of
Christ; And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the
mystery, which from the beginning of the world has been hid in God,
who created all things by Jesus Christ" (Eph.3:8-9 KJV).

As Paul continues this train of thought in verse 10, he points out that
one of the reasons for revealing these mysteries was to give this
understanding to the principalities and powers in heaven:

"To the intent that now through the church, the manifold wisdom of
God should be made known to the principalities and powers in the
heavenly realms according to his eternal purpose which he
accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Eph.3:10-11 KJV Para.).

The English words *principalities* and *powers* in Ephesians 3:10 are
translated from the Greek words *arche* and *exousia*, which respectively
mean *chief* (in order, time, place, or rank) and *privilege* (i.e.,
(subjectively) force, capacity, competency, freedom, or (objectively)
mastery (concretely), magistrate, superhuman, potentate, token of
control), delegated influence.

Because these *principalities* and *powers* are in the heavenly realm,
we can safely assume that these rulers and authorities serve in some
capacity within the governmental system of the Sovereign God's
kingdom. But why is this knowledge which had formerly been kept
secret from all spirit-beings now being revealed to them during the
gospel age?
There are a number of places in the New Testament showing that the mysteries of God about the plan and purpose for the creation of mankind were kept secret until the advent of Christ and these secrets are revealed to those whom the Sovereign Father calls to salvation during the gospel age.

**Hidden From Prophets and Kings**

One day when the seventy returned from proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, they were eager to tell Christ of their accomplishments and that they had used the ability he had given them to control evil spirits:

"And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject to us through your name. And he said to them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven. Behold, I give to you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you. Nevertheless in this do not rejoice that the spirits are subject to you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven" (Lk.10:17-20 KJV Para.).

After explaining to the seventy that there was something greater to rejoice about than the authority to wield supernatural power, Jesus began to speak of hidden knowledge that is revealed by the Sovereign Father and himself:

"In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank you, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou have hid these things from the wise and prudent, and have revealed them to babes: even so, Father; for so it seemed good in your sight. All things are delivered to me of my Father: and no man knows who the Son is, but the Father; and who the Father is, but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him" (Lk.10:21-22 KJV Para.).

The knowledge of who the Sovereign Father is and who his son is and what the Father is working out on earth had been kept secret until the advent of Christ and was being revealed for the first time to these individuals and those whom the Father would call to salvation after them. Notice what Jesus said to the twelve disciples:

"And he turned him to his disciples, and said privately, Blessed are the eyes which see the things that you see: For I tell you, that many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which you see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which you hear, and have not heard them" (Lk.10:23-24 KJV Para.).

Jesus said the things he was revealing to these men had been kept secret from prophets and kings who desired to know and understand the purpose for this physical existence.
Hidden From Angels

In the introduction of the apostle Peter's letter to the scattered elect throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, he wrote of the precious gift of being called to salvation and the reward that is promised to those who overcome the obstacles of this life, and then he began to write of hidden knowledge:

"Of that salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come to you: Searching for the time and circumstances that the spirit of Christ which was in them plainly stated, when it foretold the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. It was not revealed to them, these were serving you in the things they recorded, which are now reported to you by them that have preached the gospel to you by the holy spirit sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into" (1.Pet.1:10-12 Para.).

Although the prophets diligently searched for an understanding into the methodology of salvation that God promised and the sequence of events that would bring about the advent of the Messiah who was to bring this salvation, they were not allowed to know or understand these things. Not even the angels who existed before mankind were allowed to know and understand how and when these things would be accomplished.

The English word desire used in connection with the angels is translated from the Greek word epithumeo, which means to set the heart upon (i.e., to long for).

We know from a number of scriptures that God's plan to create mankind in order to create more immortal god-beings was formulated and finalized before the creation of the earth (1.Cor.2:6-8; 15:51-54; Eph.1:2-4; 2.Tim.1:8-10; 1.Pet.1:18-20; Titus 1:1-3).

The millions and perhaps billions of spirit-beings in God's vast realm must have seen this dimension of existence created, seen the earth created, seen it destroyed after Satan's rebellion, and seen it refurbished and mankind brought into existence, yet without knowing the exact details of God's plan for the salvation of humanity or the underlying reason for all of this effort.

Rebellious and Loyal Angels

Why was it important to keep much of the knowledge about this physical existence and mankind from angels until the advent of Christ and why is it now important for the loyal spirit rulers and authorities noted in Ephesians 3:8-11 to know and understand the mysteries that are revealed to the Sovereign Father's earthly children?
Sometime before the creation of mankind, a great number of angels followed Satan in his rebellion against the Sovereign God and these spirit-beings still oppose his rule over them. Knowing this, we can begin to understand the reasons for keeping vital information about the creation of this physical existence and mankind a closely guarded secret.

Did God know in advance that vast numbers of the spirit-beings he had created would rebel against him? Of course not! But, he did know that they had the potential to rebel, because he had given them intelligence and allowed them the ability to think, reason, and make decisions based on their knowledge and acquired information.

Angels were created with the freedom to make decisions and some made a very bad choice when they listened to Satan and rebelled against their Creator. Therefore, keeping back information essential to the success of the Sovereign's purpose and plan for mankind was wise until it became absolutely necessary to reveal this knowledge to those who had a need to know.

If rebellious spirit-beings clearly understood information essential to the success of the Sovereign God's plan and purpose for mankind, along with every detail about this plan and how the interaction between the Sovereign God, his Son, his loyal angels, and mankind is accomplished, these rebellious spirits would be in a better position to frustrate God's plan.

Allowing loyal angels to understand essential details about the Sovereign God's plan for humanity helps them to more fully appreciate their functions and responsibilities in ministering to those who are called to salvation. See Heb.1:13-14.

**Thrones, Dominions, Principalities, and Powers**

The apostle Paul wrote to the elect at Ephesus and told them the following about their enemy:

"Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 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. Wherefore take to you the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand" (Eph.6:10-13 KJV).

Clearly, these principalities, powers, rulers of the darkness, and spiritual wickedness in high places are all references to evil spirits who occupy positions of power and authority and have the ability interact in both the spirit and the physical realms. It is against these evil spirits and their evil influence that a person with the indwelling of the holy spirit must be on guard against and resist.
To the faithful saints at Colosse, the apostle Paul writes the following to encourage them to stand firm in the faith:

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

Being delivered out of the power of darkness is an allusion to being delivered from sin and out from under the influence of evil.

"In whom we have redemption, even the forgiveness of sins: Who is the image of the invisible God [God the Father], the firstborn of every creature: For by him [Christ] were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they are thrones or dominions or principalities or powers all things were created by him [Christ], and for him [God the Father]" (Col.1:14-16 KJV Para.).

The English words thrones and dominions in verse 16 are translated from the Greek words thronos and kuriotes, which respectively mean a stately seat; (by implication, power or a potentate) and a ruler.

These verses show an organizational system in the heavenly realm with positions of authority and rulership, and that spirit-beings were created by the Creator God (who became Christ) to fill these positions of authority and rulership within the Sovereign God's governmental system.

"And he [Christ] is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell: And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things to himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven" (Col.1:17-20 KJV Para.).

Again we see that all things, including spirit-beings, were created by Christ to fulfill functions and responsibilities within the Sovereign God's ever expanding kingdom.

**Christ's Authority**

In Paul's warning to the elect at Colosse to beware of philosophy, deceitful individuals, and human traditions, he wrote the following concerning people whose beliefs and practices were in opposition to God and who would attempt to subvert, confuse, and lead the Colossians astray in their worship and service to God:
"Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. For in him dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And you are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power" (Col.2:8-10 KJV).

Christ is in a position of authority over principalities and powers. This is important because Christ also delegates some of this authority to the elect as they resist and do battle with powerful evil spirits.

The English word complete in verse 10, is translated from the Greek word 
player, which can mean to cram (a net), level up (a hollow), or (figuratively) to furnish, satisfy, execute (an office), finish (a period or task). These Colossians were complete in their transformation from what they were as humans with the spirit of man into a son of the Father's new creation with his holy spirit dwelling within them.

In Colossians 2:10, Paul speaks of positions of authority and power in the spirit realm. He further explains the Colossians' spiritual status and why Christ is now in authority over all of these positions of authority and power in verses 11-14:

"In whom [Christ] also you are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ; Buried with him in baptism, wherein also you are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who has raised him from the dead. And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, has he made alive together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross" (Col.2:11-14 KJV).

After explaining that we have our sins forgiven and secure eternal and immoral life through the sacrifice of Christ, Paul says that Christ has gained victory over the spirits in positions of authority and power over the earth. Until Christ qualified to depose them, Satan and other evil spirits were in uncontested rulership of the earth.

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

The English word spoiled is translated from the Greek word 
apekduomai, which is only found in Colossians 2:15. The meaning of 
apekduomai is hotly contested among some Bible scholars because of the context of verse 15 and the fact that this word can mean put off, strip, unclothe or to divest. However, when 
apekduomai is viewed in the context of Christ being the sacrifice for a person's sins, which is the theme of verse 15, it makes sense that this word could mean "permanently removed." This meaning would then be consistent with scriptures showing the eventual removal of all evil from the Kingdom of God. See Mal.4:1-3; 2.Pet.3:9-13; Rev.22:14-15.
Paul explained in Colossians 2:10 that Christ is in authority over all spirit-beings who rule with authority in the Sovereign God's kingdom (i.e., all principality and power). Therefore, when through his sacrifice Christ became the method through which a person's sins can be removed, he also qualified to permanently remove these principalities and powers from any authority and influence over the earth and mankind. In this context, *apekduomai* speaks to a permanent removal. Moreover, through his perfect life and perfect sacrifice, Christ qualified to sit at his heavenly Father's right hand of power over all others in his Father's kingdom. See Heb.1:1-5; 10:1-14.

**At the Right Hand of God**

In Peter's letter to the scattered elect throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, he says that Christ "is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject to him" (1.Pet.3:22 KJV).

The English words *authorities* and *powers* in verse 22, are translated from the Greek words *exousia* and *dunamis*, which respectively mean *privilege* (in this case) and *delegated influence* (because it relates to a position of power and authority over a sphere of activity and miraculous power); (usually by implication), a miracle itself.

Peter shows that Christ is in authority over all spirit-beings who rule through offices and positions of authority in God's kingdom.

In his prayer before he was lead away to be crucified, Jesus said, "And now, O Father, you glorify me with your own self with the glory which I had with you before the world was" (Jn.17:5 KJV Para.).

Christ who was the Creator God prior to his coming to earth and becoming human is again at the right hand of authority next to the Sovereign God and is over all positions of authority and rulership in his heavenly Father's kingdom.

**All Things Put Under Christ**

In his first letter to the elect at Corinth, Paul speaks of a time far into the future after God's plan for mankind has been completed and after the elect are reigning as immortal beings in the Kingdom of God:

"Then comes the end, when he [Christ] shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power" (1.Cor.15:24 KJV).

This prophetic event will only come to pass after all spirit-beings who oppose the Sovereign God and are now in positions of authority and rulership have been removed from power in the Sovereign's realm. The removal of these beings from power will necessitate an organizational restructuring within the Sovereign God's governmental system in which the elect who will be immortal sons of God seem to be involved. See 1.Cor.6:1-3; Heb.2:5-8.
"For he [Christ] must reign, till he has put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For he [God the Father] has put all things under his [Christ's] feet. But when he says, all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued to him, then shall the Son also himself be subject to him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all" (1.Cor.15:25-28 KJV Para.).

This tells us that, at some point in time, Christ will reign over his heavenly Father's kingdom and all evil spirits will have been eliminated from his heavenly realm.

**Dominions**

Chapter 7 of the Book of Daniel contains a prophecy which speaks of the destruction of the evil religious and governmental system that exists at Christ's return. Christ will destroy this evil system and replace it with the Sovereign God's worship system and government, which Christ will rule over with the Sovereign Father's elect children:

"But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it to the end. And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him" (Dan.7:26-27 KJV).

Here, the English word *dominion* (both singular and plural forms) is translated from the Aramaic word *sholtan*, which means *empire*. All the nations of this world will come under the rule of Christ and the elect who will be immortal spirit-being in the kingdom of God. The reference to all dominions could also refer to the nations of spirit-beings which will exist after the new heaven and the new earth are created. See Rev.21:1-17.

**STARS AND POWERS**

Matthew records that, immediately following the catastrophic events noted in the Book of Revelation which prepare the earth for its invasion by the Messiah and his army of spirit-beings, Jesus foretold the fall of stars from heaven and the shaking of the "powers" of heaven:

"Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory" (Matt.24:29-30 KJV). See also Mk.13:24-26.
A casual reading of this prophecy seems to indicate that the laws that govern these celestial bodies will be disrupted and our solar system and the universe will be thrown into chaos. Although this may explain some of these heavenly events, Jesus' reference to stars falling and powers being shaken may refer to the removal of spirit-beings, who are also described as stars and powers in the heavenly realm, from their positions of rulership.

The Greek language used by Matthew easily accommodates this explanation. The English words powers and shaken are translated from the Greek words dunamis and saleou, which respectively mean miraculous power (usually by implication, a miracle itself) and to agitate, rock, topple or (by implication) destroy; figuratively, to disturb, incite.

Sometimes, in order to understanding the full impact of what Jesus had to say on a given topic, it is necessary to review more than one gospel narrative. When we review what Luke records about Jesus' explanation of the catastrophic events leading up to his return, we can see that these stars do not fall from heaven, but are included in the signs that come along with the destruction being reigned on the earth prior to Christ's return. Therefore, it seems that Luke is recording additional information about these events that is not recorded by Matthew and Mark.

"And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory" (Lk.21:25-27 KJV). See Acts 2:17-20.

The English word stars in verse 25 is translated from the Greek word astron, which means a constellation or a single star (natural or artificial). The use of the Greek word astron clearly indicates celestial bodies included in the heavenly signs which are a part of the events during the time of great tribulation, whereas the stars noted by Matthew and Mark are involved in events after this tribulation.

Luke's narrative clearly isolates the powers of heaven being shaken as a separate event and easily accommodates the explanation that powers being shaken refers to spirit-beings being removed from their positions of rulership in the heavenly realm as described in Matthew and Mark.

**SUMMARY**

The biblical text clearly documents a governmental structure within the Kingdom of God within which there are various offices and positions of authority referred to as authorities, dominions, principalities, powers, thrones, rule, and rulers.
Knowing every detail about the governmental structure of the Kingdom of God is not of major importance to those being called to salvation; otherwise, this information would be documented in the biblical text. However, knowing that some of the spirit-beings holding various offices and positions of authority in the heavenly realm are enemies of the Sovereign Father's earthly family of king-priests, and that these have the authority to exercise their influence within both the heavenly and the physical realms of existence is important to a person's salvation.

Evil spirits in positions of authority and power in both the heavenly and physical realms are a clear and present danger to members of God the Father's earthly family of king-priests; otherwise, the apostle Paul would not have issued his many warnings about them and he would not have given detailed instructions about how to resist their influence, do battle with them, and defeat them.

Clearly, Satan and other evil spirits are continually seeking ways to destroy mankind in general and especially individuals whom the Sovereign Father calls to salvation during this gospel age. These evil spirits show no mercy to those individuals that they are able to influence or conquer. Therefore, if you are to obtain victory over evil spirits, you must first know that they exist. Then, you must know that you have spiritual protection and must become expert in using spiritual weaponry to conquer them.

By B.L. Cocherell
There are many scriptures that seem to describe spirit-beings as stars and spirits. However, the only way to determine if the words stars and spirits are used to denote spirit-beings is to look at the context in which these words are used, review the text in its original language, and carefully compare it with other parallel or similar texts on the same subject. Even then, it is sometimes not clear whether a text is describing a spirit-being or a celestial body. This chapter discusses scriptural references to stars and spirits where these words may be symbolic of spirit-beings.

STARS

The following are a number of biblical texts in which stars are mentioned that could be describing a class of spirit-beings as stars.

Job 38:4-7

During his conversation with Job, the Creator God refers to stars in the context of creation:

"Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth? Speak, if you have understanding. Who has laid the measures of it, if you know? or who has 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 KJV Para.).

In verse 7, the English phrase morning stars sang is translated from three Hebrew words: boer, which means dawn as the break of day; kowkab, which means (in the sense of) blazing as a star, (figuratively) a prince; and ranan, which means shout or to creak or to emit a shrill grating or chirping sound.

The English phrase the sons of in verse 7 is translated from the Hebrew word ben, which means a son (as a builder of the family name), in the widest sense (of literal and figurative relationship, including grandson, subject, nation, quality or condition. The word ben is a derivative of the Hebrew word banah; a primitive root, meaning to build.

Because the context of this text is the creation of the earth and the language of verse 7 does not preclude the stars being symbolic of spirit-beings, it is a possibility that the morning stars identify another class of spirit-beings who were also present with those described as builders when the earth was being formed.
Psalms 147:4

According to the psalmist, God has numbered and named all the stars:

"He tells the number of the stars; he calls them all by their names" (Psa.147:4 KJV).

Here, the word stars is translated from the Hebrew word kowkab, which means (in the sense of) blazing as a star, (figuratively) a prince. The word names is translated from the Hebrew word shem, which means an appellation (as a mark or memorial of individuality); by implication honor, authority, character. The use of these words by the psalmist allows the possibility that these stars are symbolic of a class of spirit-beings.

Isaiah 14:12-14

This chapter contains the record of Satan's arrogant, vain, and rebellious attitude which caused his downfall, as well as a reference to his desire to rise above the stars of God:

"How are you fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how are you cut down to the ground, who weakened the nations! For you have said in your 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" (Isa.14:12-14 KJV Para.).

Satan intended to invade the Sovereign God's heavenly realm, remove him from power, and become sovereign over the heavenly realm and its subjects. Because the dimension of existence that Satan intended to invade and conquer is the heavenly realm, it seems logical that the reference to the stars of God is a reference to spirit-beings who are high-level officials in God's kingdom.

Jude 13

Jude reminds those to whom he is writing that some rebellious angels are chained in a prison of darkness until the day they will be punished by fire. He also makes reference to a group of spirit-beings he describes as "wandering stars":

"Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever" (Jude 13).

The indication is that these spirit-beings described as stars are placed in a prison of blackness and darkness where they are to be confined alone forever.
For a thinking sentient being, there could be no greater or torturous punishment than to be totally cut off from all other beings and left alone with one's thoughts in total darkness forever. This is the torment that demons fear more than death. Perhaps some are already experiencing this punishment, as indicated in Jude 6 and 1.Peter 3:19.

Prison and Punishment

There are a number of references in the Book of Enoch which clearly describe stars and the host of heaven as spirit-beings instead of celestial bodies. After being shown many things concerning this physical universe and how some of the major aspects of it function in an orderly manner, Enoch is shown seven stars and the host of heaven who have rebelled against the Sovereign God and have been placed in a prison to await their punishment:

"And there I saw a terrible thing: seven stars, like great burning mountains and like spirits, that petitioned me. The angel said: "This is the place of the consummation of heaven and earth; it is a prison for the stars of heaven, and for the host of heaven. And the stars that roll over the fire are they who have transgressed the command of God before their rising, because they did not come forth in their time. And he was enraged at them, and bound them till the time of the consummation of their sins in the year of the mystery" (Enoch 18:13-16, Book 1, Watchers).

On another occasion, Enoch was shown seven stars who had been placed in a prison because they had disregarded the Sovereign God's commands. Also note that these seven stars who are spirit-beings will be in this prison for thousands of years before they receive their punishment:

"And I went around to a place where not one thing took place. And I saw there something terrible, no high heavens, no founded earth, but a void place, awful and terrible. And there I saw seven stars of heaven, tied together to it, like great mountains, and flaming as if by fire. At that time I said: "On account of what sin are these bound, and why have they been cast here?" (Enoch 21:1-4, Book 1, Watchers).

"And then answered Uriel, one of the holy angels, who was with me, conducting me, and said to me: "Enoch, concerning what do you ask, and concerning what do you inquire, and ask and are anxious? These are of the stars who have transgressed the command of God, the Highest, and are bound here till ten thousand worlds [i.e., ages/years], the number of the days of their sins, shall have been consummated" (Enoch 21:5-6, Book 1, Watchers).
The Seven Stars

The first chapter of the Book of Revelation mentions seven stars with Christ, but what are these stars and why are they with Christ?

After John hears a voice behind him telling him to write what he sees in a book and send it to the seven churches located in Asia, he turns and sees Christ in his glorified form with seven stars:

"And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shines in his strength" (Rev.1:16 KJV).

If the phrase "And he had in his right hand seven stars" is an accurate translation of the Greek text, it would mean that Christ is symbolically holding these seven stars in his hand. However, this translation does not fit the context of what follows in the rest of the Book of Revelation about these seven stars.

The English word in from this phrase is translated from the Greek word en, which is a primary preposition denoting a fixed position (in place, time or state), and (by implication) instrumentality (medially or constructively), i.e., a relation of rest in, at, (up-) on, or, by. Therefore, the statement about the seven stars can just as easily be translated, "And he had at his right hand seven stars." This seems to be a more accurate translation when the messages to the seven churches are reviewed.

In verses 19 and 20, Christ explains the mystery of the seven stars:

"Write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter: The mystery of the seven stars which you saw at my right hand, and the seven golden lamp-stands. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven lamp-stands which you saw are the seven churches" (Rev.1:19-20 KJV Para.).

Here, the English word angels is translated from the Greek word aggelos, which means to bring tidings; a messenger; especially an angel; by implication, a pastor.

Some think that these seven stars with Christ refer to the seven angels of the seven churches located in Asia; however, this does not seem logical for a number of reasons. The messages to these seven churches seem to apply to each congregation as a whole, each greeting is directed specifically to the individual who is leading each congregation, like in the message to the congregation at Ephesus:

"To the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things says he that has the seven stars at his right hand, who walks in the midst of the seven golden lamp-stands [the churches]" (Rev.2:1 KJV Para).
The English word *angel* in verse 1 is translated from the Greek word *aggelos*, which means to *bring tidings*; *a messenger*; especially an *angel*; by implication, a *pastor*. Therefore the first sentence of this verse can just as easily be translated, "*To the pastor of the church of Ephesus write.*" This seems to be a more accurate translation when the specifics of the message to this leader are reviewed in the context of the reprimand.

In all of the greetings to the seven churches, Christ tells the individual greeted that he knows exactly what he has done and is doing (i.e., his works):

"*I know your works, and your labor, and your patience, and how you cannot bear them which are evil: and you have tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and have found them liars: And have borne, and have patience, and for my name's sake have labored, and have not fainted*" (Rev.2:2-3 KJV Para.).

Instead of being directed at an angel, this message is directed at the pastor or leader of the church, because angels neither participate in the daily activities of a congregation nor make decisions concerning how each congregation is to conduct their affairs.

The following reprimand to the leader of the Ephesian congregation clearly shows that this individuals is not a spirit-being, because what he is told and asked to do is in the context of an individual who is being given an opportunity for salvation:

"*Nevertheless I have somewhat against you, because you have left your first love. Remember therefore from whence you are fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come to you quickly, and will remove your lamp-stand out of its place, except you repent*" (Rev.2:4-5 KJV Para.).

Because the lamp-stand symbolizes the entire Ephesian group, Jesus is saying that he will remove them from among his followers, which also means that, if they do not repent, they will loose their salvation and will not enter the Family and Kingdom of God.

Repentance is the process through which the Sovereign Father's earthly children reestablish and maintain a harmonious relationship with him. Angels that rebel against God do not have this option; they cannot avail themselves of the process of repentance and have their sins forgiven, because they do not have a savior.

The seven stars which the apostle John saw at Christ's right hand do not symbolize the pastors of the seven churches that were located in Asia. These stars are spirit-beings which have functions and responsibilities in assisting Christ as he oversees and directs his heavenly Father's kingdom. From what is recorded in the Book of Revelations it seems that one of their responsibilities involved some interaction with the seven churches in Asia.
The Seven Spirits

In the first chapter of the Book of Revelation, John records that there are seven spirits before the Sovereign God's throne:

"John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace be to you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven spirits which are before his [God the Father] throne; And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. To him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, And has made us kings and priests to God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen" (Rev.1:4-6 KJV Para).

It is important to understand that the seven spirits which are mentioned as being in front of God the Father's throne are also in front of Christ's throne as he sits at the right hand of his Father in heaven, administrating the affairs of his Father's kingdom for him. See Matt.26:63-64; Acts 2:32-34; Col.3:1-2; Heb.8:1.

In the greeting to the pastor at Sardis, Christ is shown with the seven spirits of God, as well as the seven stars. This indicates that they are all under Christ's authority and control:

"And to the angel [pastor] of the church in Sardis write; These things says he that has the seven spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know your works, that you have a name that you live, and are dead" (Rev.3:1 KJV Para).

After John receives the messages to the seven churches, he is told to come and see things that will come to pass in the future, and he observes seven spirits among many other things at the Sovereign God's throne:

"After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up here, and I will show you things which must be hereafter' (Rev.4:1 KJV Para).

"And immediately I was in the spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne. And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like an emerald. And round about the throne were four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw twenty four elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold. And out of the throne proceeded lightning and thundering and voices; and there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God. And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal: and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four beasts full of eyes before and behind' (Rev.4:2-6 KJV Para).
"You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for you have created all things, and for your pleasure they are and were created" (Rev.4:11KJV Para).

We know that the spirit-being described in verses 2 and 3 is the Sovereign God because of what is said in verses 4 through 6 of this chapter and especially in verse 11, which explains that all things which were and are to be created are for his pleasure.

The scriptures show that it was the Creator God who became Christ who created all things for the Sovereign God. See Jn.1:1-14; Eph.3:8-9.

"And out of the throne proceeded lightning and thundering and voices: and there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God" (Rev.4:5 KJV Para).

Verse 5 shows seven lamps burning before the Sovereign God's throne which are described as the seven spirits of God. These burning lamps seem to be the same seven spirits mentioned in Revelation 1:4, because Christ sits on a throne at the right side of his heavenly Father's throne.

Revelation 5:1-6 shows Christ taking the book with the seven seals, which contain the plagues that will be poured out on earth in preparation for his return to establish his heavenly Father's government on earth:

"And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals. And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof? And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon. And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon. And one of the elders said to me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof" (Rev.5:1-5 KJV).

"And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth. And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne" (Rev.5:6-7 KJV).

The Lamb in verse 6 is Christ, God the Father's symbolic lamb who sacrificed himself in order provide the method through which mankind's sins can be forgiven. Horns prophetically symbolize nations or heads of governments. Therefore, these seven horns possibly symbolize rulers over seven different spiritual nations or seven different divisions of the Sovereign God's governmental system.
It is logical to assume that the seven eyes are the same seven spirit-beings mentioned in numerous scriptures who are in close association with Christ and are sent throughout the earth to gather information and report back to the Sovereign God and Christ. It can be assumed that these seven spirit-beings are sent into the earth to perform some task.

The Angel Wormwood

In Revelation 8:10, an unnamed angel sounds a trumpet to announce the poisoning of a third of the rivers and fresh water from underground sources:

"And the third angel sounded, and there fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters; And the name of the star is called Wormwood: and the third part of the waters became wormwood; and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter" (Rev.8:10-11 KJV).

The English word Wormwood in verse 11 is translated from the Greek word ἄσπινθος, which means a type of bitterness, figuratively a calamity.

Notice that this event only impacts one-third of the rivers and fresh water from underground sources; it does not impact the vast oceans. Therefore, this event must be the work of an intelligent being with tremendous power at his disposal. The context reveals that the star is a spirit-being who is named Wormwood, which is the method he uses to kill.

The Star Abaddon/Apollyon

In Revelation 9:1, another unnamed angel sounds a trumpet to announce the first woe, and then a spirit-being described as a star opens an extremely deep hole in the earth:

"And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven to the earth: and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit. And he opened the bottomless pit; and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit" (Rev.9:1-2 KJV).

Verses 3 through 10 describe the creatures that come out of the smoke from the pit, along with the tremendous pain and agony that they inflict on those who do not have God's mark of protection in their foreheads.

"And they had a king over them, which is the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue has his name Apollyon" (Rev.9:11).

Verse 11 shows that the spirit-being who is authorized to open the pit also rules over the harmful creatures that come out of the smoke from the pit.
The English word *king* in verse 11 is translated from the Greek word *basileus*, which means *a sovereign*. This tells us that this spirit-being who is charged with this important prophetic event is extremely high ranking and powerful.

We are also told that his name is Abaddon/Apollyon. Therefore, it seems logical that the star mentioned in verse 1 is a spirit-being sent to open the pit and send the creatures out to torment those who are not under God's protection.

The name Abaddon is taken from the Hebrew word *abaddown*, which basically means *a perishing or a destroyer* and the Greek name Apollyon means *a destroyer*; therefore, this spirit-being's basic function seems to be destruction.

Some people believe that the spirit-being Abaddon/Apollyon is a demon; however, this is highly unlikely because he is only charged with tormenting the unrighteous people of earth, while those worthy of God's protection are not tormented. It is more likely that this spirit-being is one of God's avenging angels.

**Stars Fall from Heaven**

Matthew records that, immediately following the catastrophic events noted in the Book of Revelation which will prepare the earth for its invasion by the Messiah and his army of spirit-beings, Jesus foretold the following events:

"Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory" (Matt.24:29-30 KJV). See also Mk.13:24-26.

A casual reading of this prophecy seems to indicate that the laws governing these celestial bodies are disrupted and our solar system and the universe is thrown into chaos. Although this may explain some of these heavenly events, Jesus' reference to stars and powers being shaken may refer to spirit-beings who are also described as stars and powers being removed from the heavenly realm after the war in heaven which will take place shortly before Christ's return:

"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 deceives the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels [i.e., evil spirits under his control] were cast out with him" (Rev.12:7-9 KJV).
During this war, the great red dragon (Satan the Devil) is defeated and cast out of the heavenly realm along with the millions and perhaps billions of evil spirits under his control. Because this is the time when the heavenly realm will be purged of evil spirits who have had access to the heavenly realm, perhaps the stars that Christ says will fall from heaven are also among these spirit-beings who will be cast out of the heavenly realm along with Satan.

The Greek language used by Matthew and Mark seems to support this explanation. The English words powers and shaken are translated from the Greek words dunamis and saleou, which respectively mean miraculous power (usually by implication, a miracle itself) and to agitate, rock, topple or (by implication) destroy; figuratively, to disturb, incite.

In order to understand the full impact of what Jesus said on a given topic, it is sometimes important to review more than one gospel narrative. When we review what Luke records about Jesus' explanation of the catastrophic events leading up to his return, we notice that these stars do not fall from heaven, but they are included in the signs that come along with the destruction being reigned on the earth prior to Christ's return; therefore, it seems that Luke records extra information about these events that is not recorded by Matthew and Mark:

"And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory" (Lk. 21:25-27 KJV). See Acts 2:17-20.

The English word stars in verse 25 is translated from the Greek word astron, which means a constellation or a single star (natural or artificial). The use of the Greek word astron clearly indicates celestial bodies which will be among the heavenly signs that are a part of the events during the time of great tribulation; whereas, the stars noted by Matthew and Mark are involved in events after this tribulation.

Luke's narrative clearly isolates the powers of heaven being shaken as a separate event and helps explain that the powers being shaken are spirit-beings who will be being removed from their positions of rulership in the heavenly realm.

**Stars Come to Earth**

The prophetic events concerning spirit-beings described as stars being evicted from the heavenly realm and arriving on earth is also described in a prophecy recorded by Daniel about the end of the age and an exceptionally powerful spirit-being described as a little horn:
"Therefore the he goat waxed very great: and when he was strong, the great horn was broken; and for it came up four notable ones toward the four winds of heaven. And out of one of them came forth a little horn, which waxed exceeding great, toward the south, and toward the east, and toward the pleasant land" (Dan.8:8-9 KJV).

Verses 8 and 9 speak to the process by which the little horn who is actually an evil spirit ascends to power on earth just before Christ returns.

"And it waxed great, even to the host of heaven; and it cast down some of the host and of the stars to the ground, and stamped upon them" (Dan.8:10 KJV).

Verse 10 tells us that this spirit-being described as a little horn is powerful enough to challenge the Sovereign God's loyal and righteous angels and to force some of the hosts (i.e., less powerful evil spirits) and stars (i.e., higher ranking and more powerful evil spirits) who inhabit the heavenly realm to earth in order to abuse them and impose his will on them.

Whether or not this powerful evil spirit actually forces other spirit-beings described as stars to earth or is just the cause of them being thrust out of heaven, the result is the same. When these stars arrive on earth they are subject to the will of an extremely powerful spirit-being described as the little horn.

In verse 11 of this prophecy, the powerful spirit-being of verse 10 even challenges Christ who rules all of the Sovereign God's spirit-servants. The little horn also stops the daily sacrifices that are being practiced at Jerusalem just before Christ returns:

"Yes, he magnified himself even to the prince of the host, and by him the daily sacrifice was taken away, and the place of his sanctuary was cast down" (Dan.8:11 KJV).

The Morning Star and the Promise of Rulership

Before his death, Jesus told his disciples that he was going to prepare an office of responsibility for them in his Father's Kingdom:

"In my Father's house are many rooms [i.e., offices or positions of authority]; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am" (Jn.14:2-3 NIV).

Christ says that those who successfully enter the Sovereign Father's kingdom as his immortal sons are elevated to positions of rulership and leadership in his governmental system.

"To him that overcomes will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne" (Rev.3:21 KJV).
"And he that overcomes, and keeps my works to the end, to him will I give power over the nations: And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father. And I will give him the morning star" (Rev.2:26-28 KJV).

It is interesting that Christ refers to himself as the "bright and morning star" (Rev.22:16) and promises in the context of rulership to give the overcomer "the morning star." Because Christ is second in authority after the Sovereign Father whose future immortal sons are under Christ's authority, the star Christ will give to the overcomers in the context of rulership cannot be himself.

Perhaps, because stars are shown to be powerful spirit-beings in God's kingdom, this references to the morning star could be an extremely high ranking spirit-being in God's governmental system which will serve under the sons of God as they carry out their administrative functions in the Kingdom. Another possible meaning of being given the morning star is that the elect are promised to inherit everything, including this solar system in which Venus is a planet referred to as the "morning star," because it appears in the east before sunrise.

**Supervision of Angels**

In the following reprimand to the church at Corinth, the apostle Paul wrote the following about their behavior and their future responsibilities in the kingdom of God:

"Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints? Do you not know that the saints shall judge the world? And if the world shall be judged by you, are you unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Don't you know that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life?" (1.Cor.6:1-3 KJV).

The English words judge and judged are from the Greek word krino, which can mean to distinguish, i.e., decide (mentally or judicially); by implication, to try, condemn, punish.

The elect who successfully obtain immortality will be given major positions of authority and responsibility in the Kingdom of God (Rev.2:26; 3:12). Included in the positions of authority and responsibility is the management of angels to assist in the administration of the affairs of the kingdom.
SUMMARY

Both the Bible and the Book of Enoch record a class of high ranking, powerful spirit-beings described as "stars" and "spirits" who inhabit the heavenly realm. Biblical prophecy shows that some of these stars and spirits are obedient to God and some are not. Additionally, the Book of Enoch documents the sins of many of these spirit-beings described as stars, their imprisonment, and their future punishment. Moreover, these powerful spirit-beings who remain loyal to the Sovereign Father will continue to live and serve in his ever expanding kingdom forever.

By B.L. Cocherell
INTRODUCTION TO CHAPTERS 13-17

The Bible indicates that there are hundreds of millions and perhaps billions of spirit-beings within the Sovereign Father's kingdom. Although many biblical researchers have expended a lot of effort attempting to explain the angelic hierarchy within God's government, the reality is that it does not matter to mankind how angels are organized. What does matter is how and why they interact with human beings, because this interaction is what negatively or positively impacts humanity.

Chapters 13-17 focus on how these spirit-beings are relevant to the Sovereign God's overall plan and purpose for mankind.

Chapter 13: Gathering and Reporting Information
Chapter 14: Communications between the Spirit Realm and Humans
Chapter 15: Angels of Death and Destruction
Chapter 16: Ministering Spirits and the Heirs of Salvation
Chapter 17: God's Ministers—A Flaming Fire
The abundance of information in the Bible showing that the Sovereign God and the Creator God who became the Messiah are intimately involved in managing the spirit and physical realms of existence, along with the many scriptures which reveal there are vast numbers of spirit-beings carrying out various functions and responsibilities on their behalf, tell us that spirit-beings are sent throughout the Sovereign God's vast realm to gather information and report back to him and his firstborn son on a regular basis.

Because of the size and complexity of the spirit and physical realms of existence and the hundreds of millions and perhaps billions of spirit-beings serving the Sovereign God in various capacities in his kingdom, it is necessary for him and those in positions of leadership in his government to be kept informed as to the status of important projects, events, and other happenings in his vast realm.

This seems to be especially true concerning gathering and reporting information about the condition of earth and occurrences in this physical dimension of existence as they relate to mankind, because the earth was created to be inhabited by mankind in order for God to expand his family. See Chapter 1, Mysteries and Secrets.

Neither the Sovereign God nor Christ are omnipresent, so they rely on information gathered and reported to them by their vast network of spirit-servants in order to keep them informed about what is happening in the spirit and physical realms. The Sovereign God and Christ need this information to make decisions and issue instructions pertaining to the governing of the spirit and physical existence and the inhabitants of both realms.

The power and essence of the Sovereign God's spirit is omnipresent in the sense that it is the power of God through which all things are created, controlled, and sustained. In this sense, it is truly in all things. However, God the Father and our Savior are not omnipresent; they are individual and unique beings who occupy one place at one time.

If God the Father and Christ were omnipresent, they would have no need to send forth angels to gather information and perform certain tasks for them. But it is well documented in the biblical record that angels indeed are sent to perform tasks and gather information for the Father and Christ. Although the power of God is omnipresent and permeates and sustains the existence of all that exists, spirit-beings are not omnipresent, because they can only occupy one place at a time.
The following examples show that neither the Sovereign God nor the Creator God who became Christ are omnipresent, which is why they send loyal spirit-servants to gather information and report information back to them.

A Personal Investigation

When the Creator God, the two angels, and Abraham were walking toward Sodom the Creator said the following to Abraham:

"Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous; I will go down now, and see whether they have done everything that has been reported to me; and if not, I will know. And the men turned, and went toward Sodom: but Abraham still stood before the Lord" (Gen.18:20-22 KJV Para.).

Why would the Creator find it necessary to come to earth to see for himself if what had been reported to him about the people of Sodom and Gomorrah was as bad as it sounded if he were omnipresent and already knew everything? Logic tells us that, if the Creator already knew every detail about the citizens of Sodom and Gomorrah, he would not have had to verify the information reported to him.

In verses 23 through 32 of this account, Abraham questions the Creator about how many righteous individuals would have to live in Sodom and Gomorrah for him to change his mind about destroying these cities. The Creator says that he will spare the cities if he can find ten righteous individuals in them.

What the questioning of the Creator by Abraham tells us is that, until the Creator completed his investigation, he would not know how many righteous individuals lived in the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. This event again documents that the Creator is not omnipresent and did not know everything that was happening at all times.

The Exodus Passover

The account of the first Passover observed by the Israelites is very brief, but has enough details to show that a tremendous amount of information must be collected, categorized, stored, and continually updated in order for the Sovereign God, the Creator, and their angelic servants to make decisions which affect people and the rest of creation at a specific moment is time.

"For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast, and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute my judgment: I am the Lord. And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where you are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt" (Ex.12:12-13 KJV).
The Creator told Moses and Aaron that he would kill all the firstborn of man and animals in Egypt; therefore, whoever carried out the Creator's instructions must have known the identity of each of the firstborn and exactly where they were located. This gives us an indication of the tremendous amount of knowledge that must be kept current about mankind and this physical environment in order to carry out God's plan for mankind.

**Reporting to the Creator**

If the Sovereign God, the Creator God, and the angels are not omnipresent, there must be some mechanism in place for obtaining and updating information about the Sovereign God's vast physical and spirit realms.

The Book of Job contains the account of Satan going along with other spirit-beings to the Creator God:

"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 to Satan, Where are you coming from? 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 KJV Para.).

Satan reported where he has been and what he had been doing. In verse 12 of this same account, Satan is granted authority and power over all that Job possesses and is then sent on his way.

In chapter 2, another assembly of spirit-beings go to present themselves to God and Satan is among them also:

"Again there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them to present himself before the Lord. And the Lord said to Satan, From Where are you coming from? And Satan answered the Lord, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it" (Job 2:1-2 KJV Para.).

Although only a small portion of the conversation between God and Satan is recorded in Job, chapters 1 and 2, there is enough recorded to document the fact that certain spirit-beings were required to report to the Creator on a regular basis in order to inform him of their activities.

Why would the Creator find it necessary to ask Satan where he had been if he were omnipresent and already knew where Satan had been and what he had been doing?

An analysis of the conversations between the Creator and Satan in the Book of Job clearly shows that at that point in time, the Creator was not omnipresent and did not know everything that Satan was doing.
The Horsemen Gather Information

The prophet Zechariah is shown a series of visions about the end of the age prior to Christ's return in which he sees a number of spirit-beings sent to earth to gather information. In the first vision, Zechariah sees a rider and horses standing among myrtle trees and he asks about their meaning:

"I saw by night, and behold a man riding upon a red horse, and he stood among the myrtle trees that were in the shade; and behind him there were red horses, speckled, and white. Then said I, O my lord, what are these? And the angel that talked with me said to me, I will shew you what these are' (Zech.1:8-9 KJV Para.).

"And the man that stood among the myrtle trees replied and said, These are they whom the Lord has sent to walk to and fro through the earth. And they replied to the angel of the Lord that stood among the myrtle trees, and said, We have walked to and fro through the earth, and, behold, all the earth sits still, and is at rest" (Zech.1:10-11 KJV Para.).

Here are spirit-beings who have been sent to ascertain conditions on earth and report their findings. In the rest of the prophecies, there are other mentions of spirit-beings described as "the eyes of the Lord" being sent to run "to and fro" in the earth ostensibly to gather information about conditions on earth. See Zech.4:10; 6:1-8.

Why would the Creator need to send his spirit-servants to ascertain conditions on earth if he were omnipresent and already knew everything? Obviously, he would not need to do this.

The biblical texts show that the Sovereign God, the Creator God, and other spirit-beings are not omnipresent. This is why one of the functions and responsibilities of some spirit-beings is to gather information and report back to God. See also 2.Chron.16:9; Dan.7:9-10; Rev.5:6-7.

THE EYES OF THE LORD

There are several biblical references which mention the "eyes of the Lord" which seem to be metaphorical; however, in some cases, these seem to be statements of fact about ongoing reconnaissance activity.

Given it is a biblical fact that spirit-beings are sent to earth to gather information and report this information to God, it seems highly likely that, in some of the following texts, the "eyes of the Lord" are references to spirit-beings being sent to perform the task of gathering information.

Zechariah and the Seven Eyes

In the third chapter of Zechariah, which is a prophecy for the end of the age just before Christ returns, there is mention of a mysterious stone laid before the prophetic Joshua that has seven eyes. Additionally, in chapter 4, a stone with seven eyes is put into the hand of the prophetic Zerubbabel:
"For behold the stone that I have laid before Joshua; upon one stone shall be seven eyes: behold, I will engrave the graving thereof, says the Lord of hosts, and I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day" (Zech.3:9 KJV).

"Moreover the word of the Lord came to me, saying, The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house; his hands shall also finish it; and you shall know that the Lord of hosts has sent me to you. For who has despised the day of small things? for they shall rejoice, and shall see the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel with those seven; they are the eyes of the Lord, which run to and fro through the whole earth" (Zech.4:8-10 KJV).

In Zechariah 4:10, the King James translators inserted the word with, which is not in the original text in order to connect the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel, and the seven eyes. Removing the word with from the text reveals the "seven" as the "eyes of the Lord," which run to and fro through the whole earth. Perhaps, these are the same eyes on the stone that is laid before the prophetic Joshua.

It seems clear from the context of this prophecy that these eyes of the Lord are spirit-beings who are sent throughout the earth to gather information. Because these eyes are given into the hand of Zerubbabel, perhaps these spirit-beings play some part in providing him the information he needs to carry out his responsibilities during the end of the age.

**Seven Spirits Sent to Earth**

In chapter 5 of the Book of Revelation, the apostle John is shown a vision of Christ sitting on a throne and being handed a book pertaining to the plagues which will be poured out on the earth and its inhabitants in preparation for his return to conquer the earth and establish the rule of God's Kingdom over it:

"And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth" (Rev.5:6 KJV).

Are these seven horns, seven eyes, and seven spirits sent into the earth to aimlessly roam around without a purpose? Obviously not! These seven are sent for a purpose. Symbolism within the Bible depicts horns as individuals who are in positions of authority and rulership; therefore, it can be assumed that the horns, eyes, and spirits are high ranking officials in the governmental structure of the Kingdom of God. Moreover, eyes are for seeing, so it seems logical that these seven are being sent to gather first-hand information about the earth and what is happening on it.
The Promised Land

In the Book of Deuteronomy, chapter 11, the Creator God encourages the Israelites to practice the laws he has given them and to obey the other things that he told them to do. He also tells them that he is giving their promised land special consideration and his "eyes" (i.e., spirit-servants) are continually monitoring this land:

"The land you are entering to take over is not like the land of Egypt, from which you have come, where you planted your seed and irrigated it by foot as in a vegetable garden. But the land you are crossing the Jordan to take possession of is a land of mountains and valleys that drinks rain from heaven. It is a land the Lord your God cares for; the eyes of the Lord your God are continually on it from the beginning of the year to its end" (Deut.11:10-12 NIV).

The Creator is not omnipresent, so how could he continually watch over the land he was giving to the Israelites? He obviously could not, unless he were there all the time. Because the Creator told the Israelite that he would not go with them into the promised land (Ex.33:1-3), it seems logical that the eyes of the Lord are, in fact, spirit-beings who are assigned to continually make themselves aware of what is going on in the promised land and report these conditions and events to the Creator.

In verses 13 through 15, the Creator says that, if the Israelites obey his commands, he would do certain things for them. Again, how would God know if the Israelites were faithfully keeping his commandments and practicing the laws he gave them? Obviously, he could not know what the Israelite were doing unless there was someone to tell him:

"So if you faithfully obey the commands I am giving you today– to love the Lord your God and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul– then I will send rain on your land in its season, both autumn and spring rains, so that you may gather in your grain, new wine and oil. I will provide grass in the fields for your cattle, and you will eat and be satisfied" (Deut.11:13-15 NIV).

King Asa and God's Eyes

In the second book or Chronicles is the record of king Asa of Judah taking the gold and silver from the temple and giving it to King Ben-Hadad of Aram in order to persuade him to break his treaty with the king of Israel. Ben-Hadad agreed to break the treaty and subsequently invaded the northern tribes of Israel on behalf of king Asa in order to stop them from building fortifications in Ramah.

Because King Asa did not trust the Creator to defend Judah, the Creator sent the seer Hanani to Asa with the following reprimand and promise of punishment:

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"At that time Hanani the seer came to Asa king of Judah and said to him: "Because you relied on the king of Aram and not on the Lord your God, the army of the king of Aram has escaped from your hand. Were not the Cushites and Libyans a mighty army with great numbers of chariots and horsemen? Yet when you relied on the Lord, he delivered them into your hand. For the eyes of the Lord range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him. You have done a foolish thing, and from now on you will be at war" (2.Chron.16:7-9 NIV).

In this account, the spirit-beings described as the "eyes of the Lord" who range throughout the earth seem to have two missions: 1) Ascertain who is committed to God; 2) Assist those who are committed to God.

Psalms and Proverbs

Although David and Solomon may have meant the following metaphorically, other texts point to the fact that God does assign spirit-beings to watch over the righteous and assist them when necessary.

King David wrote the following about God's ongoing concern for those who serve and obey him:

"The eyes of the Lord watch the righteous, and his ears are open to their call for help" (Psa.34:15 KJV Para.).

"He rules by his power for ever; his eyes behold the nations: let not the rebellious exalt themselves" (Psa.66:7 KJV).

"For the ways of man are before the eyes of the Lord, and he ponders all his goings" (Prov.5:21 KJV). See also Jer.16:14-17.

The following proverb clearly shows that God sends spirit-beings throughout the earth to observe what is going on with all people.

"The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good" (Prov.15:3 KJV). See also Amos 9:7-8.

Because there are hundreds of millions and perhaps billions of spirit-beings that God has created to serve him, his spirit-servants could easily be almost everywhere.

The Little Ones

Although there are many other lessons to be learned from the events surrounding the following statement by Christ about the "little ones," an extremely important element of the study about angels as information gathers and reporters is that these angels are assigned to watch over these "little ones" and have an open invitation to speak to the Sovereign Father about them:
"See that you do not despise one of these little ones: for I say to you, that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father that is in heaven. For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost" (Matt.18:10-11 KJV).

The Righteous

The following statement by the apostle Peter may be describing God's eyes, ears, and face metaphorically; however, the writings in the New Testament clearly show that angels were assigned to watch over the lives of the elect of the early church and sometimes interacted with them, presumably because they were assigned to care for these individuals:

"For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil. And who is he that will harm you, if you be followers of that which is good?" (1.Pet.3:12-13 KJV).

THE WATCHERS

The Book of Enoch names six angels described as Watchers who have major responsibilities in the Sovereign God's kingdom:

"And these are the names of the holy angels who watch: Uriel, one of the holy angels, the angel of thunder and of trembling; Rafael, one of the holy angels, the angel of the spirits of men; Raguel, one of the holy angels, who takes vengeance on the earth and the luminaries; Michael, one of the holy angels, namely set over the best portion of men, over the people; Saraqâel, one of the holy angels, who is over the spirits of the children of men who induce the spirits to sin; Gabriel, one of the holy angels, who is over the serpent which is over the Paradise and the Cherubim" (Enoch 20:1-7 Translated from the Ethiopic, by George H. Schodde, Ph. D. 1882).

Although Enoch describes these six angels as Watchers, the functions and responsibilities ascribed to them are far more involved than just watching events transpire. These individuals seem to be in extremely important rulership and management positions in God's government, which would necessitate information gathering and reporting to the Sovereign God and the Creator God.

The Book of Enoch has many references to Watchers, some are described as righteous and loyal to God and some are shown to have been disloyal and rebellious and will be punished for their rebellion. The righteous Watchers are shown to have various functions and responsibilities within the heavenly and the physical realms, including gathering information and making status reports to God.
Nebuchadnezzar's Dream

The Book of Daniel, chapter 4 contains the account of King Nebuchadnezzar's troubling dream in which he sees a huge, beautiful, and beneficial tree which gave shelter and food to all who came to it. But, the dream ends with a mysterious decree from a being called a Watcher. The prophet Daniel who is called to interpret the dream, explains to the king that the Watcher has issued a decree of a future punishment; so that, people will know that the true God is sovereign over all nations and is the one who decides who will rule over them.

The following are three important things to learn from the king's prophetic dream:

• This Watcher is a spirit-being who comes from heaven to pronounce a punishment on Nebuchadnezzar.
• The decree is a judgement given by the holy ones (i.e., the Sovereign God and the Creator God). A study of the Hebrew language of the king's dream indicates this.
• The punishment is administered so the people will know the God Daniel serves has sovereign authority over the earth and mankind.

A year later, while the king was boasting about his greatness, and his accomplishments, a voice called to him from out of the air and explained what was about to happen to him because he would not acknowledge that it was through preferential treatment by the Sovereign God that he had accomplished so much and had his position of rulership and power.

Because, spirit-beings are sent to watch what is happening on earth and report this information to the Sovereign God and Christ who rules God's kingdom for him, it seems logical to assume that the Watcher noted Daniel, chapter 4, is the spirit-being who was given the responsibility to gather information about Babylon and report it back to the Creator God.

SUMMARY

The biblical record clearly documents that neither the Sovereign God nor the Creator God are omnipresent, and neither of them knows the condition of everything at every moment or everything about everything that is happening from moment to moment. If this were not true, the biblical accounts of their loyal spirit-servants being sent to gather information and report back to them make no logical sense.

The biblical record clearly indicates that there is a vast network of spirit-beings whose function and responsibility is to gather information for the Sovereign God and the Creator God in order for them to be kept current with what is happening in the spirit and physical realms.
The gathering and reporting of this information to the Sovereign God, the Creator God, and the various officials within the kingdom of God is necessary in order to maintain order, keep things running smoothly in the spirit realm, and make adjustments in the physical realm in order to obtain the desired end result for the Sovereign God's plan and purpose for mankind.

By B.L. Cocherell
CHAPTER FOURTEEN

COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN THE SPIRIT REALM AND HUMANS

There are many biblical accounts of the Creator God sending spirit-messengers, commonly called "angels," to convey messages, provide specific instructions, encourage people, and reveal prophetic events and their meanings to people. It is a biblical fact that the Creator God of ancient Israel spoke directly to people and that, even after Christ's resurrection from the dead, he communicated with certain individuals.

Today, as in the past, many people believe that they have received messages or instructions from God, Christ, or an angel. But how can people know this for certain, and how can they discern between communication from a righteous source and an evil spirit?

The numerous accounts contained in the Bible of the Creator God and Christ interacting with individuals and righteous angels communicating with people provide a template for why and how these communications take place. Moreover, the many warnings in the Bible about how and why evil spirits communicate with people provide the information needed to recognize the difference between communications from righteous and unrighteous spirit-beings.

The following warning by the apostle John tells us to be weary of religious leaders and prophets, as well as spirit-beings who communicate with people to deceive them in order to promote their own goals.

"Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world" (1.Jn.4:1). See also 1.Jn.2:18-29.

Because almost all opposition to God the Father, Jesus Christ, and the children of God comes from the influence of evil spirits, it is extremely important for anyone who is serious about their salvation to be able to discern the difference between a good spirit and an evil spirit. There are a number of clear instructions in the Bible about how to test the spirits in order to determine if a person, a spirit, or an influence is good or evil. See chapter 27: Testing the Spirits.

A Serious Warning - Satan's Ministers

The Corinthian Church seems to have been a group of individuals with many problems, evidenced by both of Paul's letters to them, which contain strong correction. The first letter was almost totally devoted to correction and admonition and contains many remarks about their poor spiritual behavior.
No other Church of God is corrected on as many points as the Corinthians. This fact in itself should tell us something about the spiritual character and maturity of these early Christians. Although they were children of God, they had major problems in understanding how to conduct themselves; they were truly "babes" in the faith. See 1.Cor. 3:1-2.

Paul was afraid they might believe the deceptive teachings circulating at that time concerning Christ and his message, which is what prompted the following warning to the elect at Corinth about Satan's ministers and their teachings:

"But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled [deceived] Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. For if he that comes preaching another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if you receive another spirit [an evil lying spirit], which you have not received, or another gospel [a false gospel], which you have not accepted, you might well bear with him" (2.Cor.11:3-4 KJV). See also Gal.1:6-9.

Paul begins this warning with the example of Satan's deception of Eve and then warns of evil spirits who come to deceive:

"For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works" (2.Cor.11:13-15 KJV). See also Deut.13:1-5; Jer.23:21-22.

The English word ministers in verse 15 is translated from the Greek word daikons, which can mean an attendant, i.e., a waiter at table or a person in other menial duties or a servant. Therefore, it is not a stretch of logic to assume that evil spirits also fit into the category of ministers (i.e., servants) of Satan because of their common goals.

THE FOUR AGES OF SALVATION

The biblical record clearly shows that righteous spirit-beings never engage in frivolous activities or communications with people, because of the seriousness of their functions and responsibilities in dealing with humans, to perform tasks which have to do with the Sovereign Father's plan and purpose for mankind. Therefore, before reviewing some of the many biblical records showing spirit-beings interacting with people in order to convey messages to them, it is helpful to review the four ages of salvation. This places spirit-messengers in the context of God's plan for the salvation of mankind as we review messages and instructions sent from God through angels.
The First Age

The first age of salvation existed from the time of Adam until the agreement between God and Israel at Mount Sinai. During this time, individuals were offered salvation through a sacrificial system and obedience to God's law. Very little is known about God's worship system during this time period; however, the scriptures do record that individuals kept God's law, offered sacrifices, and prayed to God. A few individuals had personal contact with the Creator God and his spirit-messengers, and there were preachers of righteousness who taught God's law and way of life to people who wanted to worship him.

The Second Age

The second age of salvation began at Mount Sinai and ended with the death and resurrection of Christ. During this time, the nation of Israel was offered salvation through obedience to God's law and a sacrificial system which was officiated over by a priesthood at the place where God and the power of his presence resided (i.e., the tabernacle of the wilderness and the temple at Jerusalem).

During this age, a few individuals had personal contact with the Creator God and his spirit-messengers, but the nation as a whole only had access to the Creator God through prayer and formal worship at the tabernacle/temple.

The Third Age

The third age of salvation began on the first Festival of Pentecost, after the death and resurrection of Christ. During this time, which will last until Christ returns to rule the earth, individuals are offered salvation through belief in the message Jesus Christ brought about God the Father and his offer of salvation through the sacrifice of his son for the forgiveness of sins.

During this age, Christ rules with his Father in heaven and guides and directs his Father's earthly family (1.Pet.2:7-10; Rev.1:5-6) and world events, which will culminate in his return. As with the first two ages of salvation, Christ, who was the Creator God before becoming human, communicates with individuals and sends spirit-messengers to convey messages and instructions to people.

The Fourth Age

The fourth and final age of salvation will begin after Christ returns and the Kingdom of God is established on the earth.

After Christ returns, the descendants of the patriarch Israel (Jacob) will be brought to the land of their inheritance where they will be formed into a world power to fulfill their national destiny. It is at this time that God will formalize a second agreement with national Israel. See Jer.31:31-33; Heb.8:7-10.
During this future age, the nation of Israel will again assume its responsibility of being an example of God's way of life to the world. The city of Jerusalem will again become the focal point of the worship of God, because this is where Jesus Christ will administer God's government and religion to the nations of the world in an effort to convert humanity to the ways of his Father. See Deut.30:1-6; Mic.4:1-7; Joel 3:16-21; Zech.8:1-3. This age will last until the Sovereign Father's kingdom is presented to him by Jesus Christ. See 1.Cor.15:24-28.

COMMUNICATIONS THROUGHOUT THE AGES

Hundreds of pages could be written about each and every personal contact, vision, dream, and instruction by the Creator God and spirit-beings to individuals and groups of people. However, the point of this chapter is to provide enough information for anyone who is serious about his or her salvation with the ability to know and understand the basic reasons for righteous spirit-beings being sent to convey messages and instructions to humans. Therefore, the rest of this chapter will give an overview of communications as they pertain to the categories which are key to the final outcome of God's plan for mankind as it progresses through the various ages of salvation.

BEFORE THE GREAT FLOOD

Although the Book of Enoch records many interactions between righteous and unrighteous spirit-beings and people before the great flood, there are no biblical accounts of the Creator God sending spirit-messengers to communicate with people. The only biblical accounts of communications between spirit-beings and individuals before the great flood are the ones between Satan and Eve in the Garden of Eden in which Satan deceives Eve into eating the forbidden fruit and the conversations between the Creator God and individuals in which he gives a prophetic promise of a Savior, a reprimand, and specific instructions for the performance of certain tasks.

Although the accounts of communication between the Creator God and individuals before the great flood are very limited, the overall tone of these conversations shows God's disappointment with mankind for their wickedness and rebellious nature, which presumably was exacerbated by the influence of evil-spirits who interacted with mankind then as they do today.

The Genesis record shows that it was mankind's inability to live in harmony with God and obey his precepts and principles which caused the destruction of all but eight individuals in the great flood.

BEFORE THE EXODUS FROM EGYPT

After the great flood and before the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt, a number of events show the Creator and his spirit-servants communicating with people.
Message to Hagar

Genesis, chapter 16 contains the account of Hagar fleeing into the wilderness because of the harsh treatment she received from Abraham's wife Sarai:

"And the angel of the Lord found her by a fountain of water in the wilderness, by the fountain in the way to Shur. And he said, Hagar, Sarai's maid, where do you come from? and where will you go? And she said, I flee from the face of my mistress Sarai" (Gen.16:7-8 KJV Para.).

The English words angel and Lord in verses 7 are translated from the Hebrew words malak and Yehovah, which respectively mean a messenger (specifically, of God) and the self-Existent or Eternal.

The words malak and Yehovah tell us that the spirit-being speaking to Hagar is a messenger from God. However, it cannot be determined from these words if the messenger speaking to Hagar is a spirit-being in the service of the Creator God sent from him or the Creator God himself who is in the service of the Sovereign God.

"And the angel of the Lord said to her, Return to your mistress, and submit yourself under her hands. And the angel of the Lord said to her, Behold, you are pregnant, and shall bear a son, and shall call his name Ishmael; because the Lord has heard your affliction. And he will be a wild man; his hand will be against every man, and every man's hand against him; and he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren. And she called the name of the Lord that spoke to her, You God see me: for she said, I also have seen him who sees me" (Gen.16:9-13 KJV Para.). See also Gen.21:1-21.

This spirit-being brings a message from the Self-Existent One who has the authority and power to cause Hagar to have multitudes of descendants through her son Ishmael.

The English words Lord and God in verse 13 are translated from the Hebrew words Yehovah and 'el, which respectively mean the Self-Existent (or Eternal) and mighty; especially the Almighty (used also of any deity). These two Hebrew words show that the messenger who appeared to Hagar and spoke with her was the Creator God sent from the Sovereign God to deliver his message.

This event shows the Creator being sent to encourage and comfort Hagar and give her a prophetic promise. It also shows the Sovereign God's guidance and manipulation of a seemingly inconsequential event in order to further his plan and purpose for mankind.

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The birth of Ishmael is one of the major events in human history, because Ishmael is the patriarch of the Arabic peoples who have already played a major role in world history and are destined to play a major role in prophetic events surrounding the return of Christ.

**Sodom and Gomorrah**

The events of Genesis, chapters 18 and 19 surrounding the Creator and two angels visiting with Abraham and the subsequent destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah reveal not only God's attitude toward extremely evil behavior but also another major milestone in God's plan for the salvation of mankind.

Chapter 18 contains the account of the Creator visiting with Abraham and promising that he will father a son with Sarah in their old age. This promise is an affirmation of earlier promises given to Abraham concerning his descendants. As promised, Sarah gave birth to Isaac whose son Jacob fathered the patriarchs of the tribes of Israel.

Chapter 19 contains the account of the two angels who visited Abraham with the Creator, visiting with Abraham's nephew Lot and telling him that they are going to destroy the place where he lives and warning him to gather his close relatives and leave in order to be spared. The events surrounding Lot and his family escaping Sodom show the discretionary authority of angels, and that they sometimes reveal future events in order to give people an opportunity to escape harm or death in order to fulfill their part in God's plan. In this case, the descendants of Lot's two daughters play a major role in prophetic events.

**A Promise to Jacob**

Genesis, chapter 28, verses 10-15, record that Jacob whose name was changed to Israel was shown angels ascending from and descending to the earth. This shows the continual interaction between the earth and the heavenly realm through spirit-beings. In this chapter, the Creator promises Jacob his descendants will spread throughout the earth and all mankind will be blessed through his offspring, which is primarily a prophecy of salvation through the sacrifice of Christ for the forgiveness of sin.

Although these are only a few accounts concerning the Creator and angels interacting with people after the great flood and before the establishment of national Israel, these accounts reveal that the Creator God and his spirit-servants communicated with individuals in order to transmit important messages, give specific instructions, provide encouragement, relate promises from God, and reveal prophetic events to people.
National Israel

In order to understand the reason so many spirit-messengers were sent to the Israelites and why the Israelites are either directly or indirectly the focus of almost all communications between spirit-messengers and people, you must understand something about God's basic plan for mankind's salvation. First, the descendants of Abraham through national Israel, are the vehicle through which the Sovereign God brings salvation to all mankind through the sacrifice of Christ. Second, it is through national Israel that all mankind will eventually learn the Sovereign God's truth and way of truth after Christ returns.

In Exodus, chapter 23, the Creator God tells the Israelites he will send an angel to lead and protect them on their journey into the land which he is giving them to inhabit:

"See, I am sending an angel ahead of you to guard you along the way and to bring you to the place I have prepared. Pay attention to him and listen to what he says. Do not rebel against him; he will not forgive your rebellion, since my Name is in him. If you listen carefully to what he says and do all that I say, I will be an enemy to your enemies and will oppose those who oppose you. My angel will go ahead of you and bring you into the land of the Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Canaanites, Hivites and Jebusites, and I will wipe them out" (Ex.23:20-23 NIV).

The Creator tells the Israelites to pay attention to what this angel tells them to do, which indicates that this angel not only relays messages from the Creator God to the Israelites but also has the authority to give them instructions and punish them if they disobey him. This is just one of many accounts showing that spirit-messengers were often sent to guide the Israelites and instruct them in what they should do as individuals and as a nation.

After the Israelites had entered into the promised land and throughout the history of national Israel under kings Saul, David, and Solomon, the Creator sent spirit-messengers with important messages and instructions to guide individuals and the nation as a whole.

Even after national Israel's separation into two distinct national entities (the House of Judah and the House of Israel), angels were continually sent to transmit important messages, instructions, encouragement, promises from God, and to relate information about prophetic events.

Although some of the prophets noted in the Bible received what they were supposed to proclaim and record from the Creator God himself, many received this information from angels sent to them by the Creator. Daniel is one prophet to whom the Creator sent many spirit-messengers to reveal prophetic events about the end of the age, just before Christ returns. See Dan.10:1-21; 12:1-13.
A review of the biblical record of spirit-messengers being sent from God to communicate with Israelites or individuals associated with the Israelites reveals that almost all communications between angelic messengers sent from God had to do with furthering God's plan for the salvation of mankind and making sure the Israelites maintained their position within this plan, in order to fulfill their role in prophetic events before Christ returns.

JOHN THE BAPTIST AND CHRIST

The messenger Gabriel is only mentioned by name four times in the Bible—twice in the Book of Daniel and twice in the Book of Luke. In each of these accounts, Gabriel gives messages about prophetic events which are major milestones in the Sovereign God's plan for the salvation of mankind.

Gabriel Sent to Zacharias

The gospel according to Luke contains the account of Gabriel informing the elderly priest Zacharias that, in his old age, he will father a child who will prepare the way for the Messiah:

"And there appeared to him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense. And when Zacharias saw him, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him" (Lk.1:11-12 KJV).

Zacharias was fearful because the temple was being guarded to prevent anyone but priests from entering the sanctuary where only priests were to perform their duties. Clearly, the individual Zacharias saw should not have been in the temple.

"But the angel said to him, Fear not, Zacharias: for your prayer is heard; and your wife Elisabeth shall bear you a son, and you shalt call his name John. And you shall have joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at his birth. For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the holy spirit, even from his mother's womb" (Lk.1:13-15 KJV).

From the instructions Gabriel gives Zacharias about John not consuming alcohol, it seems that John was to be Nazarite from birth like Samson.

"And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God. And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord" (Lk.1:16-17 KJV).

"And Zacharias said to the angel, Whereby shall I know this? for I am an old man, and my wife well stricken in years. And the angel answering said to him, I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God; and am sent to speak to you, and to show you these glad
tidings. And, behold, you shall be dumb, and not able to speak, until the day that these things shall be performed, because you do not believe my words, which shall be fulfilled in their season" (Lk.1:18-20 KJV).

This account and others in the biblical text show that messengers sent from God are authorized to take certain actions in order to validate their message. In this account, Gabriel uses his discretionary authority and power to remove Zacharias' ability to speak as a reprimand and as proof that what he told Zacharias is true.

**Gabriel Sent to Mary**

The gospel according to Luke also contains the account of Gabriel being sent to inform Mary that she would give birth to the Messiah:

"And, behold, you shall conceive in your womb, and bring forth a son, and shall call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give to him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end" (Lk.1:31-33 KJV).

"Then said Mary to the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? And the angel answered and said to her, The holy spirit shall come upon you, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow you: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of you shall be called the Son of God" (Lk.1:34-35 KJV).

"And, behold, your cousin Elisabeth, she has conceived a son in her old age: and this is the sixth month with her, who was called barren. For with God nothing shall be impossible. And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it to me according to your word. And the angel departed from her" (Lk.1:36-38 KJV).

**Messages to Joseph and Shepherds**

In addition to Mary being told by Gabriel that she would give birth to the Messiah, an angel informed her future husband Joseph about this event and gave him instructions to follow (Matt.1:18-25).

After Christ's birth, an angel announced the event to a group of shepherds (Lk.2:8-15), and angels were sent to give instructions to Joseph about fleeing to and returning from Egypt (Matt.2:13-22).

**THE GOSPEL AGE**

Shortly after Christ's death and resurrection, angels appeared to the women who came to the tomb where his body was placed. The angels told them to go and tell Christ's disciples that he had risen as he promised. After this, Christ himself appeared to give comfort, encouragement, and instructions to a number of people.
Christ Appears to Mary Magdalene

After Mary's conversation with the two angels sitting in the tomb where Christ's body had been placed after his crucifixion, she turns around to leave and sees a man near the tomb whom she does not recognize as Jesus until he speaks to her:

"... and saw Jesus standing there but did not recognize him, Jesus said to her, Woman, why do you weep? whom do you seek? She, supposing him to be the gardener, said to him, Sir, if you have taken him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away. Jesus said to her, Mary. She turned herself, and said to him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master. Jesus said to her, Do not touch me; for I have not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say to them, I ascend to my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God." (Jn.20:14-17 KJV Para).

Christ appeared as an ordinary man in ordinary clothing after his resurrection and he gave an instruction to Mary.

On the Road to Damascus

The account of Saul (later known as the apostle Paul) and his encounter with a bright light and the voice of Christ can teach us much about spirit-beings and the messages they bring:

"Meanwhile, Saul was still breathing out murderous threats against the Lord's disciples. He went to the high priest and asked him for letters to the synagogues in Damascus, so that if he found any there who belonged to the Way, whether men or women, he might take them as prisoners to Jerusalem. As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" (Acts 9:1-4 NIV).

Upon seeing this bright light around him, Saul falls to the ground in fear of what might happen to him and he hears a voice out of the air speak to him. Realizing that the voice was that of a spirit-being, Saul asked, "Who are you, Lord?" The voice answered, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting..." (Acts 9:5 NIV).

"Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do." The men traveling with Saul stood there speechless; they heard the sound but did not see anyone. Saul got up from the ground, but when he opened his eyes he could see nothing. So they led him by the hand into Damascus. For three days he was blind, and did not eat or drink anything" (Acts 9:6-9 NIV).
Realizing that he was now blind and had just experienced an encounter with a spirit-being who claimed to be the one whom the Jews had crucified and whose followers he was persecuting and causing to be put to death, Saul began to fast. Presumably, he did this in order to seek answers through prayer to God and to contemplate what had happened to him, as well as what was going to happen next.

"In Damascus there was a disciple named Ananias. The Lord called to him in a vision, "Ananias!" "Yes, Lord," he answered. The Lord told him, "Go to the house of Judas on Straight Street and ask for a man from Tarsus named Saul, for he is praying. In a vision he has seen a man named Ananias come and place his hands on him to restore his sight" (Acts 9:10-12 NIV).

Christ came to Ananias in a vision and told him to go to Saul who had been given a vision of him restoring his sight.

"Lord," Ananias answered, "I have heard many reports about this man and all the harm he has done to your saints in Jerusalem. And he has come here with authority from the chief priests to arrest all who call on your name." But the Lord said to Ananias, "Go! This man is my chosen instrument to carry my name before the Gentiles and their kings and before the people of Israel. I will show him how much he must suffer for my name" (Acts 9:13-16 NIV).

Ananias knew that the person in the vision was Christ, but he was extremely apprehensive because of what he had heard about Saul's persecution of the elect.

"Then Ananias went to the house and entered it. Placing his hands on Saul, he said, "Brother Saul, the Lord-Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you were coming here has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit." Immediately, something like scales fell from Saul's eyes, and he could see again. He got up and was baptized, and after taking some food, he regained his strength. Saul spent several days with the disciples in Damascus" (Acts 9:17-18 NIV).

Because of the importance of the mission that Saul had been selected to perform in proclaiming the good news message, Christ personally instructed both Saul and Ananias in order to facilitate God's plan to offer salvation to non-Israelites.

**Philip and the Angel**

The evangelist Philip was instructed by a spirit-messenger to go toward Gaza. It is logical to assume that he obeyed the angel's instruction because he knew he was being sent to perform his commission of proclaiming the good news message of the Kingdom of God and the sacrifice of Christ for the forgiveness of sin:
"An angel of the Lord spoke to Philip, and said, Arise, and go toward the south in the way that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza, which is desert. And he arose and went: and, behold, a man of Ethiopia, an eunuch of great authority under Candace queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treasure, and had come to Jerusalem to worship, was returning, and sitting in his chariot reading Isaiah the prophet. Then the spirit said to Philip, Go near, and join yourself to this chariot. And Philip ran to him, and heard him read the prophet Isaiah, and said, do you understand what you are reading? And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me? And he asked Philip to come and sit with him" (Acts 8:26-31KJV Para).

Notice that when he saw the Ethiopian in the chariot, "The spirit said to Philip, go and join yourself to the chariot." It is unclear if the spirit referred to was the angel who first instructed Philip to go toward Gaza or the holy spirit inspiring Philip to take the action he did, which resulted in the Ethiopian believing the gospel message and being baptized.

Cornelius and Peter

The Book of Acts, chapters 10 and 11 contains the lengthy account of an angel being sent to Cornelius the centurion to encourage him and tell him to send for the apostle Peter. In this account, Peter also receives a vision, which he later understood to mean that Gentiles are also being given an opportunity for salvation through Christ's sacrifice:

"At Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius, a centurion in what was known as the Italian Regiment. He and all his family were devout and God-fearing; he gave generously to those in need and prayed to God regularly. One day at about three in the afternoon he had a vision. He distinctly saw an angel of God, who came to him and said, "Cornelius!" Cornelius stared at him in fear. "What is it, Lord?" he asked. The angel answered, "Your prayers and gifts to the poor have come up as a memorial offering before God. Now send men to Joppa to bring back a man named Simon who is called Peter. He is staying with Simon the tanner, whose house is by the sea" (Acts 10:1-8 NIV).

Because Cornelius understood that spirit-beings were superior to humans and not knowing if it were a god-being who spoke to him, he acknowledges the angel's superiority with the most respectful title he knew.

In this account, an angel is sent to a non-Jew with a message telling him that God has been listening to his prayers and is acknowledging his generosity. The angel also instructs Cornelius to send for a man he does not know for a purpose that has not been fully explained to him.
Around noon on the next day, while Peter was praying, he became exceptionally hungry and while waiting for a meal to be prepared, he has a vision of unclean animals which are forbidden to be eaten. But in this vision he is told three times to eat these animals and that nothing God has made clean is unclean:

"While Peter was wondering about the meaning of the vision, the men sent by Cornelius found out where Simon's house was and stopped at the gate. They called out, asking if Simon who was known as Peter was staying there. While Peter was still thinking about the vision, the spirit said to him, "Simon, three men are looking for you. So get up and go downstairs. Do not hesitate to go with them, for I have sent them" (Acts 10:17-20 NIV).

The English word spirit in verse 19 is translated from the Greek word pneuma, which has many meaning depending on the context in which it is used. Pneuma can mean a current of air, i.e., breath or a breeze; by analogy or figuratively, a spirit, vital principle, mental disposition, etc., or (superhuman) an angel, demon, or God the Father or Christ's spirit or the holy spirit.

In the context of verse 19, it is difficult to tell if the spirit referred to is an angel speaking to Peter or thoughts being transmitted into Peter's mind by an angel through the power of the holy spirit.

The men sent by Cornelius explain why they have come to fetch him and Peter goes with them to speak to Cornelius the next day. The following day, Peter and the others arrived in Caesarea. Cornelius was expecting them and had called together his relatives and close friends. As Peter entered the house, Cornelius met him and fell at his feet in reverence, but Peter made him get up: "Stand up," he said, "I am only a man myself" (Acts 10:24-26 NIV).

Cornelius had so much confidence in what the angel told him about fetching Peter from Joppa that he invited a number of his relatives and close friends to hear what Peter would have to say when he arrived.

"Talking with him, Peter went inside and found a large gathering of people. He said to them: "You are well aware that it is against our law for a Jew to associate with a Gentile or visit him. But God has shown me that I should not call any man impure or unclean. So when I was sent for, I came without raising any objection. May I ask why you sent for me?" (Acts 10:27-29 NIV).

Some time after Peter's vision of the unclean animals, the arrival of Cornelius' servants to fetch him and his arrival at Cornelius' home, Peter came to an understanding that the tradition of the Jews concerning avoiding contact with gentiles was not correct.

The rest of this account records Cornelius telling Peter about his experience with the angel, Peter explaining the sacrifice of Christ, and the baptism of these gentiles into the Sovereign Father's earthly family of king-priests.

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This account tells us that those individuals who are living in harmony with God's truth and way of truth will recognize the authority of a spirit-messenger sent from God and although that person may not understand why he or she is being asked to do something at that very instant, an understanding of the instructions given by God's messenger will eventually become clear.

One thing that all of the accounts of spirit-messengers being sent to individuals during the establishment of the early church have in common is that they all have to do with facilitating the proclaiming of the gospel message.

Because the gospel age continues until Christ returns, it is logical to assume that, when Christ sends spirit-messengers today, they are sent for similar reasons as they were during the early days of the church.

**Major Announcements**

There are many major announcements which will be made by the angels who sound the trumpets just before Christ's return to earth to gather the elect. Most of these announcements seem to be made in the heavenly realm; however, there is one announcement made by an angel, accompanied by the sounding of a trumpet, which seems to be heard around the earth as Jesus enters the earth's atmosphere in his glorified form:

"Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other" (Matt.24:29-31 KJV).

"For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words" (1.Thess.4:16-18 KJV).

**Communication with the Sovereign God**

Since the death and resurrection of Christ, many individuals believe they have seen or spoken with God. It is not uncommon to hear people to say God told them to do something. Nor is it uncommon to hear individuals who profess to believe what is written in the Bible say God gave them instructions or led them to their ministry and to preach a given doctrine. But, many times, what they do or teach and how they live their life is in direct opposition to what is written in the Bible.
In order to determine if the Sovereign God appears to individuals and speaks to them in this age, the following three things must be clearly understood:

1. The Creator God no longer exists; he gave up his immortality, came to earth in human form, and died a physical death in order become the Savior of humanity.

2. Christ was resurrected as the firstborn son of the Sovereign God's new creation.

3. Christ is now second in authority next to the Sovereign God in the Kingdom of God.

The prophetic Psalm 110 revealed that Christ would sit at the right hand of the Sovereign God as a ruler and high priest. Christ foretold that he would fulfill this prophecy and would be sitting at the right hand of power—power being a metaphor for the Sovereign God (Matt.26:64; Mk.14:61-62). In the account of Stephen proclaiming Christ, he sees Christ standing at the right hand of the Sovereign God (Acts 7:51-15), and the writer to the Hebrews states twice that Christ now sits at the right hand of the Sovereign God (Heb.1:1-3: 12:1-2).

Christ's Authority and Responsibility

As second in authority in the Kingdom of God, Christ's responsibilities include the direct management and supervision of his heavenly Father's spirit realm and earthly family of king-priests.

In the apostle Paul's letters to the saints at Corinth and Colosse, he writes that Christ is the first-fruits from the dead, the Sovereign Father put all things under Christ's authority except himself (1.Cor.15:20-28), and Christ is in authority over the Church (Col.1:9-18). To the saints at Ephesus, he wrote that Christ is put in authority over all spiritual and physical realms and that he is in authority over the church (Eph.1:15-23; Eph.5:23).

Because the Sovereign God (God the Father) has delegated the management and supervision of his kingdom and his earthly family to Christ, there is absolutely no reason for God himself to appear before or speak to any human.

No Man Has Seen or heard the Sovereign God

In his introductory comments to his gospel account, the apostle John wrote, "No man has seen God at any time, the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he has declared him" (Jn.1:18 KJV). When John wrote this, he could not have been referring to the Creator God, because men did see, hear, and speak to him face-to-face. Clearly, John was speaking about the Sovereign God—God the Father.
After Jesus' baptism and during his ministry, he said the following to a group of Jews at the temple in Jerusalem, "And the Father himself, which has sent me, has borne witness of me. You have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape" (Jn.5:37 KJV).

What the apostle John says in his introductory comments and what he says that Jesus said about no one ever seeing God the Father's shape or hearing his voice are both fact, because the scriptures do not contradict themselves.

Although John's record should be accepted as fact, some will argue that, when Jesus was baptized, the Father's voice was heard saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matt.3:17). See also Mk.1:9-11; Lk.3:21-22.

In each of these accounts of Jesus' baptism, the English word voice is translated from the Greek word phone, which is similar to the Greek word phaino, which means a show (transitive or intransitive, literal or figurative). The Greek word phone does not necessarily mean a voice, it can mean a disclosure; proclamation; a tone (articulate, bestial or artificial); by implication, an address (for any purpose), saying, or language.

Because the Greek word phone has meanings other than the English word a voice, there is room for conjecture about who actually made the declaration from heaven. Additionally, it is important to note that these three accounts of Jesus' baptism do not specifically say it was God the Father who spoke from heaven.

Some also assume that the following statement by the apostle Peter proves that it was God the Father who spoke from heaven and acknowledged Jesus as his son:

"For he received from God the Father honor and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount" (2 Pet.1:17-18 KJV).

Here again the English word voice is translated from the Greek word phone, which conveys the concept of a disclosure; a tone, an address, saying, or language.

The following is Matthew's account of what happened:

"And after six days, Jesus took Peter and James, and his brother John, and brought them up into a high mountain apart. And he was transfigured before them and his face shone like the sun, and his clothing became white as the light. And, behold! Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with him. And answering Peter said to Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here. If you will, let us make three tabernacles here, one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah. While he was yet speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed
them. And, behold, a voice out of the cloud saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I have found delight; hear him. And hearing the disciples fell on their face and were greatly terrified. And coming near, Jesus touched them and said, Rise up, and do not be terrified. And lifting up their eyes they did not see anyone except Jesus alone” (Matt.17:1-8 Para.).

Continuing in verse 9, Jesus explains what the disciples actually saw and heard:

"And as they were going down from the mountain, Jesus charged them, saying, Tell the vision to no one until the Son of man is raised from the dead" (v9 Para.). See also Mk.9:2-10; Lk .9:28-36.

Jesus said what they saw and heard was a vision of the resurrection, which had not actually occurred; this was a prophetic vision of the future—not the reality of the moment. See Jn.3:13; Acts 2:29;34; Heb.11:33-35;39-40; 1.Thes.4:16-17; 2.Thes.2:1-8.

The Sovereign God's Voice

The accounts surrounding Jesus' baptism and the vision seen by Jesus, Peter, James, and John are the only accounts in the biblical record of a voice being heard that could have possibly been the Sovereign God's voice. Moreover, there are no accounts of the Sovereign God ever being seen other than in a vision. Additionally, no biblical record shows the Sovereign God personally speaking to individuals or making announcements.

What is recorded before the advent of Christ are the Sovereign God's thoughts being conveyed by the Creator God, one of the heavenly hosts, or a prophet.

The record of the New Testament clearly shows that God the Father only speaks to his earthly children and answers their requests through Christ who is the mediator between them and their heavenly Father (1.Tim 2:5; Heb.4:13-16; Jn.16:23-24). The scriptural record also shows that the Sovereign God will only interact face-to-face with those of his new creation after they are immortal spirit-beings in his heavenly family (Rev.21:1-6).

Any spirit-being or human who represents themselves as the Creator God or the Sovereign God during this gospel age of salvation is a liar and should be avoided.

AFTER CHRIST RETURNS

The scriptures are almost entirely silent concerning communications between angels and mankind after Christ returns and establishes the government of God and its worship system on earth. However, there are indications that angels and the elect (who will be immortals) will communicate with mankind to direct and guide them in their opportunity for salvation.
The Book of Isaiah contains the following prophecy, which will come to pass after Christ returns and the elect are ruling the earth with him:

"For the people shall dwell in Zion at Jerusalem: you shall weep no more: he will be very gracious to you at the voice of your cry; when he hears it, he will answer you. And though the Lord gives you the bread of adversity, and the water of affliction, yet your teachers shall not be removed into a corner any more, but your eyes shall see your teachers: And your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, This is the way, walk you in it, when you turn to the right hand, and when you turn to the left" (Isa.30:19-21 KJV Para.).

There will be close supervision of the affairs of the Israelites who will have been gathered from among the nations of earth and reside in peace at Jerusalem. From the context of this and other scriptures which speak of the millennial reign of Christ, it is logical to assume that these instructions are either given by the elect who have been changed into immortals or spirit-messengers sent by them.

In his letter of reprimand and encouragement to the elect at Corinth, the apostle Paul wrote the following concerning their responsibilities after Christ's return:

"Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints? Do you not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are you unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Do you not know that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life?" (1.Cor.6:1-3 KJV Para.).

The English words judge and judged are from the Greek word krino; which can mean to distinguish, i.e., decide (mentally or judicially); by implication, to try, condemn, punish.

The elect who successfully obtain immortality will be given major positions of authority and responsibility in the Kingdom of God (Rev.2:26; 3:12). Included in the positions of authority and responsibility is the management of angels to assist in the administration of the affairs of the kingdom.

**Future Kings**

There are many scriptures in the New Testament which speak of the elect being rewarded with important positions of rulership after Christ's return to rule the earth. Moreover, one reason the Father calls people to participate in the first resurrection is that he wants to prepare a people to fulfill positions of authority and rulership in his heavenly kingdom:
"Then Peter said to him, Behold we have forsaken all, and followed you, what shall we have therefore? And Jesus said to them, Truly I say to you, That you which have followed me, in the regeneration when the son of man shall sit on the throne of his glory, you shall also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Matt.19:27-28 Para.).

After Christ returns, everyone who has been called to salvation throughout the ages and has qualified to be given immortality in the Father's Family and Kingdom will rule the earth with Jesus Christ as kings and priests:

"And he that overcomes, and keeps my works to the end, to him will I give power over the nations: And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father" (Rev.2:26-27 KJV). See also Matt. 10:22.

"Blessed and holy is he that has part in the first resurrection: on such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years" (Rev.20:6 KJV). See also Rev.1:4-6; 5:5-10.

The rule of the elect with Christ will surely include their management of God's spirit-servants as they perform their functions and responsibilities as kings and priests in the Kingdom of God. This is noted by the apostle Paul in his letter to the elect at Corinth. See 1.Cor.6:1-3.

INTELLIGENT COMMUNICATION

Biblical accounts show righteous angels being sent to individuals to convey specific instructions, provide encouragement, restate or make a promise, announce an impending punishment, and reveal prophetic events and their meanings. One thing that is very clear from even a casual reading of the dozens of accounts of righteous spirit-messengers being sent to individuals in face-to-face encounters, dreams, or visions is that no righteous spirit-being will communicate with a person through cryptic means. The biblical examples show righteous angels communicating with people in a clear, intelligible manner.

It is common for people in this age to have dreams and visions and encounters with spirit-beings in which they are given messages or shown things. Because there is little doubt that these events occur, the problem becomes one of determining if the dream, vision, encounter, or message is from a good or an evil spirit.

It is also common in this age to hear people say that either God or Christ has personally spoken to them or revealed something to them. Although these people may be sincere and truly believe they have been personally contacted by the true God or Christ, an encounter with the Creator God or God the Father is an impossibility during this age for the following reasons:
The Creator God no longer exists as the Creator because he came to earth, became a human, was crucified and died, then became the firstborn son (Christ) of the Sovereign God (God the Father).

God the Father does not interact with mankind in the same way that the Creator God did, because he has given the rule over his kingdom to Christ and interacts with his earthly family of king-priests through Christ who is their high priest and intercedes to him on their behalf. See 1.Cor.15:19-28; Heb.4:12-16.

The accounts of Christ's appearances and communications with people after his resurrection and ascension to his heavenly Father have one thing in common: they all, in one way or another, have to do with the proclamation of the true gospel message or the furtherance of his heavenly Father's plan and purpose for mankind. Therefore, it is logical to assume that, if Christ appeared to a person today, it would be for the aforementioned reasons.

There are no biblical accounts of God's messengers being sent to communicate with individuals for any other purpose than the furtherance of God's plan for the salvation of mankind.

Cryptic Communication

Evil spirits have the ability to communicate easily understood messages to people through dreams and visions and by appearing in person. But, they also use cryptic messages and other phenomenon in order to confuse, obfuscate, and shroud their message in an aura of mystery to deceive and manipulate people into doing their bidding.

Prophetic Messages

From the Book of Genesis through the Book of Revelation, we see righteous angels being sent with prophetic massages. Sometimes the meaning of these prophetic messages are explained by the messenger and sometimes they are not, depending on the circumstances surrounding the prophecy and for whom the prophetic message is intended. See Dan.12.7-13.

Angelic Appearances

All of the biblical evidence shows that angelic messengers sent from God appear as men, whether in a glorified form or in a physical form. There are absolutely no biblical accounts of angelic massage sent from God manifesting themselves as a woman, an animal, a bird, glowing orbs of light, shadowy figures, or in some other mysterious way.

Man was patterned after the likeness of God, and it appears from the biblical evidence that all spirit-beings other than those who serve in special functions at God's throne are also created after God's appearance.
Evil spirits are extremely powerful and have the ability to manipulate the physical environment in order to manifest themselves in various forms, such as men, women, animals, glowing orbs of light, hazy apparitions, and more. They do this in order to deceive people into believing and doing certain things which will promote their evil goals and agendas. Many times, manifestation of evil spirits and their communications with individuals are done for the purpose of conditioning a person's mind in order for an evil spirit to eventually take possession of that person's mind and body.

A Warning

Because evil spirits still exist during this gospel age of salvation and are actively communicating with people to deceive them in order to promote their own goals, the apostle John's warning to test the spirits is still applicable today:

"Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world" (1.Jn.4:1). See also 1.Jn.2:18-29.

Paul's Warning About Angels

After the apostle Paul's introduction in his letter to the church at Galatia, he says the Galatians are departing from Christ and the true good news message which had originally been delivered to them and he warns them against anyone, including angels, who would pervert the true gospel message:

"I marvel that you are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ to another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than that which we have preached to you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so I now say again, If any man preach any other gospel to you than that you have received, let him be accursed" (Gal.1:1-9 KJV Para.).

This is no shallow, meaningless threat by the apostle Paul. His decree is backed by the authority of Jesus Christ whom the apostle Paul served as a minister of the gospel. What is recorded here is a historical fact. During the lifetime of the apostles, the true gospel was being corrupted, and another gospel was being taught to confuse and seduce the elect of God and the whole world into believing a false gospel.

Why would Paul include angels in his warning to those who preach another gospel? The answer is that Paul is referring to evil spirits who pretend to be righteous, but are actually proclaiming a deceptive message.

Can evil spirits deceive people into believing a false gospel? Yes they can! Evil spirits can and do deceive people into believing lies. Today, we find churches which call themselves Christian, yet the vast majority of
them do not even faintly resemble the early church. Some of these churches boast that an angel sent from God gave them their particular belief system.

Paul's warning shows just how important it is to understand what the true good news massage is and is not. The gospel Jesus proclaimed is very different from the teachings of popular Christianity today. The true good news messages is so dynamic, so powerful, so diametrically opposite of what is taught in most professing Christian churches around the world today that most people do not recognize the true gospel message and reject it when they do hear it.

**SUMMARY**

The reality is that spirit-beings do communicate and interact with people; however, there are a number of important questions which a person should ask about any dream, vision, message, or interaction that may involve a spirit-being. The following questions and their answers are extremely important in order for you to determine whether the source of a dream, vision, message, or interaction with a spirit-being is the product of a righteous or an unrighteous spirit:

- What is purpose of the message, instruction, or interaction?
- Is the message or instruction understandable and logical—does it make any sense?
- Is the interaction constructive from a biblical perspective?
- Does the message, instruction, or interaction conflict with God's truth?

These are important questions which need to be asked and answered regarding any interaction between the physical and the spirit realms. If a communication is from a spirit-being who is not a loyal spirit servant of the Sovereign Father and his firstborn Son, the communication or interaction is the product of an evil spirit.

In order to determine if a dream, vision, message, or interaction with a spirit-being is the product of a righteous spirit-being and not an evil spirit, a person must be well versed in the Sovereign Father's truth.

The biblical examples of dreams, visions, or messages conveyed to people by righteous spirits-beings and interactions between people and righteous spirit-beings are understood in the light of God's plan for the salvation of mankind and his care and concern for those whom he has a special interest in dealing with for a specific purpose. Dreams, visions, and messages believed to be from God, Christ, or a spirit-being that fail the test of biblical truth and logic are either the products of a person's mind or a deception from an evil spirit. Moreover, interactions with spirit-beings which fail the test of biblical truth and logic should be viewed as coming from evil spirits and should clearly be avoided and rebuked.

By B.L. Cocherell
Throughout the biblical record, there are accounts of spirit-beings sent from God carrying weapons, waging war, and inflicting death and destruction on humans and property in the process of protecting his chosen people, fulling his promises to people, and advancing God's plan and purpose for mankind. This chapter discusses several of these accounts.

SODOM AND GOMORRAH

Genesis 19 contains the account of two spirit-beings in human form being sent to Sodom to destroy it and the city of Gomorrah, along with all the inhabitants of both cities. After eating a meal and blinding Sodom's sexual predators, the angels tell Lot that they have come to destroy Sodom:

"And the men said to Lot, Have you any here besides these? son in law, sons, or daughters, whoever you have in the city, bring them out of this place. Because we will destroy this place, because its cry is loud before the face of the Lord [Yehovah]; and the Lord has sent us to destroy it" (Gen.19:12-13 KJV Para.).

After the angels escorted Lot, his wife, and his two daughters a safe distance away from Sodom, Lot begs the angels not to send them into the mountains where they might die, but to allow them to go to the city of Zoar, which the angels allowed:

"The sun was risen upon the earth when Lot entered into Zoar. Then the Lord rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven; And he overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground. But his wife looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt. And Abraham got up early in the morning to the place where he stood before the Lord: And he looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all the land of the plain, and beheld, and, lo, the smoke of the country went up as the smoke of a furnace" (Gen.19:23-28 KJV).

Although verse 24 says the Creator God poured brimstone and fire on Sodom and Gomorrah, verse 22 of this account documents that it was the angels who carried out the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. As direct representatives of God acting in his place, when these angels destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah it was as if God himself had done it.
PASSOVER IN EGYPT

The last plague to be brought on the Egyptians before Pharaoh would allow the Israelites to leave Egypt was the death of all the firstborn of man and beast. Prior to the night of this plague, the Israelites were to sacrifice a lamb, put its blood on the entry to their homes in which they would eat the lamb, and be dressed and ready to leave Egypt. All who diligently followed these instructions would be spared from the spirit-being that the Creator would send to carry out this great slaughter:

"For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the Lord. And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where you are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt" (Ex.12:12-13 KJV).

"Then Moses called for all the elders of Israel, and said to them, Draw out and take you a lamb according to your families, and kill the Passover. And you shall take a bunch of hyssop, and dip it in the blood that is in the basin, and strike the lintel and the two side posts with the blood that is in the basin; and none of you shall go out at the door of his house until the morning. For the Lord will pass through to smite the Egyptians; and when he sees the blood upon the lintel, and on the two side posts, the Lord will pass over the door, and will not suffer the destroyer to come in to your houses to smite you" (Ex.12:21-23 KJV).

The English word destroyer in verse 23 is translated from the Hebrew word shachath; a primitive root; meaning to decay, i.e., (causatively) ruin (literally or figuratively). In this account, it clearly indicates someone sent to destroy.

The destroyers task was to quickly kill all the firstborn of all the people and animals in Egypt, but spare those who were under the protection of the lamb's blood.

The ten plagues that were poured out in the land of Egypt not only show the tremendous confidence that the Creator God had in his angelic servants to carry out his instructions but also the tremendous authority and power that God's spirit-servants can wield as they perform the tasks given to them.

BALAAM AND THE ANGEL

The Book of Numbers, chapter 22 contains the account of the Moabite king Balak sending messengers to persuade the Mesopotamian prophet Balaam to use his power to curse the Israelites in order to remove them from the land. The Creator God tells Balaam not to go with the messengers and not to curse the Israelites, because they are a blessed people (Num.22:12). However, after Balak sent a second group of messengers with a larger bribe, Balaam asks the Creator what he should
do. The Creator tells him that, if the king's messengers come again he should go with them, but he must follow the Creator's instructions (verses 20-22).

In this account, the Creator God became so displeased with Balaam that he sent an angel to intercept him before he could meet with Balak. This account does not tell us what Balaam did to anger the Creator, but it does show that the spirit-being sent to intercept Balaam carried a sword and was given both the authority to speak for the Creator and the discretionary authority and power to kill Balaam.

**KING DAVID'S MISTAKE**

Although God found David to be a man with great respect for him and his law, David on occasion allowed himself to be influenced by the negative side of his nature and made some terrible mistakes for which he was punished.

**Seventy Thousand Killed**

The Book of First Chronicles contains the account of King David being seduced by Satan to take a census of the Israelites in order to know how many warriors were at his disposal. This greatly angered the Creator because he had promised many times to protect Israel and destroy their enemies if they would obey him and keep his commandments (Num.10:1-9; Deut.1:30, 3:22). In taking a census of the Israelites, David was essentially telling the Creator that he did not believe he would keep his promise to protect and fight for Israel.

As the nation's king, David represented national Israel to God; therefore, in punishing David, God also punished all Israel. The Creator sent the prophet Gad to David with three choices of punishment and David chose to let the Creator decide which punishment to apply:

"David said to Gad, 'I am in deep distress. Let me fall into the hands of the Lord, for his mercy is very great; but do not let me fall into the hands of men.' So the Lord sent a plague on Israel, and seventy thousand men of Israel fell dead. And God sent an angel to destroy Jerusalem. But as the angel was doing so, the Lord saw it and was grieved because of the calamity and said to the angel who was destroying the people, 'Enough! Withdraw your hand.' The angel of the Lord was then standing at the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite. David looked up and saw the angel of the Lord standing between heaven and earth, with a drawn sword in his hand extended over Jerusalem. Then David and the elders, clothed in sackcloth, fell face down" (1.Chron.21:13-17 NIV). See also 2.Sam. 24:7-25.

The language and context of this account indicates that a spirit-being sent from the Creator had just killed seventy thousand men and was about to kill many more people in Jerusalem when he was stopped by the Creator before he could carry out the rest of his assignment.
Although there are many lessons which can be learned from the entire account of David numbering Israel, one thing for certain is that there is no human defense against a spirit-being sent to take human life, unless God intervenes.

**THE WINDS OF DESTRUCTION**

There are several biblical prophecies and scriptures in which various Hebrew and Greek words have been translated into English as *winds* or *wind*. But, these Hebrew and Greek words can also be translated into English words which indicate a reference to a spirit-being or spirit-beings.

**The Four Winds Scatter Elam**

There are many references to Elam in the biblical record. Some are references to individuals and their descendants, such as in Ezra and Nehemiah where two Elams are noted as having 1,254 male descendants each. There are also references to Elam as a national entity as noted in Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel.

The land of Elam is located beyond the Tigris River, east of Babylonia, but little is known about the Elamites except that they were skilled archers and soldiers (Isa.22:6). Additionally, they seem to have had alliances with other nations in their geographical area, a history of aggression against their neighbors, and they seem to have fallen into captivity.

In the Book of Jeremiah, there are prophecies against Elam and Babylon, in which the means of their destruction is described as "four winds" and "a wind" in many English translations of the texts.

"The word of the Lord that came to Jeremiah the prophet against Elam in the beginning of the reign of Zedekiah king of Judah, saying, This says the Lord of hosts; Behold, I will break the bow of Elam, the chief of their might. And on Elam will I bring the four winds from the four quarters of heaven, and will scatter them toward all those winds; and there shall be no nation where the outcasts of Elam shall not come" (Jer.49:34-36 KJV Para.).

The English word *wind* in this prophecy is translated from the Hebrew word *ruwach*, which is used to represent many things and can mean *breath, exhalation;* figuratively, *life, life's essence, God's and man's spirit and spirit-beings.* Therefore, the word *ruwach* used in this prophetic text and translated as *four winds* may represent four spirit-beings who have been given the task of scattering Elam throughout all the nations on earth.
A Destroying Wind

In verse 1 and 2 of the following prophecy, God says that he will send a destroying wind and "fanners" against Babylon. The rest of the prophecy shows that the time-frame of this prophecy is the time of God's vengeance, which strongly indicates this prophecy is meant for the end of the age before Christ returns:

"This says the Lord; Behold, I will raise up against Babylon, and against them that dwell in the midst of them that rise up against me, a destroying wind; and will send to Babylon fanners, that shall fan her, and shall empty her land: for in the day of trouble they shall be against her round about" (Jer.51:1-2 KJV).

Again, we see the English word wind is translated from the Hebrew word ruwach, which can mean spirit-being. Additionally, the English word fanners is translated from the Hebrew word zuwr; a primitive root, which can mean to turn aside (especially for lodging), or to be a foreigner.

The use of the words ruwach and zuwr in this prophecy seems to be a clear indication that the destroying wind and the fanners are spirit-beings sent by God to destroy the Babylonian religious and governmental system, which many prophecies show as being destroyed in the end of the age at Christ's return.

Holding Back The Four Winds

"And after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree" (Rev.7:1 KJV).

This verse shows four angels holding back four winds from blowing on the earth, the sea, and the trees. Verses 2 and 3 reveal that the function of these four angels is to unleash forces that will have an adverse effect on the earth, the sea, and trees. Therefore, it is logical to assume that the four winds being held back are actually four spirit-beings who will be released to cause widespread destruction throughout the earth:

"And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads" (Rev.7:2-3 KJV).

Wings of the Wind

Although not prophetic texts, both Samuel and king David describe the Creator God riding on a cherub and upon the wings of the wind. In both texts the English word wind is translated from the Hebrew word ruwach, which can mean a spirit-being. This would mean the wings are those of the spirit-being described as a cherub:
"And he rode upon a cherub, and did fly: and he was seen upon the wings of the wind" (2.Sam 22:11 KJV). See also Psa.18:10; 1.Kgs.6:23-28.

There are other prophecies and texts in English translations of the Bible in which the words wind and winds are mentioned, which may be symbolic of spirit-beings who are given tasks to perform (See Dan.7:1-7, 8:1-14, Jer.18:15-17). Although the analysis of the prophecies and texts cited may not be absolute proof that spirit-beings are the intended symbolic meaning of the English words wind and winds, the possibility does exist and is interesting nonetheless.

AN ARMY DESTROYED

After the death of king Ahaz, Hezekiah began to reign and reestablish the worship of the true God at the temple in Jerusalem, which had fallen into disuse during the reign of Ahaz. Some time after the establishment of God's worship system in Jerusalem, Sennacherib and his Assyrian army invaded Judah and sent messengers to Hezekiah and the people of Jerusalem telling them that they were foolish to put their trust in the Creator God to defend them; they said that their God was no more powerful than the gods of the other nations which the Assyrians had conquered.

This show of disrespect for the Creator God by Sennacherib and Hezekiah's fear of captivity led him and the prophet Isaiah to appeal to God for deliverance from Sennacherib and his army:

"King Hezekiah and the prophet Isaiah son of Amoz cried out in prayer to heaven about this. And the Lord sent an angel, who annihilated all the fighting men and the leaders and officers in the camp of the Assyrian king. So he withdrew to his own land in disgrace. And when he went into the temple of his god, some of his sons cut him down with the sword. So the Lord saved Hezekiah and the people of Jerusalem from the hand of Sennacherib king of Assyria and from the hand of all others. He took care of them on every side" (2.Chron.32:20-22 NIV).

Here, the Creator God sent a spirit warrior to selectively kill all of Sennacherib's soldiers and officers in order to show his power and render this army ineffective, thus delivering the people of Jerusalem and Judea from this invading army.

There is a more detailed account of what transpired during Sennacherib's invasion of Judea in 2 Kings, chapter 19. This account shows that besides killing all the officers in Sennacherib's army, the angel also killed 185,000 of his soldiers:
"And it came to pass that night, that the angel of the Lord went out, and slaughtered one hundred and eighty-five thousand Assyrian in the camp: and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses. So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed for his own country, and dwelled in Nineveh" (2.Kgs.19:35-36 KJV Para.). See also Isa.37:1-38.

There are at least two powerful lessons in all three of the accounts of Sennacherib's invasion of Judea: 1) Do not show disrespect for the true God; 2) The true God is all powerful and just one of his spirit-warriors is capable of quickly destroying an entire army.

HEROD'S DEATH

The following account takes place after an angel released the apostle Peter from prison and after Herod had the guards who were charged with keeping Peter in prison, until he could dispose of him. This account shows that there are spirit-beings assigned to watch certain events and to take appropriate action when necessary:

"Then Herod went from Judea to Caesarea and stayed there a while. He had been quarreling with the people of Tyre and Sidon; they now joined together and sought an audience with him. Having secured the support of Blatus, a trusted personal servant of the king, they asked for peace, because they depended on the king's country for their food supply' (Acts 12:19-20 NIV).

"On the appointed day Herod, wearing his royal robes, sat on his throne and delivered a public address to the people. They shouted, "This is the voice of a god, not of a man. Immediately, because Herod did not give praise to God, an angel of the Lord struck him down, and he was eaten by worms and died" (Acts 12:21-23 NIV).

The account of the historian Josephus concerning Herod's death at the hand of an angel fills in many details left out of the brief account in the Book of Acts. Josephus records that Herod Agrippa made an eloquent speech which prompted the crowd to praise him as a god. Instead of rejecting the crowd's declaration of his supposed divinity, he reveled in this adulation and was immediately infested with worms by an angel, which caused his death five days later. See Antiquities of the Jews, book 19, chapter 8, section 2.

The death of Herod at the hand of an angel also shows that these spirit-beings have the authority and power to inflict pain and death on those who insult the God of all that is by ascribing to themselves the glory and honor that is his.

DEATH, THE ANGEL

In the following reprimand, we see what will happen to a woman who is a member of the congregation of Thyatira when she refuses to repent of her evil ways. Notice that her children are to be killed with "death":

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"Notwithstanding I have a few things against you, because you suffer that woman Jezebel, which calls herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed to idols. And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she did not repent. Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds. And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searches the reins and hearts: and I will give to every one of you according to your works" (Rev.2:20-23 KJV Para).

Verse 23 reads: "I will kill her children with death." The English words kill and death are translated from the Greek words apokteino and thanatos, which mean respectively to kill outright, figuratively, to destroy and death (literally or figuratively).

Clearly, when a person is killed, they are dead, so what does it mean to be killed with death? Perhaps, the word death in verse 23 is actually the name of the spirit-being whose function is to kill when necessary.

The Angel Named Death

"And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, Come and see. And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him. And power was given to them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth" (Rev.6:7-8 KJV). See also Ezk.14:21.

The English word Death in verse 8 is translated from the Greek word thanatos (i.e., death), which is an adjective used as a proper noun; (i.e., is, a name.

The English word Hell in verse 8, is translated from the Greek word hades, and is capitalized in most translations indicating that Hell refers to the name of another spirit-being; however, the language of the text can just as easily refer to hades as a place. If the intent is to show hades as a spirit-being, there are two spirit-beings who carry out this specific prophecy.

THE ANGEL WORMWOOD

In Revelation 8:10, an unnamed angel sounds a trumpet to announce the poisoning of a third of the rivers and fresh water from underground sources:

"And the third angel sounded, and there fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters; And the name of the star is called Wormwood: and the third part of the waters became wormwood; and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter" (Rev.8:10-11 KJV).
The English word *Wormwood* in verse 11 is translated from the Greek word *apsinthos*, which means a type of bitterness: figuratively a calamity.

Notice this event impacts the whole world, yet is a selective event. It only impacts one-third of the rivers and fresh water from underground sources, it does not impact the vast oceans. Logic tells us that this event is not blind chance, but is the work of an intelligent spirit-being with tremendous knowledge and power at his disposal. The context seems to reveal that this angel is named Wormwood because of the method he uses with which to kill.

**THE FIRST WOE**

In Revelation 9:1, an unnamed angel sounds a trumpet to announce the first woe, and then another unnamed angel described as a star is given the authority to open an extremely deep hole in the earth and release its occupants:

"And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven to the earth: and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit. And he opened the bottomless pit; and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit" (Rev.9:1-2 KJV).

Smoke so thick that it blackens the sky and obscures the sun rises out of the pit, and then odd looking creatures come out from this smoke. For five months, these creatures will torment people who are not under the Sovereign God's protection:

"And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth: and to them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power. And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads' (Rev.9:3-4 KJV).

"And to them it was given that they should not kill them, but that they should be tormented five months: and their torment was as the torment of a scorpion, when he strikes a man. And in those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them' (Rev.9:5-6 KJV).

"And the shapes of the locusts were similar to horses prepared for battle; and on their heads were as it were crowns like gold, and their faces were as the faces of men. And they had hair as the hair of women, and their teeth were as teeth of lions. And they had breastplates, as it were breastplates of iron; and the sound of their wings was as the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle. And they had tails similar to scorpions, and there were stings in their tails: and their power was to hurt men five months" (Rev.9:7-10 KJV Para.).
Verses 7 through 10 describe the unique features of these creatures to be unlike anything currently known to man. We are not told whether these creatures are spirit or physical, but we are told that their only purpose is to inflict tremendous pain and agony on those who do not have God's mark of protection in their foreheads.

**Abaddon/Apollyon**

In verse 11 we are told that the name of the spirit-being who has been given authority and rulership over these harmful creatures is Abaddon in Hebrew and Apollyon in Greek:

> "And they had a king over them, which is the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue has his name Apollyon" (Rev.9:11 KJV).

The English word king in verse 11 is translated from the Greek word basileus, which means a sovereign. This tells us that the spirit-being who is charged with this important prophetic event is an extremely high ranking and powerful angel.

The name Abaddon is taken from the Hebrew word abaddown and basically means a perishing or a destroyer. Moreover, the name Apollyon means a destroyer; therefore, this spirit-being's basic function seems to be to destroy.

Some seem to think that the spirit-being Abaddon/Apollyon is a demon, which is highly unlikely, because he is only charged with tormenting the unrighteous people of earth, but those worthy of God's protection are not tormented. It is more likely that this spirit-being is one of God's avenging angels.

**THE SECOND WOE**

> "One woe is past; and, behold, there come two woes more hereafter. And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God, Saying to the sixth angel which had the trumpet, Loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates. And the four angels were loosed, which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men" (Rev.9:12-15 KJV).

> "The first woe is past; two other woes are yet to come. The sixth angel sounded his trumpet, and I heard a voice coming from the horns of the golden altar that is before God. It said to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, "Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates. And the four angels who had been kept ready for this very hour and day and month and year were released to kill a third of mankind" (Rev.9:12-15 NIV).
A problem in understanding this prophecy is that it is difficult to know the intended meaning of the Greek words *hoi* and *hetoimazo* in verse 15, which have been translated into English in the KJV version of the Bible as *which were prepared* and in the NIV version of the Bible as *had been kept ready*. The two Greek words *hoi* and *hetoimazo* can just as easily be translated as *were to prepare* or *to prepare*.

Clearly, these four spirit-beings will remain in the Euphrates river until they are sent to carry out their mission as noted in verse 15. Although not stated, perhaps these four direct the slaughter of one-third of mankind by the 200 million spirit-beings described as "horsemen" who ride the odd looking creatures noted in verses 16 through 19:

"And the number of the army of the horsemen were two hundred thousand thousand: and I heard the number of them. And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them, having breastplates of fire, and of jacinth, and brimstone: and the heads of the horses were as the heads of lions; and out of their mouths issued fire and smoke and brimstone. By these three was the third part of men killed, by the fire, and by the smoke, and by the brimstone, which issued out of their mouths. For their power is in their mouth, and in their tails: for their tails were like unto serpents, and had heads, and with them they do hurt" (Rev.9:16-19KJV).

What is clear from verse 18 is that a third of mankind will be killed through the combined efforts of these four spirit-beings, the 200 million horsemen, and the odd looking creatures. So many people will be killed in order to make it abundantly clear to people that they need to change from their sinful ways and begin to obey the Sovereign God.

The indication from verses 16 through 19 is that, once this great slaughter begins, it will not stop until a third of mankind is killed. What is truly amazing is that, even though people will be informed by God's prophets as to why this ongoing slaughter of mankind is happening, people will still refuse to acknowledge or obey the true God:

"And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk: Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts" (Rev.9:20-21KJV).

**SLAUGHTER IN JERUSALEM**

The prophet Ezekiel was shown many visions of prophetic events that will be fulfilled during the end of the age, just before Christ returns. In Ezekiel, chapter eight, Ezekiel is shown that God's patience toward national Israel will come to an end and he will no longer sit quietly by while the House of Israel, the House of Judah, and their civil and religious leaders openly commit abominations and idolatry.

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In Ezekiel, chapter nine, Ezekiel is shown a prophetic vision in which he sees spirit-beings being gathered to begin a great slaughter in Jerusalem because of the people's worship of false gods and their contempt for the Sovereign God. In the same vision Ezekiel is also shown that many of God's elect who inhabit Jerusalem at that time will be sealed for protection against God's wrath:

"He cried also in my ears with a loud voice, saying, Cause them that have charge over the city to draw near, even every man with his destroying weapon in his hand. And, behold, six men came from the way of the higher gate, which lies toward the north, and every man a slaughter weapon in his hand; and one man among them was clothed with linen, with a writer's inkhorn by his side: and they went in, and stood beside the brazen altar " (Ezk.9:1-2 KJV).

In verses 3 and 4, one of these warriors has an inkhorn with which he is instructed to place a mark on the righteous individuals in Jerusalem. Verses 5 to 7 tell us that these spirit-beings are sent forth to slaughter all but those that have been marked for protection. In this prophecy, we again see that, just before Christ returns, angelic warriors will be sent to kill the unrighteous who refuse to repent of their evil and obey the true God.

The Angel's Sickle of Death

The following prophecy in verse 14 of Revelation, chapter 14 shows a great slaughter by an angel in which a tremendous amount of blood is spilled—hundreds of thousands and perhaps millions of people are killed:

"And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying. Thrust in your sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe. And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God. And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs" (Rev.14:18-20 KJV).

Angels Destroy the Wicked

Although the scriptures do not tell the exact date when most prophetic events will take place, there are many prophecies, like the ones Jesus gave, showing that a time will come when angels will separate the wicked from the righteous, and then destroy the wicked by fire:
"The kingdom of heaven is like a net that was let down into the lake and caught all kinds of fish. When it was full, the fishermen pulled it up on the shore. Then they sat down and collected the good fish in baskets, but threw the bad away. This is how it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come and separate the wicked from the righteous and throw them into the fiery furnace..." (Matt.13:47-50 NIV).

The parable Jesus gave about the wheat and the tares concerns who will and will not be in the kingdom of heaven and reveals that angels will be sent to gather the wicked and destroy them by fire:

"Then Jesus sent the multitude away, and went into the house: and his disciples came to him, saying, Declare to us the parable of the tares of the field. He answered and said to them, he that sows the good seed is the Son of man; The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one; The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels. As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world. The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who has ears to hear, let him hear" (Matt.13:36-43 KJV).

CHRIST'S ARMY

The Book of Revelation contains a description of a vast army of spirit-beings led by Christ. There can be no doubt that the spirit-beings who make up this vast army are going to slaughter millions of humans as they go forth to conquer the earth in preparation for Christ's millennial rule and the establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth. In this vision, John sees Jesus Christ in battle dress, ready to invade the earth and make war with the nations who have not heeded the warning to repent of their wickedness:

"And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he does judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean" (Rev.19:11-14 KJV).

In this prophecy, the English word armies is translated from the Greek word strateuma, which is derived from a word meaning an armament. In this context, the word strateuma means, by implication, a body of troops (i.e., an army).
The Invasion Begins

"And the armies that were in heaven followed upon white horses, dressed in fine linen, white and pure. And out of his mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And he has on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, King of Kings, and Lord of Lords" (Rev. 19:14-16 KJV).

With the return of Jesus Christ as King of kings and Lord of lords, a whole new era of peace and prosperity will emerge. From the death and destruction caused by the wrath of God on an evil and corrupt world, will come a people who have the opportunity to live in an unprecedented time of great peace and prosperity.

SUMMARY

Although some spirit-beings in God's service are given clear instructions to destroy people in specific situations and within certain limitations, some are given discretionary authority to take human life in order to carry out a task or perform a function or responsibility for the purpose of protecting God's chosen people, fulfilling his promises to people, or advancing his plan for mankind.

Regardless of the reason for which spirit-beings in God's service destroy people, these spirit-servants carry out their function in a clinical fashion without hatred or malice toward people; it is just a task that they perform in serving God's purpose. However, this cannot be said for evil spirits who hate mankind and delight in tormenting and killing humans.

By B.L. Cocherell

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MINISTERING SPIRITS AND THE HEIRS

The Bible indicates that one-third of all the spirit-beings God created are either loyal to Satan or under his authority and control. But, two-thirds of the millions and perhaps billions of spirit-beings are still loyal to the Sovereign God and his Son the Savior of mankind.

This vast number of loyal spirit-beings are busy carrying out many functions and responsibilities within the Sovereign's spirit dimension of existence, as well as performing necessary tasks in this physical dimension of existence in order to ensure that his plan for mankind is kept on schedule and comes to a successful conclusion.

A short review of the Bible reveals that righteous spirit-beings in the service of the Sovereign God and the Creator God who became the Messiah have always been assigned to watch over and help individuals and nations which play a key role in the Sovereign God's plan and purpose for mankind.

In this chapter, we will define who these ministering spirits are and discuss some of the many beneficial services these righteous spirit-beings have provided to the heirs of salvation in the past. This will allow us to gain an understanding of why these services were provided and what help an heir of salvation should expect during this gospel age of salvation.

HEIRS OF THE KINGDOM

Few who study the Bible realize the enormity of what God the Father is offering to those whom he calls to salvation in this gospel age, before the establishment of his Kingdom on earth. According to the apostle Paul, those who successfully enter the Kingdom of God as the Father's immortal sons are joint-heirs with Christ of his entire kingdom:

"For as many as are led by the spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For you have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but you have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together" (Rom. 8:14-17 KJV).

In order to clearly understand the importance of God the Father's loyal spirit-servants to a person's opportunity to live forever in the Kingdom of God as a joint-heir with Christ, it is necessary to review some of the letter to the Hebrews in the context of the purpose for the creation of mankind and this physical dimension of existence.
Christ The First Heir

In his opening statements, the writer to the Hebrews says the Sovereign Father sent Jesus to speak to mankind on his behalf. He explained that Jesus is the heir of all things that exist and he is the one who created all things for the Sovereign Father:

"God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, Has in these last days spoken to us by his Son, whom he has appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high: Being made so much better than the angels, as he has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they" (Heb.1:1-4 KJV).

The writer also tells us that Jesus who was the Creator God is now much better than the angels, which means that, at one time, he was not. But, how could this be? Verses 1 through 4 make no sense unless one clearly understands that the Creator God who inherently possessed the highest form of existence voluntarily emptied himself of his glory, power, and immortality to become a mortal man subject to death. The apostle Paul wrote the following about the God who became a man:

"Who, [speaking of Christ] being in the form of God [the Sovereign God], thought it not robbery to be equal with God [the Sovereign God]: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient to death, even the death of the cross" (Phil.2:6-8 KJV).

The apostle Paul taught that Christ was the Creator God before he came to earth and became human in order to experience life as a human and sacrifice himself to pay the penalty for the sins of mankind.

"And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory" (1.Tim 3:16 KJV).

Here, the English word manifest is translated from the Greek word phaneroo, which basically means to render apparent. Paul says that God appeared in the flesh. But, when did God manifest himself in the flesh? The only place in the Bible where we find conditions that fit all of the descriptive terms used in 1.Timothy 3:16 is in the New Testament. And the only person who claims to represent and come from God the Father is Jesus. Therefore, the God who manifested himself in the flesh had to be the Creator God who became Jesus Christ.

This powerful god-being came to earth to perform a mission of great importance, and the majority of the people he came into contact with did not even know who he was:
"He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not" (Jn.1:10 KJV).

One of the most profound mysteries of the New Testament is the incarnation of the immortal Creator God. In his incarnation, he was still God, but in the human form and in human flesh. Moreover, he was without immortality and subject to eternal death.

The Book of Hebrews

It is important to remember when reviewing the letter to the Hebrews that it is written to those of the Sovereign Father's earthly family of kings and priests (i.e., the church) who understand his plan and purpose for the salvation of mankind, and that Jesus was the Creator God before he relinquished his immortality in order to become human. Therefore, when the writer speaks of the heirs of salvation, he is not speaking of all people on earth; he is speaking of specific individuals who have been offered an opportunity for salvation.

At the end of Hebrews, chapter 1, the writer says that ministering spirits were sent to assist the "heirs of salvation":

"But to which of the angels did he say at any time, Sit on my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool? Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" (Heb.1:13-14 KJV Para.).

The English words ministering and minister in verse 14 are translated from the Greek words leitourgikos and diakonia, which respectively mean to benefit and to aid or to provide a service.

The English phrase sent forth is translated from the Greek word apostello, which means to send out (properly, on a mission), literally or figuratively.

According to the writer to the Hebrews, a primary function and focus of angels at this time in history is to provide beneficial services to those who are the heirs of salvation; however, the writer does not provide details as to what these services are. In order to gain a clear understanding of God's purpose for assigning spirit-beings with the responsibility for providing these benefits and services to the heirs of salvation, we must first establish the importance of these heirs to the Sovereign God.

Angels were never promised rulership at the Sovereign God's right hand. This position of rulership was the Creator God's before he became Christ and is now his position of rulership as the Sovereign God's firstborn son of his new creation. Loyal angels are servants of the Sovereign God and Christ and are sent to minister to the heirs of salvation.

Continuing in chapter 2, the writer to the Hebrews gives a warning to the heirs of salvation:
"Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to his own will?" (Heb.2:1-4 KJV).

There is only one opportunity for a person to accept the Sovereign God's offer of salvation. For some that opportunity happens during this gospel age, and the warning is for these people to pay attention to this opportunity and not let it slip away.

**Humans Created to Rule**

It is important to the discussion of ministering spirits and the heirs of the Sovereign God's Kingdom to understand Psalms 8:3-8 in the context of what the writer to the Hebrews says in chapter 2, verses 5 through 8 about mankind and the heirs of salvation:

"When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have ordained; What is man, that you are mindful of him? and the son of man, that you visit him? For you have made him a little lower than the angels, and have crowned him with glory and honor. You made him to have dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under his feet: All sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field; The fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passes through the paths of the seas" (Psa.8:3-8 KJV).

The English word man in the question What is man, is translated from the Hebrew word enowsh, which means a man in general. The English word man in the phrase son of man is translated from the Hebrew word adam, which means a human being (an individual or the species, mankind). The two Hebrew words enowsh and adam clearly refer to humans.

The English word angels in verse 5 is translated from the Hebrew word elohiym, which can mean gods in the plural sense. Mankind is indeed made lower than the Sovereign God and the Creator God.

Although many believe that the Psalmist is referring to Christ as being made "a little lower than the angels," nothing in verses 3 through 8 references Christ. Only when compared with the quotation of this psalm by the writer to the Hebrews can such an association be made. Otherwise, the psalm stands alone in its context of mankind being made lower than the Gods. The Psalmist is in fact referring to mankind in general and their dominion over the earth and its contents being granted to mankind as noted in the Genesis record:
"And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said to them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moves upon the earth" (Gen.1:26-28 KJV).

The World to Come

The writer to the Hebrews explains the tremendous difference between the status of angels who are spirit-beings and humans who have the opportunity to become god-beings:

"For to the angels has he not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak. But one in a certain place testified, saying, What is man, that you are mindful of him? or the son of man, that you visits him? You made him a little lower than the angels; you crowned him with glory and honor, and did set him over the works of your hands" (Heb.2:5-7 KJV).

There is no contradiction between what the writer to the Hebrews wrote and what the Psalmist wrote concerning mankind. Humans were created inferior to the Sovereign God, the Creator God, and their created spirit-servants.

When the writer says, "For to the angels has he not put in subjection the world to come," he is stating a fact. It is the heirs of salvation who will rule the world to come with Christ (Rev.3:21-22). After stating this fact, the writer quotes Psalm 8, but instead of quoting the entire psalm, he interjects a new thought and expands on the psalm by stating that God made man a little lower than his spirit-messengers (i.e., servants).

The writer continues his thought concerning mankind in Hebrews 2:8, but now injects the heirs of salvation: "But now we see not yet all things put under him."

"You have put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him" (Heb.2:8 KJV).

When the writer says, all things put under him, he is speaking of the world to come in which the Sovereign God's adopted sons (the heirs of salvation) will inherit all things and co-reign with his firstborn son the Savior of mankind.

The Sovereign God's purpose for the creation of mankind is to expand his heavenly family with immortal sons who will inherit his vast kingdom and rule it along with his firstborn son, the Savior of mankind:
"And he said to me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give to him that is thirsty of the fountain of the water of life freely. He that overcomes shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son" (Rev.21:6-7 KJV). See Rev.2:26-27; 3:21-22.

The God Who Died

In Hebrews 2:9, the writer begins to speak of Christ in the context of his being human and explains how individuals become heirs of salvation through the effort of the Creator God:

"But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man" (Heb.2:9 KJV). See also Lk.24:1-7; Acts 2:24-32; 3:15,26; Rom.6:8-10; Phil.2:6-8; 1.Pet.3:18; Rev.1:18; 2:8.

The Creator of mankind who became Jesus voluntarily gave up his immortality to become a human being who was inferior to angels in many ways. Spirit-beings that have been created to serve the Sovereign God are far superior to humans. These spirit-beings have eternal life, are more intelligent than humans, and they have tremendous spirit-power, far beyond anything that humans could ever conceive of wielding.

The Creator of mankind came to earth and became human in the person of Jesus in order to experience the human condition:

"For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings" (Heb.2:10 KJV).

The Creator God who made all that exists for the Sovereign God became human, lived a sinless life in compliance to his heavenly Father's laws as an example for us to follow, and then sacrificed his life in an agonizing death as payment for the sins of all humanity. He did this so that each of us could be saved from eternal death, which we have earned as a result of our violation of his Father's perfect law. See 1.Cor.6:20; 7:23; Ezk.18:4, 20; Rom.6:23.

"For both he that sanctifies and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren, Saying, I will declare your name to my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise to you" (Heb.2:11-12 KJV). See also Psa.22:22.

Prior to the advent of Jesus Christ, there was no way to gain forgiveness of sin and no way for a person to make lasting peace with the Sovereign God. All stood condemned under the law; all were awaiting a permanent death, because there was no method by which a person could petition God the Father for forgiveness of sin in order to make peace with him.
Now, through the perfect sacrifice of Christ, the Sovereign Father has a method through which he is able to forgive a person's violation of his law, make a person holy (i.e., sanctified), and thereby save a person from the second death in the Lake of Fire in which all wicked humans will die and cease to exist. Therefore, those who are made holy are now brothers of Christ in the Sovereign Father's earthly family of king-priests of whom Christ is the ruler:

"And again, I will put my trust in him. And again, Behold I and the children which God has given me. 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; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage" (Heb.2:13-15 KJV).

Jesus who was the Creator God divested himself of his immortality and became a human, which he had created inferior to angels. He did this in order to experience life as a human and to provide a method through which you and I can become heirs of the Sovereign God's kingdom as his immortal sons:

"For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behooved him to be made like to his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself has suffered being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted" (Heb.2:16-18 KJV).

**Christ Becomes a Son and an Heir**

After living and experiencing life as a human, through a resurrection from the dead, Christ became the firstborn son of the Sovereign Father's new creation of spirit-beings to be transformed from a human being into a God-being and an heir to all of the Sovereign Father's kingdom:

"For to which of the angels said he at any time, You are my Son, this day have I begotten you? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son? And again, when he brings in the first-begotten into the world, he said, And let all the angels of God worship him" (Heb.1:5-6 Para.).

Although angels are spirit-beings, they are not god-beings in the God Family (Eph.3:14-15). However, Christ is of the God Family because he is not only the first human to be fathered by the Sovereign God (Lk.1:30-35) but also the first human to be transformed into a spirit son of the Sovereign God (Col.1:14-18) through a resurrection from the dead.
Today, the God Family consists of two members—God the Father and God the Son who is the Savior of mankind and was the Creator God before he was born of a human. The Sovereign God's purpose for the creation of this physical existence and mankind is to expand his family by creating beings just like himself through the process of the human experience and a transformation from the physical to the spiritual.

Angels do not have the potential to become god-beings because they are already spirit-beings created for a specific function and responsibility within the heavenly realm. A major part of their function and responsibility is to watch over and care for those whom the Sovereign Father calls to salvation during the gospel age.

Although the purpose for the creation of mankind is the expansion of the God Family who will inherit the Sovereign's kingdom, assist in its rule, and the administration of the heavenly realm (Matt.25:34; Rev.2: 26-27; 3:21;21:7), mankind only has rule over the physical earth and everything within it at this time (Gen.1:27-30).

Three Groups of Heirs

According to the biblical record, there are three groups of individuals who will be in the first resurrection at Christ's return and receive the rewards promised to the heirs of salvation. They are the righteous individuals who obtained salvation before the covenant with national Israel, during the covenant with national Israel, and during the gospel age of salvation. All other people will have their opportunity for salvation during Christ's reign on earth.

In the of Book of Hebrews, chapter 11, there is a long list of righteous individuals beginning with Abel who remained faithful in their obedience and service to God. At the end of this long list, the writer to the Hebrews says, "And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect" (Heb.11:39-40 KJV). The promise which these individuals received from the Creator God was immortal life in the Sovereign God's kingdom as his heirs.

The apostle Paul said the following about being an heir according to the promise.

"For you are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you be Christ's, then are you Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (Gal.3:26-29 KJV). See also Gal.4:4-7.

It is the individuals who will participate in the first resurrection at Christ's return who are the "heirs" which the writer to the Hebrews referred to when he wrote, "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" (Heb.1:14 KJV).
Spirit-beings are assigned to perform a beneficial services to the heirs of salvation. During the gospel age of salvation, the heirs are individuals who comprise the Sovereign Father's earthly family of king-priests.

Abraham

The Creator God promised Abram whose name he changed to Abraham a national inheritance and a blessing for all nations through his descendants, one of which would become the Savior of mankind (Gen.12:1-7). In order for the Creator to fulfill his promise to Abraham, he not only had to protect and bless Abraham and his descendants but also manipulate many world events throughout history.

After many years, Abraham fathered a son, Isaac, through his wife Sarah as the Creator had promised (Gen.18:1-15). When it came time for Isaac to get married, Abraham followed God's instructions and sent his most trusted and eldest servant to find a wife for Isaac from among his relatives:

"He said to the chief servant in his household, the one in charge of all that he had, ”Put your hand under my thigh, I want you to swear by the Lord, the God of heaven and the God of earth, that you will not get a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I am living, but will go to my country and my own relatives and get a wife for my son Isaac" (Gen.24:2-4 NIV).

In verse 7, Abraham tells his servant that the Creator will send an angel before him. This means that the Creator had assigned one of his spirit-servants the responsibility of ensuring that events would be set in motion which would enable Abraham's servant to find the wife who has been chosen in advance for Isaac:

"The Lord, the God of heaven, who brought me out of my father's household and my native land and who spoke to me and promised me on oath, saying, 'To your offspring I will give this land'—he will send his angel before you so that you can get a wife for my son from there" (Gen.24:7 NIV).

In chapter 24, we see the authority and power which an angel sent from God had been given in order to guide and manipulate events to facilitate the desired result, which was ensuring that Rebecca would be Isaac's wife.

The fulfillment of the Creator's promise to Abraham to make him a multitude of nations (which his descendants are today) and to ensure that the timing of the Messiah's arrival on the world scene occurred on the exact date (year, day, and hour) within the prophetic sequence of events took a tremendous amount of planning, monitoring, and the manipulation of hundreds of millions (and perhaps billions) of minor to major events throughout history up to that precise point in time.
God is not omnipresent, so how is it possible for him to monitor and guide the life of an individual, a small number of individuals, or the lives of billions of people, along with world events throughout history in order to make sure that certain events occur in order to obtain a desired result? The answer is, that God micro-manages on a grand scale by using hundreds or millions (and perhaps billions) of highly skilled, well trained, and loyal spirit-beings, which he has created to carry out his plan for mankind. The micro-management and attention to the smallest details surrounding certain people’s lives and world events shows the tremendous amount of effort being put forth in order for God's promises to be fulfilled and for salvation to be brought to mankind.

The Sovereign God has created vast numbers well organized and directed spirit-beings to perform various functions for him. When they are assigned a function or a responsibility, they have the knowledge, intelligence, skills, authority, and power to perform whatever they are assigned to do.

**LOT, HIS WIFE, AND DAUGHTERS PROTECTED**

Genesis 19 contains the account of two spirit-beings in human form going to Sodom where they met Abraham's nephew Lot who invited these spirit-beings into his home for a meal and shelter for the night.

In verses 4 through 11, a crowd of sexual predators came to Lot's home in an attempt to sodomize the two men whom they knew had recently arrived in the city. After the angels struck the men surrounding Lot's home with blindness, one of the angels told Lot that they would destroy the city. The angels told Lot that, if he had other relatives living there, he should warn them to leave the city.

The rest of the account shows that because of their hesitance to leave Sodom, the angels had to grab the hands of Lot, his wife, and daughters and pull them out of the city in order to prevent them from being killed with the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah.

Although these two angels were destroying angels, they were also protectors and saviors of Lot and his immediate family. It is through the descendants of Lot's two daughters that the nations of Moab and Ammon came into existence. These two nations play a major role in biblical history and the prophetic events at the end of this age just before Christ returns.

**AN ANGEL ASSIGNED TO ISRAEL**

Exodus, chapters 13 and 14 contains the account of the Israelites leaving Egypt. This is one of the rare instances in which the Creator himself takes a personal hand in the events as a representative of the Supreme God, because of the importance of the events. During the exodus from Egypt, the Creator manifests a cloud and pillar of fire to lead and protect the Israelites as they leave the land of Egypt. See Neh.9:1-19 and Chapter 4 of this book: "The Angel of the Lord").
"And the angel [messenger] of God, which went before the camp of Israel, removed and went behind them; and the pillar of the cloud went from before their face, and stood behind them" (Ex.14:19 KJV).

After leading the Israelites out of Egypt, the Creator tells Moses that he will provide a spirit-being to protect and instruct them during their journey and into the promised land.

"Behold, I send an angel before you, to keep you in the way, and to bring you into the place which I have prepared. Beware of him, and obey his voice, do not provoke him for he will not pardon your transgressions: for my name is in him" (Ex.23:20-21 KJV Para.).

The English phrase to keep you is translated from the Hebrew word shamar, which means to hedge about (as with thorns), i.e., guard; generally, to protect, or attend to.

"But if you shall indeed obey his voice, and do all that I speak; then I will be an enemy to your enemies, and an adversary to your adversaries. For my angel shall go before you, and bring you to the Amorites, and the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the Canaanites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites: and I will force them out" (Ex.23:22-23 KJV Para.).

In this account, we see that the Creator has assigned a spirit-being to go with the Israelites as their guide, protector, instructor, and warrior as they proceed toward entering the promised land. Moreover, the Creator gives the Israelites specific instructions and a warning to do exactly what they are told by this spirit-being as he performs his task, because he has the authority and power to reprimand and punish them if they do not carefully follow his instructions. This account also shows that there was meant to be a close working relationship between the Israelites and this angel as the Israelites took possession of the promised land.

In Exodus, chapter 33, the Creator tells the Israelites that he will not personally go with them into the promised land, because of their rebellious attitude and behavior, but he would send an angel to go with them:

"And the Lord said to Moses, Depart, and go up from here, you and the people which you have brought up out of the land of Egypt, to the land which I swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, saying, To your seed I will give it: And I will send an angel before you; and I will drive out the Canaanite, the Amorite, and the Hittite, and the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite: To a land flowing with milk and honey: for I will not go in the midst of you; lest I consume you in the way, for you are a stiff-necked people" (Ex.33:1-3 KJV Para.).

The spirit-being which the Creator assigned as his personal representative to be with the Israelites and bring them into the promised land was extremely powerful and would remove the inhabitants of the land that the Israelites were to occupy:
"And I will send hornets before you, which shall drive out the Hivite, the Canaanite, and the Hittite, from before you. I will not drive them out from before you in one year; lest the land becomes desolate, and the beast of the field multiply against you. By little and little I will drive them out from before you, until you are increased, and inherit the land" (Ex.23:28-30 KJV Para.). See also Deut.11:22-24.

The Israelite's relationship with the spirit-being assigned to them by the Creator was to be a long term relationship in which this extremely powerful angel would guide, protect, and instruct, them as he removed the inhabitants of the land which the Israelites were to occupy.

**ELIJAH'S TWO MEALS**

The Book of 1 Kings, chapter 19 contains the account of an angel preparing two meals for Elijah the prophet and giving him a message to go to Mount Horeb where Elijah has a conversation with the Creator.

After Elijah had the prophets and priests of Baal slaughtered, Queen Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah to tell him she was going to have him killed the next day. Hearing this, Elijah fled for his life into the wilderness where he requested that God let him die:

"And came and sat down under a juniper tree: and he asked that he might die; and said, It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers. And as he lay and slept under a juniper tree, an angel touched him, and said to him, Get up and eat. And he looked, and there was a cake baked on the coals, and a jug of water at his head. And he ate and drank, and lay down again" (1.Kgs.19:4-6 KJV Para.). See also 2.kgs.9:1-10.

It is unlikely that this angel who was sent to Elijah went to a local market and purchased the food and water that he had ready for Elijah to eat after he woke him up. It is more likely that he just caused this food, water, and the fire to come into existence through wielding his spirit-power in the same way that Jesus, through the use of his spirit-power, turned water into wine and cause food to come into existence to feed thousands of people on two different occasions. See Jn.2:1-10; Matt.14:14-21, 15:32-38.

"And the angel of the Lord came again the second time, and touched him, and said, Get up and eat; because you have a long journey ahead of you. And he got up and ate and drank, and went by the energy in that food forty days and forty nights to Horeb the mount of God" (1.Kgs.19:7-8 KJV Para.).

The rest of chapter 19 tells of Elijah's encounter with the Word of the Lord (i.e., the Creator God) and being sent to perform another task for the Creator. Elijah was spared from death and miraculously nourished in order to perform a task for God.
ELISHA'S PROTECTION

During one of the conflicts between Israel and the Syrians, the prophet Elisha warned the king of Israel twice to avoid a place where the Syrians would camp to lay an ambush. When the Syrian king found out that it was Elisha who had been warning the Israelites, he sent a large group of his soldiers to capture him:

"When the servant of the man of God got up and went out early the next morning, an army with horses and chariots had surrounded the city. "Oh, my lord, what shall we do?" the servant asked. "Don't be afraid," the prophet answered, "Those who are with us are more than those who are with them." And Elisha prayed, "O Lord, open his eyes so he may see." Then the Lord opened the servant's eyes, and he looked and saw the hills full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha" (2.Kgs. 6:15-17 NIV).

Elisha was not afraid of the Syrian army or anyone else who would attempt to harm him, because he knew that he was being protected by righteous spirit-beings who were more powerful than any physical army.

RESCUED BY AN ANGEL

The account of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego being sentenced to death for their refusal to bow down and worship King Nebuchadnezzar's golden image is an example of a rescue from certain death by a spirit-being charged with protecting those who trust in God and with whom he is dealing in a personal way.

In this account, the king flies into a rage when he hears that his instructions to worship the golden image, which he had made are being ignored. He has Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego thrown into a furnace, which has been heated to seven times its normal temperature in order to make sure that these three men are completely destroyed. However, as the king looks into the furnace, he sees four men walking in the flames. Puzzled by what he sees, he questions his counselors:

"Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? They answered and said to the king, True, O king. And he replied, Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they are not hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God" (Dan.3:24-25 KJV Para.).

The king recognizes Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego and says that the other person looks like a god-being.

"Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the mouth of the burning fiery furnace, and said, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, ye servants of the most high God, come out of there and come here. Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, came out of the midst of the fire. And the princes, governors, and captains, and the king's counselors, who were there saw these men on whose bodies the fire had no power, nor was a hair of their head singed, neither were
Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego understood God's law, which forbids the worship of any God but him. These men also knew that, if God wanted to rescue them, he had the power to do it, so they put their life in his hands. After the angel saved them from being burned alive in the furnace, the king made the following declaration:

"Then Nebuchadnezzar spoke, and said, Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, who has sent his angel, and delivered his servants who trusted in him, and has made the kings command worthless, and rescued their bodies, because they would not serve nor worship any god, except their own God. Therefore I make a decree, That all people, nations, and languages, which speak any thing amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made a dunghill: because there is no other God that can deliver after this sort. Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, in the province of Babylon" (Dan.3:28-30 KJV Para).

DANIEL AND THE LIONS

The account of the prophet Daniel being rescued from the lion's den is another instance of God sending an angel to rescue a person from certain death.

In this account, King Darius was persuaded by individuals who disliked Daniel to issue a decree that forbid anyone from petitioning any god or man except the king for thirty days. The penalty for violating this decree would be death. The king did this without considering that Daniel whom he highly respected would violate this decree.

After the king was told that Daniel was seen praying to the Creator God, the king worked well into the evening of that day in an attempt to find a way to keep Daniel from being thrown to the lions. When this failed, he had Daniel brought to him and told him that he had no choice but have him thrown to the lions.

Although king Darius worshiped false gods, he knew that Daniel's God was extremely powerful and told him, "Your God whom you serve continually, he will deliver you" (Dan.6:16). After authorizing Daniel's execution, the king went to his palace and passed the night fasting in the hope that Daniel would not die:

"Then the king arose very early in the morning, and went quickly to the den of lions. And when he came to the den, he cried with a lamentable voice to Daniel: and said to Daniel, O Daniel, servant of the living God, was your God, whom you serve continually, able to deliver you from the lions?" (Dan.6:19-20 KJV Para.).
To the king's surprise and delight, Daniel answered and said:

"My God has sent his angel, and has shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me: forasmuch as before him innocency was found in me; and also before you, O king, have I done no harm. Then was the king very happy for him, and commanded that they should take Daniel out of the den. So Daniel was taken out of the den, and absolutely no harm was done to him, because he believed in his God" (Dan.6:22-23 KJV Para.).

THE ARCHANGEL MICHAEL

The archangel Michael whose name means who (is) like God is mentioned five times in the Bible—three times in the Book of Daniel, once in Jude's letter, and once in the Book of Revelation. There is little doubt that Michael is an extremely powerful and high ranking servant who performs a number of important functions within the Sovereign God's government.

This powerful, high ranking spirit-being is shown to have at least two major responsibilities. Under the supervision of Christ, the archangel Michael is assigned to watch over national Israel and he is the commander of the Sovereign God's heavenly armies.

Michael Intervenes

The following account of a spirit-messenger being sent to the prophet Daniel to provide him insight into his vision of events which would occur near the end of human rule on earth shows several important things about Michael and other spirit-beings:

"Then he [the Angel] said to me, Fear not, Daniel: for from the first day that you set your heart to understand, and to afflict yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I come because of your words. But the prince of the kingdom of Persia held me back twenty-one days: However, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me; and I remained there with the kings of Persia. Now I have come to make you understand what shall befall your people in the latter days: for the vision is far in the future" (Dan.10:12-14 Para.).

The prince of the kingdom of Persia is described in Hebrew as the sar malkuth, which means a head person of a rule/dominion. This is not speaking of the physical ruler, but the spirit-being who rules Persia. This spirit ruler of Persia is of a higher rank and more powerful than the messenger sent from God, and was allowed for twenty-one days to prevent the messenger from accomplishing his task.

Notice that Michael is one of the chief princes in The Sovereign God's kingdom. The English phrase chief princes is translated from the Hebrew words ri’shown sar, which mean a head person, first in rank. This tells us that there is a ranking system ordered according to status or authority within God's governmental system.
Being made aware that the messenger sent to Daniel had not completed his mission, the archangel Michael who has the responsibility of overseeing national Israel and the interaction between the spirit realm and national Israel comes to the aid of the messenger and overpowers the spirit ruler of Persia, thus allowing the messenger to accomplish his mission.

This record tells us that not only are there evil spirits who are covertly ruling various nations on earth but also some angels are much more powerful than others.

The messenger was forced to stay "with the kings of Persia." The English word king in this account is translated from the Hebrew word melek, which means king. It is unclear in this account whether the use of melek is plural or singular; however, its use indicates that there is more than one spirit-being in authority over Persia and that there is a governmental structure or minimally a hierarchical structure among the spirit-beings who are ruling Persia behind the scenes.

Daniel, chapter 10, verses 20 and 21 give more insight into the conflicts which go on between righteous spirit-beings within the Sovereign God's orderly governmental structure and those rebellious spirit-beings who oppose his rule.

Although the Living Bible Paraphrased is not and exact translation of the original text, it does capture the essence of what happened once the messenger had accomplished his mission. Speaking to Daniel the messenger said the following:

"Do you know why I have come? I am here to tell you what is written in the 'Book of the Future.' Then, when I leave, I will go again to fight my way back, past the prince of Persia; and after him, the prince of Greece. Only Michael, the angel who guards your people Israel, will be there to help me" (Dan.10:20-21 LBP).

The reference to Greece (i.e., yavan in the original text) seems to be a reference to Javan, a son of Joktan, from whom the Ionians, known as the Greeks, descended. This may also be a reference to their geographical territory as well. What is important, however, is that this account shows another spirit-being, ruling over a specific group of people who is hostile toward the spirit-beings who serve God.

**Michael and National Israel**

The prophet Daniel recorded the Creator God's promise to send the archangel Michael who is described as a great prince to rescue the Israelites and everyone written in the Book of Life from the time of great trouble which will come upon the earth just before Christ returns:
"And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which stands for the children of your people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time your people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book" (Dan.12:1 KJV Para.).

The English word stand is translated from the Hebrew word amad, which means to stand (literal and figurative, intransitive and transitive); therefore, amad in verse 1 clearly shows Michael has the responsibility to watch over and protect Daniel's people.

The English word great in verse 1 is translated from the Hebrew word gadowl, which means great in any sense; therefore it also means "older." The English word prince is translated from the Hebrew word sar, which means a head person of any rank or class. Michael is the head and perhaps the eldest among his ranking or class of spirit-beings and subordinates.

Although Michael is described as the great prince of Daniel's people and Daniel was of the House of Judah, these prophecies in Daniel also concern the House of Israel as well. Therefore, we can assume that, when Michael is described as "the prince of your people", it means that he is the prince of the national entity Israel.

This prophecy is of a time at end of human rule on earth, just before Christ returns, and at the first resurrection. Moreover, there are many prophecies which speak of the Israelites being rescued from total annihilation during this time; therefore, it seems logical that the archangel Michael's responsibilities include all of the tribes of Israel.

"And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever. . . . But you go your way till the end comes: for you shall rest, and stand in your lot at the end of the days" (Dan.12: 2-3,13 KJV Para.). See also Dan.7:18; Heb.11:1-40.

The events described in this prophecy also include the protection of the individuals noted in Ezekiel, chapter 9 and Revelation, chapter 7 from God's wrath as the earth is prepared for Christ's return. When the angel told Daniel that he would stand in his lot at the end of the days, he was referring to Daniel being in the first resurrection. This is the resurrection of the righteous of national Israel to whom salvation was promised for their obedience to God's law.

CHRIST AND ANGELS

When the Creator God divested himself of his immortality and became human, he was watched over by angels throughout his life, beginning at his birth and ending just before his crucifixion.
After Christ's baptism and just before he began his formal ministry, he went off by himself to fast and commune with his heavenly Father in preparation for his mission to proclaim the Kingdom of God. During this time of fasting and preparation, Satan attempted to get Christ to test his Father's promise to provide angels who would protect him so he could complete his mission:

"Then the devil took him into the holy city, and set him on a pinnacle of the temple, and said to him, If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning you: and they shall bear you up in their hands, lest at any time you strike your foot against a stone. Jesus said to him, It is written again, You shall not tempt the Lord your God" (Matt.4:5-7 Para.). See Psa.91:11-12.

After Christ's forty days of fasting and his refusal to worship and serve Satan, angels came and strengthened him and provided for his needs. An angel also strengthened him as he was praying to his heavenly Father on the Mount of Olives in preparation for his sacrifice for mankind.

Although the scriptures do not say exactly what the angels did for Christ on these two occasions, it can be assumed that Jesus' physical needs were supplied after his fast and that, on both occasions, he was encouraged to go forward and complete his mission. See Matt.4:1-11; Mk.1:9-13; Lk.22:39-43.

**Christ Arrested**

The following account of the arrest of Jesus before his crucifixion gives us an idea of the vast numbers of spirit-beings available to protect the righteous:

"Then the men stepped forward, seized Jesus and arrested him. With that, one of Jesus' companions reached for his sword, drew it out and struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his ear' (Matt.26:50-51 NIV).

"Put your sword back in its place," Jesus said to him, "for all who draw the sword will die by the sword. Do you think I cannot call on my Father, and he will at once put at my disposal more than twelve legions of angels? But how then would the Scriptures be fulfilled that say it must happen in this way?" (Matt.26:52-54 NIV).

Roman legions consisted of 6,000 men; therefore, Jesus was saying that he could have called for more than 72,000 angels to assist him if he had wanted to prevent his arrest.

This account and the account of the angelic army that stood ready to defend the prophet Elisha (2.Kgs.6:8-17) show that certain individuals can have vast numbers of angels at their disposal in times of great danger.
RELEASE FROM PRISON

There are two occasions where the apostles of the early church were released from prison by an angel. One occasion involved both Peter and the other apostles and one involved only Peter.

**Peter and the Other Apostles Released**

As Peter and some of the other apostles were proclaiming the gospel, healing people of various sicknesses, and casting out evil spirits in Jerusalem, the high priest and other religious leaders of the Jews who viewed the apostles as a threat to their religious authority and teaching had them arrested and thrown in prison:

"Then the high priest rose up, and all they that were with him, (which is the sect of the Sadducees,) and were filled with indignation, And laid their hands on the apostles, and put them in the common prison" (Acts 5:17-18 KJV).

Sometime during the night, an angel came and released the apostles from the prison and told them to go to the temple and proclaim the good news message:

"But the angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors, and brought them forth, and said, Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life" (Acts 5:19-20 KJV).

This account in chapter 5 tells us that the angel released these men without the guards noticing. To keep the guards from noticing the apostles walking out, the angel must have somehow manipulated the minds of the guards.

It is important to understand that spirit-beings are not constrained by physical law in the same way as humans; these beings are extremely intelligent and powerful and can manipulate and control this physical environment in ways that we can only imagine.

**Peter Released from Prison**

For whatever reason, whether personal, political, or religious, Herod who was the ruler of Judea began to persecute members of the early church and had the apostle John's brother James executed and the apostle Peter arrested and put in prison.

Because Herod had probably heard stories of Peter and the other apostles' escape from the common, low-security prison, Herod was going to make sure that Peter would not embarrass him by escaping, so he had Peter put in what amounted to a military prison with sixteen soldiers to guard him until the Passover season was finished. At this time, Peter was to be brought before the people and dealt with.
We are not told how long Peter was in prison, but it was likely over seven days, because Passover lambs were sacrificed in the afternoon before the first day of Unleavened Bread and eaten after sunset on the first day of this seven-day festival.

"So Peter was kept in prison, but the church was earnestly praying to God for him. The night before Herod was to bring him to trial, Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains, and sentries stood guard at the entrance. Suddenly an angel of the Lord appeared and a light shone in the cell. He struck Peter on the side and woke him up. "Quick, get up!" he said, and the chains fell off Peter's wrists" (Acts 12:5-7 NIV).

"Then the angel said to him, "Put on your clothes and sandals." And Peter did so. "Wrap your cloak around you and follow me," the angel told him. Peter followed him out of the prison, but he had no idea that what the angel was doing was really happening: he thought he was seeing a vision. They passed the first and second guards and came to the iron gate leading to the city. It opened for them by itself, and they went through it. When they had walked the length of one street, suddenly the angel left him" (Acts 12:8-10 NIV).

The angel used his power to make the guards unaware of what was transpiring and manipulated the physical environment in order to facilitate Peter's escape from prison.

"Then Peter came to himself and said, "Now I know without a doubt that the Lord sent his angel and rescued me from Herod's clutches and from everything the Jewish people were anticipating" (Acts 12:11 NIV).

As Peter stood in the street, he realized that he had neither seen a vision nor had he been dreaming. He had been released from prison by an angel.

In both these accounts of individuals being released from prison by an angel, the primary purpose for their release was not to save them from further persecution or to save their lives. The overriding purpose was for them to be able to show the spiritual leaders of the Jews that these men were under the care and protection of God and for these men to be able to continue to proclaim the Sovereign Father's good news message.

Paul Rescued

There is a lengthy account of Paul being shipwrecked on his way to Italy. In this account, an angel is sent with a message of encouragement to tell Paul that his life will be spared (Acts 27:1-44). Although the angel was primarily sent to save Paul in order for him to be able complete his mission of proclaiming the good news message in Rome, two hundred and sixty other people were also saved from certain death as a witness of the true God's power and mercy.
FUNCTIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Although there is nothing specific in Bible which promises each individual in the Sovereign Father's earthly family of king-priests (or any other person) that a personal angel or a number of angels will be assigned to continually watch over them during their lifetime, there are several scriptures indicating that this angelic function does exist.

Matthew, Mark, and Luke all record Christ's metaphorical references to "little children" in the context of those who believe in him and are followers of the Sovereign God's truth. Within these instructions and warnings by Christ is the following injunction and reference to angels:

"See that you do not despise one of these little ones: for I say to you, that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father that is in heaven. For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost" (Matt.18:10-11 KJV Para.).

Christ warns that the Father's earthly children should not be despised because their angels stand before his heavenly Father. This seems to indicate that the elect have at least one angel assigned to watch over them and continually give reports concerning them to their heavenly Father.

After an angel released Peter from prison, he went to the house of Mary the mother John to tell those gathered there what just happened:

"Peter knocked at the outer entrance, and a servant girl named Rhoda came to answer the door. When she recognized Peter's voice, she was so overjoyed she ran back without opening it and exclaimed, "Peter is at the door!" "You're out of your mind," they told her. When she kept insisting that it was so, they said, "It must be his angel" (Acts 12:13-15 NIV).

In Acts 12:15, the English word angel is translated from the Greek word aggelos, which means to bring tidings; a messenger; especially an angel. If the writer of the Book of Acts had meant to indicate that a personal messenger had been sent to the house by Peter, the writer could have used the Greek word apostolos; which can mean a delegate.

The use of the Greek word aggelos seems to indicate that, at that time, the elect of God believed that a spirit-being was assigned to watch over them and assist them when necessary.

Being Watched Over

The Book of Enoch contains a promise that God will set his angels to watch over those for whom he has tremendous love:

"But over all the just and holy he will place holy angels as watchmen to watch them like the apple of an eye; till an end has been made to evil and to all sin; and even if the holy sleep a long sleep there is nothing to fear. And the wise among men will see the truth, and the children of the earth will understand all the words of this book, and know that their riches will not be able to save them in
the overthrow of their sins" (Enoch 100:5-6, Book 5, Epistle of Enoch)

Enoch records tremendous words of encouragement for those who have been called to salvation throughout the centuries. Through the assignment of angels to watch over his earthly children, the Sovereign Father not only expresses his love for the elect in this present life but also into eternity, which is why there is truly nothing to fear. See Matt.10:29-31; Lk.1:67-74; Rom.8:36-39; Heb.13:5-6.

**Gathering of Israelites**

The Creator God made a promise to national Israel that on its surface may not seem all that important to the subject of angels, but actually documents an extremely important function and responsibility given to angels, which concerns all ancient and modern Israelites, as well as the righteous of all ages who will participate in the first resurrection at Christ's return.

After warning the Israelites that he would scatter them throughout the world's nations if they broke their agreement with him by rebelling against him, the Creator God made the following promise through Moses:

"And it shall come to pass, when all these things are come on you, the blessing and the curse, which I have set before you, and you shall call them to mind among all the nations, where ever the Lord your God has driven you, and shall return to the Lord your God, and shall obey his voice according to all that I command you this day, you and your children, with all your heart, and with all your soul; That then the Lord your God will turn your captivity, and have compassion on you, and will return and gather you from all the nations, where ever the Lord your God has scattered you. If any of yours are driven out to the outmost parts of heaven, from there will the Lord your God gather you, and from there will he fetch you: And the Lord your God will bring you into the land which your fathers possessed, and you shall possess it: and he will do you good, and multiply you above your fathers" (Deut.30:1-5 KJV Para.).

The above promise is very important, because it not only speaks to the ancient and modern Israelite but also to Israelites far in the future after Christ returns and the establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth. The Creator promises to gather the Israelites from among the nations and even from the heavens if they happen to be there.

After asking some men about the Jews who had escaped from their Persian captors and the condition of Jerusalem, Nehemiah was so disappointed at what he heard that he wept, mourned, fasted, and prayed to God. He reminded God of his promise to national Israel of which the House of Judah is a part:
"Remember, I beseech you, the word that you command your servant Moses, saying, If you transgress, I will scatter you abroad among the nations: But if you turn to me, and keep my commandments, and do them; though there were of you cast out to the uttermost part of the heaven, yet will I gather them from there, and will bring them to the place that I have chosen to set my name there" (Neh.1:8-9 KJV Para.). See also Jer.32:36-44; Ezek.20:33-38; 37:1-14.

This promise includes the gathering of the scattered Israelites from among the nations and the heavens. It is important to understand that the place where God will place his name and establish his earthly government after Christ returns is Jerusalem.

Although there are no scriptures which document that it will be angels who gather Israelites out of the nations and the heavens, it makes sense when we consider that many other scriptures show angels gathering people for various reasons at and after Christ returns.

**Angels and Lazarus**

Many people quote the parable of the rich man and Lazarus the beggar to support the traditional teaching that the righteous go to heaven at death and the wicked go to a place of eternal torment. The parable does show a judgment in graphic detail, so it no wonder that, after hearing a "hell-fire and brimstone" sermon based on this parable, people are scared into a religious life. But, does this parable support such a belief? And, what does this metaphoric parable have to do with angels?

In the Abramic covenants, God promised great, irrevocable blessings to Abraham and his descendants. The Jewish civil and religious leaders of Jesus' day understood the magnitude of these promises. They also understood that, when the Messiah came, he would establish a kingdom that would rule the earth and give Abraham and his descendants their inheritance. An analysis of the parable of the rich man and Lazarus shows that this story is just one of the many warnings Jesus gave to the Jewish leaders of his day. These men who were supposed to lead the people into righteousness were themselves examples of unrighteousness. Jesus warned them many times that they would lose their inheritance, as well as their lives if they did not repent of their evil ways.

In the beginning of the parable, Jesus mentions the rich man first because of his position and wealth, but he eventually reverses the order and begins giving honor to the beggar by mentioning him first: "And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried" (Lk.16.22 KJV). It is angels that fetch Lazarus to Abraham.
The beggar Lazarus is the one carried to the bosom of Abraham, but the rich man is left behind and buried in the grave. In the parable, Lazarus who is sick, hungry, and destitute lives alongside the rich man. But Lazarus gains the prize of eternal life, while the rich man loses eternal life.

The Jewish belief was that the "Bosom of Abraham" was the place in sheol (hades) where the true children of Abraham would be taken by angels after their death. This may be the belief that Jesus referred to in his parable.

In this parable, Jesus never says that Lazarus went to heaven; however, he does say that Lazarus was carried away to the Bosom of Abraham by angels. This is important, because the only other references to the righteous being collected by angels is in the context of Christ's return; therefore, this parable is also prophetic of the gathering of the righteous dead by angels at Christ's return and the punishment of the wicked who remain dead awaiting a resurrection in which their life will be terminated in the Lake of Fire (Rev.20:14-15).

One of the functions and responsibilities of angels at and after Christ's return is the gathering of all the righteous and all Israelites from wherever they are scattered.

**Gathering of The Elect**

At Christ's return and as a great trumpet blast sounds through the earth, Christ will enter the earth's atmosphere and light the sky with his glory, and the angels will begin to collect the righteous of all ages from wherever they have been scattered over the centuries:

"Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other" (Matt.24:29-31 KJV). See also Isa.43:5-7; Mk.13:24-27; 14:62; Rev.1:7.

This is the time of the first resurrection when all of the righteous dead will be resurrected and all the righteous who are living will be transformed into God the Father's immortal sons. See 1.Cor.15:51-54; 1.Thess.4:13-14.

**Gathering The Wicked**

The parable Jesus gave about the wheat and the tares tells us that angels will be sent to gather evil people out of God's kingdom and destroy them:
Then Jesus sent the multitude away, and went into the house: and his disciples came to him, saying, Declare to us the parable of the tares of the field. He answered and said to them, he that sows the good seed is the Son of man; The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one; The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels. As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world. The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; And shall cast them into a furnace of fire; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who has ears to hear, let him hear” (Matt.13:36-43 KJV).

Separating The Wicked and The Righteous

Jesus warned that a time will come when the wicked and the righteous will be separated and the wicked will be destroyed by fire:

"The kingdom of heaven is like a net that was let down into the lake and caught all kinds of fish. When it was full, the fishermen pulled it up on the shore. Then they sat down and collected the good fish in baskets, but threw the bad away. This is how it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come and separate the wicked from the righteous and throw them into the fiery furnace, . . ." (Matt.13:47-50 NIV). See also Matt.25:31-34.

It is clearly shown throughout the biblical text that one of the functions and responsibilities of angels at and after Christ's return is the gathering of all the righteous from wherever they are scattered and the gathering of the wicked for their punishment in the Lake of Fire.

SUMMARY

This short review of the functions and responsibilities of ministering angels shows that the spirit-beings who are given the responsibility to watch over individuals and nations which God has a personal interest in helping and protecting are authorized to take whatever actions necessary to fulfill their responsibilities. It also shows that these responsibilities extend to Christ’s return and beyond.

The Psalmist David wrote the following about his confidence in the Creator's ability and intent to protect and deliver righteous individuals from trouble through the use of his spirit-servants:

"The angel of the Lord encamps round about them that fear him, and delivers them. O taste and see that the Lord is good: blessed is the man that trusts in him" (Psa.34:7-8 KJV). See also Psa.37: 39-40.
David also knew that he could ask the Creator to send his spirit-servants to fight his battles for him and that he would receive a positive response from the Creator because of his many promises to protect and fight Israel's battles if they would obey him:

"Let them [i.e., the enemy] be as chaff before the wind: and let the angel of the Lord chase them. Let their way be dark and slippery: and let the angel of the Lord persecute them" (Psa.35:5-6 KJV).

The writer to the Hebrews clearly documents that a primary focus of the Sovereign God's righteous spirit-servants is to minister to the heirs of salvation.

"But to which of the angels said he at any time, Sit on my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool? Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" (Heb.1:13-14 KJV).

The biblical record shows that before the advent of Christ, angelic help was authorized and provided to protect and help certain individuals perform the responsibilities and tasks that they were given. This protection and help was provided regardless of a person's spiritual condition, as long as the intervention of angels in their lives facilitated God's plan for the salvation of mankind.

The biblical record shows that after the advent of Christ, angelic help was available and given to individuals who were serving God in their calling to proclaim the gospel message. Therefore, it is logical to assume that the same help exists today for the Sovereign Father's elect children in order for them to fulfill their calling (Heb.1:13-14, 4:12-16).

The biblical record shows that God's spirit-servants have been assigned throughout history to watch over and care for those who are called to salvation, as well as those whom God is dealing with in a personal way. But this does not mean that a person has permission to live their life in a reckless manner.

It should be very comforting to know that the Sovereign God and his son the Savior of mankind are so concerned about individuals who are called to salvation that spirit-beings are assigned to help them obtain salvation, as well as succeed in the various functions and responsibilities which they have been called to perform as members of their heavenly Father's earthly family of king-priests.

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In the previous chapter it was shown that one of the primary functions and responsibilities of the Sovereign God’s righteous spirit-servants is to minister to those individuals whom he is calling to salvation. These are the people who have been given an opportunity to become the first of mankind to be born into his heavenly family as his immortal spirit sons.

There are a number of biblical accounts that speak of the Sovereign God’s righteous spirit-servants and messengers as having the appearance of fire, which indicates these spirit-beings possess a quality of existence that unrighteous spirit-beings do not. This chapter will explore the reason for this quality of existence and why it is different from that of unrighteous spirit-beings.

In his letter to the Hebrews, the writer quotes the Psalmist who said, "God makes his angels spirits; his ministers a flaming fire" (Psa.104:4). The writer to the Hebrews also says of these angels: "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" (Heb.1:14). But, why was this information important to the individuals to whom the letter is addressed and why is it important to those called to salvation during this age?

In order to understand the importance of what the writer to the Hebrews wrote concerning angels as spirits, ministers, and flames of fire, we must first understand that the Psalmist made his comment about angels in the context of his praise of God’s virtues, power, and the grandeur of his creation. It is in this context that we can begin to understand the meaning of angels being spirits, ministers, and flames of fire. Moreover, it is in this context that we can begin to understand the power and splendor that these spirit-beings have in the kingdom of God and their importance and relationship to the heirs of salvation.

Before we can make sense out of what the writer to the Hebrews said here about angels, we must first review several scriptures which speak of the appearance of righteous spirit-beings and their quality of existence.

A FIERY APPEARANCE

Many biblical references to the Sovereign God, the Creator God, Christ, and their righteous spirit-servants described them as having a fiery appearance in their glorified form. The following statement by the apostle John reveals that those who take part in the first resurrection will also have a similar fiery appearance:
"Behold, what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world does not know us, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it does not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is" (1.Jn.3:1-2 KJV Para.). See also Dan.12:3.

The English word like in verse 2 is translated from the Greek word homoios, which means similar (in appearance or character). The Sovereign Father is shown to have a fiery appearance; therefore, we can assume that, when his elect children participate in the first resurrection, they will also have this fiery appearance bestowed on them.

While speaking of the punishment of the wicked and the reward of righteous individuals, Jesus said, "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who has ears to hear, let him hear" (Matt.13:43 KJV). See also Dan.12:1-3. Because the sun is a fiery ball of flame, there is no doubt that righteous individuals shall also appear as flaming fire in their spirit-form.

The apostle Paul warns that the angels who are themselves a flaming fire will use fire to punish those who have persecuted the Sovereign Father's earthly children and refuse to obey his good news message that was brought by his firstborn son Jesus the Christ:

"Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you: And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power" (2.Thess.1:6-9 KJV). See also 1.Pet.4:17-19; 2.Pet.3:1-14.

In a vision, the apostle John sees one of God's loyal spirit-servants coming to earth. This angel has such tremendous power and energy emanating from him that he lights the earth with his presence:

"And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power: and the earth was lightened with his glory. And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird" (Rev.18:1-2 KJV).

Joel records the following prophecy concerning the wrath of God that will be poured out on the earth and mankind as his avenging spirits surge through the earth bringing death an destruction in advance of the arrival of Christ to establish his heavenly Father's kingdom on earth.
"Blow you the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain: let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: for the day of the Lord comes, for it is near at hand; A day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick darkness, as the morning spread upon the mountains: a great people and a strong; there has not been ever the like, neither shall be any more after it, even to the years of many generations" (Joel 2:1-2 KJV Para.).

Verses 3 through 5 reveal that fire is the instrument of destruction which these spirit-warriors use:

"A fire devours before them; and behind them a flame burns: the land is as the garden of Eden before them, and behind them a desolate wilderness; yes, and nothing shall escape them. Their appearance is as the appearance of horses; and as horsemen, so shall they run. Like the noise of chariots on the tops of mountains shall they leap, like the noise of a flame of fire that devours stubble, as a strong people set in battle array" (Joel 2:3-5 KJV Para.).

There are dozens of scriptures which describe in great detail the future punishment and destruction of evil humans and evil spirits by fire, which is the most destructive force known to man, because it can reduce physical things to their lowest form of existence.

**God Is a Devouring and Consuming Fire**

"Hear, O Israel. You are now about to cross the Jordan to go in and dispossess nations greater and stronger than you, with large cities that have walls up to the sky. The people are strong and tall—Anakites! You know about them and have heard it said: "Who can stand up against the Anakites?" But be assured today that the Lord your God is the one who goes across ahead of you like a devouring fire. He will destroy them; he will subdue them before you. And you will drive them out and annihilate them quickly, as the Lord has promised you" (Deut.9:1-3 NIV).

God literally (not metaphorically) goes before the Israelites as a devouring fire. In the power of his glorified form, God has a quality of fire, which consumes all it touches in this physical existence, unless he protects the physical existence from the power of his presence. See Ex.19:19-25.

The writer to the Hebrews also describes God as a consuming fire:

"Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: For our God is a consuming fire" (Heb.12:28-29. KJV).
The English word *consuming* is translated from the Greek word *katanalisko*, which means *to consume utterly*. One unique thing about the fire of God is that, when it comes into contact with the physical dimensions of existence, this spirit-energy is manifested as fire, which destroys anything physical. See 1.Kgs.18:30-38; Am.9:5; Nah.1:5.

All beings in the heavenly realm are composed of spirit from the spirit dimension of existence. The biblical text reveals that the physical realm and the spirit realm of existence can only coexist under certain conditions and within the bounds of the laws which govern their ability to interact with each other.

**Nadab and Abihu**

In order for the presence of God to reside in the tabernacle, it had to be made and kept pure and holy. In his instructions about how to perform the specific rites of atonement for the Most Holy Place, the tabernacle, the altars, the priesthood, and the nation of Israel, the Creator God inspired Moses to record the deaths of Nadab and Abihu which resulted from their failure to adhere to the laws of purity:

"The Lord spoke to Moses after the death of the two sons of Aaron who were killed when they offered unholy fire to the Lord. He said, Tell your brother Aaron that only at the proper time is he to go behind the curtain into the Most Holy Place, because that is where I appear in a cloud above the lid on the covenant box. If he disobeys he will be killed" (Lev.16:1-2 GNB).

**A Fatal Mistake**

The two sons of Aaron disregarded the instruction that God gave about keeping all physical contamination out of his presence. By bringing unholy fire within the confines of the tabernacle, they committed a serious violation of the law regarding purity and the tabernacle. By placing the impure fire in their censers, they defiled themselves, as well as their censers, which made them impure and unfit to minister before God.

This blatant violation of God's law of purity brought a swift and fatal response from the presence of God. The law was very clear on this subject. All physical things (people or objects) which came into the presence of God while he was in his spirit-form within the tabernacle had to be kept in a condition of physical and ceremonial purity:

"And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, each took his censor, and put fire in them; and they put incense on it and brought strange fire before the Lord, which he had not commanded them. And fire went out before the Lord and consumed them; and they died before the Lord" (Lev.10:1-2 Para.). See also Lev.10:9-10,12.

The two sons of Aaron did not take seriously the instruction God gave them about keeping all physical contamination out of his presence.
Because they did not heed these instructions, they were killed by the fire of God's presence.

**God is Holy**

The Sovereign God and his firstborn son Jesus Christ are holy beings whose very nature and being requires all things which come into close contact with them in their glorified spirit-form to be of the same quality of existence.

Holy beings inhabit a dimension of existence which is holy. The word *holy* expresses a condition of existence which is in harmony with the attitude, behavior, and character of God. Being holy is a reality which derives its quality of existence from the Sovereign God through the power of his holy spirit. It is this holy quality of existence that separates holy spirit-beings from unholy evil spirit-beings.

The Sovereign God, Christ, and their loyal spirit-servants are intrinsically holy and are superior beings who live in a superior dimension of existence, which is distinctly different in character and composition from this physical creation.

Spirit-servants who are loyal to the Sovereign God and Jesus Christ are holy. Being holy is a quality of existence. It is this quality of existence (i.e., holiness) which differentiates God's spirit-servants from evil spirits; in that, God's spirit-servants have an outward fiery appearance and have authority and power in the spiritual and physical realms which evil spirits do not.

The very nature of holy spirit-beings in their glorified spirit-form prevents them from interacting with the physical existence. However, the Creator God was able to dwell among the Israelites and commune with them in his spirit-form and presence as long as the tabernacle, the priesthood, the people, and all things that came into close contact with him were made holy and kept in a condition of physical and spiritual purity. See Lev.19:2; Ex.29:36-46; Deut.23:14; 1.Cor.3:17; 1.Pet.1:15-16.

**Be Holy**

"For I am the Lord your God: you shall set yourselves apart for a holy purpose. You shall be holy; for I am holy: neither shall you defile yourselves with any kind of thing that creeps upon the earth. For I am the Lord that brought you out of Egypt, to be your God; therefore, you shall be holy, for I am holy" (Lev.11:44-45 KJV).

"And you shall be holy to me: for I the Lord am holy, and have severed you from other people, that you should be mine" (Lev.20:26 KJV). See also Lev.19:1-2; 1.Pet.2:1-10.

Being holy is a spiritual reality which derives its quality of existence from the Sovereign God through the power of his holy spirit. It is this sacred quality of existence that separates the holy from the unholy.
Moses was given many instructions by the Creator God concerning the procedures that were necessary in order to purify the temple, the temple contents, and the priesthood from defilement in order to maintain them in a state of purity; so that, the Creator God, in his spirit presence, could dwell in the temple and the priesthood could come inside the temple to perform their duties without being killed.

Throughout the Old Testament, the Creator God continually warned the Israelites about the sacredness of his temple and the punishment they would bring on themselves if they did not keep from polluting it. The death of Aaron's sons, Nadab and Abihu, is an example of what happens to those whom God has set apart for a holy purpose when they fail to remain holy and maintain the purity of his temple (Lev.10:1-3).

But, how could these men interact with the Creator God whose very presence, in his glorified state, destroys the physical existence by fire?

God was still holy when he walked on earth among men; however, the degree to which he expressed his holy-presence (i.e., the spirit-power of his presence) was dramatically reduced in order to protect the physical existence from destruction.

**GOD'S MINISTERS A FLAME OF FIRE**

After reviewing the quality of existence holy spirit-beings possess, we now have the proper context in which to view what the writer to the Hebrews wrote in chapter 1 about God's ministers being like a flame of fire, his ministering spirits being sent forth to minister to the heirs of salvation, and about God making his angels spirits:

"God, who at different times and in different ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by his Son, whom he has appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds: Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; Being made so much better than the angels, as he has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they" (Heb.1:1-4 KJV Para.).

The writer tells us that Jesus Christ is the one whom the Sovereign God sent to earth to speak to his future immortal sons. He is heir of all that belongs to the Sovereign God and he was the Creator God who created this dimension of existence and everything in it. He is also the personification of his heavenly Father and he sustains all that exists through his great power. He is the one who sacrificed his life for the forgiveness of our sins and is next in authority to his heavenly Father. Additionally, he is better in every way than the angels:
"For to which of the angels did he say at any time, You are my Son, this day have I begotten you? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son? And again, when he brings in the first-begotten into the world, he said, And let all the angels of God worship him" (Heb.1:5-6 KJV Para.).

After the writer to the Hebrews introduces his letter by explaining who the Sovereign God is, who Christ is, and Christ's position in the Sovereign Father's family, the writer says the following about God the Father's spirit-messengers who are subservient to Christ and are to worship and serve him as they do his heavenly Father:

"And of the angels he [the Sovereign God] said, Who makes his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire. But to the Son [Christ] he said, Your throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of your kingdom" (Heb.1:7-8 KJV Para.).

The English word angel in verse 7 is translated from the Greek word aggelos and has basically the same meaning as the Hebrew word malak, which is translated into the English word angel in most Bible translations. A righteous angel is God's spirit-messenger and servant.

The English word ministers in verse 7 is translated from the Greek word leitourgos, which is a derivative of a word which means a public servant, i.e., a benefactor (of man). In Psalm 104:4, from which the writer quotes verse 7, the word ministers in Hebrew is sharath, which means to attend to as a menial labor/servant or worshiper; figuratively, to contribute to.

Verse 7 tells us that angels are spirit-beings who are created to serve and that these spirit-beings are composed of spirit elements described as blazing fire.

The English word scepter in verse 8 is translated from the Greek word rhabdos, which basically means a stick or wand (as a cudgel, a cane or a baton of royalty) i.e., a badge or symbol of authority, depending on the context in which the word is used.

The English word righteousness in verse 8 is translated from the Greek word euthutes, which basically means correct behavior.

Verse 8 tells us that Christ securely holds correct behavior as a royal badge of honor. The biblical definition of the things that are right and correct in the sense of character are those things which are guided and governed by the Sovereign God's laws, precepts, and principles.

The scepter of the kingdom noted in verse 8 clearly shows Christ's everlasting authority to rule within the Sovereign God's kingdom.
"You [Christ] have loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God [the Sovereign God], even your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness above your fellows. And, You, Lord, in the beginning have laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of your hands: They shall perish; but you remain; and they all shall wax old as does a garment; And as a vesture you shall fold them up, and they shall be changed: but you are the same, and your years shall not fail" (Heb.1:9-12 KJV Para.).

The writer again extolls the virtues of Christ and tells us that the Sovereign God has placed him above all others and that Christ is the Creator God who lives forever and who will discard this dimension of existence and exchange it for another one. See 2.Pet.3:1-14; Rev.21:1-5.

"But to which of the angels did he say at any time, Sit on my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool? Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" (Heb.1:13-14 KJV Para.).

The English words ministering and minister in verse 14 are translated from the Greek words leitourgikos and diakonia, which respectively mean to benefit and to aid (or to provide a service).

The English phrase sent forth is translated from the Greek word apostello, which means to send out (properly, on a mission) literally or figuratively.

The writer to the Hebrews tells us that all the created spirit-beings in the Sovereign God's heavenly realm are to provide beneficial services to those who are the heirs of salvation. During the gospel age of salvation, these heirs are the Sovereign Father's earthly family of king-priests (i.e., the church) who understand his plan and purpose for the salvation of mankind. Therefore, when he speaks of the heirs of salvation, he is not referring to all people on earth, he is speaking of individuals to whom the Sovereign God has offered salvation before Christ returns and the establishment of his kingdom on earth. See Rom.8:14-17; Gal.3:26-29.

SUMMARY

Clearly, any being which is holy in attitude, behavior, character, and composition is far superior in a quality of existence to one that is unholy. One example of the expression of this spiritual quality of existence is the fact that God's loyal spirit-servants are described as "a flaming fire" in the biblical text.

Although the Sovereign God's loyal spirit-servants are "a flame of fire," evil spirits are never described as such in the Bible. Moreover, they are never described having a brilliant blinding appearance. It seems that because of their rebellion against God, their holy quality of existence has been removed from them, and the blazing fire of their former appearance has been extinguished.
Spirit-servants who are loyal to the Sovereign God and his son, the Savior of mankind, are holy. These beings manifest this sacred quality of existence in their glorified form as a fiery appearance:

"And of the angels he said, Who makes his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire" (Heb.1:7 KJV Para.).

"Who makes his angels spirits; his ministers a flaming fire" (Psa.104:4 KJV).

When these holy beings come into contact with the physical existence in their glorified form, their energy radiates spirit-energy that can consume the physical existence if it is not protected through the application of God's law governing the interaction between the holy and the unholy. However, this is not so with evil spirits. They do not have a holy quality of existence like righteous angels.

There are many biblical accounts which describe God's righteous spirit-messengers as having the appearance of fire, but there are no biblical records showing evil spirits appearing as fire. Therefore, it seems that, as light is analogous to God's truth and way of truth (i.e., righteousness), darkness is analogous to the lack of righteousness. A fiery appearance is an integral part of a righteous spirit-being's composition, but an unrighteous spirit-being lacks this quality.

The difference between a spirit-being who is holy and one who is not is extremely important in identifying what kind of spirit (good or evil) you are dealing with, as well as determining the difference between a good or an evil spiritual influence or manifestation.

It should be extremely comforting to know that the Sovereign God and Jesus Christ are so concerned about individuals who are called to salvation that they have assigned powerful spirit-beings who have the well being of these individuals as a major priority and focus of their existence.

By B.L. Cocherell
INTRODUCTION TO CHAPTERS 18-28

Evil spirits do exist and people from every walk of life dabble in the spirit realm and make contact with evil spirits in various ways, but most of these people do not realize the tremendous danger and impact that these spirits can have on them, their loved ones, and other people around them.

The apostle Peter wrote: "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, walks about as a roaring lion seeking those he may devour" (1.Pet.5:8 KJV).

The apostle Paul wrote to the Church at Ephesus: "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" (Eph.6:12 KJV).

Not knowing and understanding the dangers posed by evil spirits and how to counter this threat to your physical and spiritual life puts you in jeopardy of being abused by these powerful, intelligent, and extremely dangerous spirit-beings who roam the earth.

There are no magical formulas, incantations, or rituals that will allow you to win a battle with an evil spirit. The Bible is the only source containing the information necessary to win a battle against evil spirits.

The following chapters provide you with the information which is vital to understanding many biblical concepts and principles that are absolutely necessary to equip a person to do battle with evil spirits and be victorious over them. If you skip over the information contained in the following chapters, you will do yourself a great disservice.

Chapter 18: What is Demonic Influence
Chapter 19: Preventing Demonic Influence, Control, and Possession
Chapter 20: Resist Evil
Chapter 21: People, Places, and Things to Avoid
Chapter 22: Demonic Possession
Chapter 23: Removing Demonic Control and Possession
Chapter 24: Communication and Interaction with the Spirit Realm
Chapter 24a: Ephod, Breastplate, Urim, Thummin, and Teraphim
Chapter 24b: The Drawing and Casting of Lots
Chapter 25: The State of the Dead and the Rephaim
Chapter 26: The Witch of Endor
Chapter 27: Testing The Spirits
Chapter 28: Short Topics
CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

WHAT IS DEMONIC INFLUENCE?

No aspect of society or human endeavor is immune from demonic influence. Demonic influence is prevalent throughout the world and adversely impacts all societies and human endeavors through educational systems, governments, philosophies, religions, and science and more.

According to what Christ revealed to the apostle John, Satan is actively deceiving and influencing the whole world into following his concepts, precepts, and principles:

"And the great dragon was cast out that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceives the whole world: . . ." (Rev.12:9 KJV).

When we look at the conditions of this present world, we see a world of unending chaos where righteous, ethical, and moral behavior is rare. The world is in turmoil. There are wars, famines, disease epidemics, environmental pollution, crime, poverty, squalor, religious bigotry, racism, hatred, broken-homes, permissiveness, promiscuity, sexual perversion, upset weather conditions, natural disasters, and many other conditions that cause mankind pain, agony, and unhappiness.

The pathetic situation in which we see the world today is the result of centuries of practicing the wrong kinds of educational, philosophical, political, and religious systems which have been, for the most part, influenced by spirit-beings who are not interested in promoting peace, happiness, and prosperity for mankind: Instead, they have entirely different goals. If this were not true; we would live in a far different world from the one that exists today.

The question is not whether or not demons/evil spirits influence people's attitudes and behaviors to do evil things, because they do; rather, following are the questions that need to be answered:

• What exactly is demonic influence?
• Why do evil spirits want to influence human attitudes and behaviors?
• How susceptible is mankind to evil influence?
• How is evil influence accomplished?
• How can a person keep from being influenced by evil spirits?

In the following chapters, I will attempt to answer these five questions.
WHAT IS DEMONIC INFLUENCE?

Demonic influence is the power and ability of evil spirits to affect someone's emotions, thoughts, beliefs, or actions. It is through this power and ability to influence individuals that Satan and other evil spirits either openly or covertly persuade and manipulate individuals into following a lifestyle or a course of action which is in opposition to the Sovereign Father's laws, precepts, and principles.

Demonic influence is distinctly different from demonic possession; in that, the success of an evil spirit to influence a person's life is predicated on a person's willingness to maintain certain attitudes, make certain decisions, and behave in certain ways. But someone who is demonically possessed does not have the ability to oppose the demonic influence.

An individual with a sound mind who is not totally controlled by an evil spirit has the freedom to resist an evil influence, but a person who is totally possessed by an evil spirit does not have this freedom. The degree to which an individual can be influenced by evil spirits is the degree to which an individual is willing to accept this influence in their life.

Demonic influence can be overt or extremely subtle and it comes in many forms, depending on the intent and purpose of the evil spirit doing the influencing.

WHY INFLUENCE PEOPLE?

In order to understand why Satan and other evil spirits want to influence people, we must know what these spirit-beings hope to accomplish through this influence.

Satan's ultimate goal is to ascend to heaven, become a god-being, and wrest control of the Sovereign God's realm from him (Isa.14:12-14). In order to accomplish this, he and other evil spirits mistakenly think that, by influencing, controlling, and ultimately destroying mankind, they can prevent the Sovereign God from fulfilling his plan to expand his family of god-beings, thereby becoming more powerful than the Sovereign God.

Therefore, they attempt to influence people into rejecting the existence of the Sovereign God and his Christ, the Sovereign God's method of salvation, God's rule in their lives, and God's law. This rejection leads to people violating God's law and causes chaos in people's lives on an individual and societal level. This is how evil spirits hope to prevent humans from entering the Family of God as immortal god-beings and inheriting the earth and the Kingdom of God.
SUSCEPTIBILITY TO DEMONIC INFLUENCE

In order to understand the degree to which mankind is susceptible to evil influence, it is important to keep in mind that humans were not created with godly attitudes and character, but were created with the freedom to choose what to think and how to order their life.

The record in the Book of Genesis in which Satan influences Eve to disobey the Creator's instruction to neither touch the tree of the knowledge of good and evil nor eat its fruit, and then Eve persuades Adam to disobey the Creator's instructions reveals that humans are easily deceived and highly susceptible to evil influence. See Gen.2:15-17; 3:1-6.

Mankind's proclivity to choose what is appealing and gratifying without analyzing the short or long term consequences of these choices provides many opportunities for evil spirits to easily influence humans. This proclivity to make choices that are opposite to what results in a godly and beneficial lifestyle led to the conditions we now see on earth:

"And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (Gen.6:5 KJV). See also Psa.14:1-3; Jer.17:9 KJV).

The prophet Isaiah was inspired to record the Creator God's following assessment of the human thought process, character, and behavior:

"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, says the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts" (Isa.55:8-9 KJV). See 1.Cor 2:14.

Because humans in their natural state lack godly thoughts, character, and behavior, evil spirits can easily influence most of mankind to choose lifestyles and actions which are in opposition to godliness.

HOW IS INFLUENCE ACCOMPLISHED?

Although the methods and the circumstances used by evil spirits in their attempts to influence individuals may vary, it is basically through appealing to mankind's natural propensity to do what satisfies their desires that evil spirits can easily influence the vast majority of people on earth to reject the godly and righteous lifestyle set forth in God's law.

Through individuals or groups of people who are already under their influence, evils spirits inspire literature, religions, philosophies, rituals, music, and traditions designed to promote a state of mind through which evil spirits can accomplish their goals. Evil spirits also have the ability to project thoughts and emotions into people's minds in order to cause them to have certain attitudes and act in ways that promote their goals. These are just a few of the many means through which evil spirits can and do influence people in order to effect a desired result and further their primary goals.
Seeking physical or spiritual, influence, knowledge, power, or other benefits through the following methods can dramatically increase a person's susceptibility to demonic influence or control:

- Mind altering drugs
- A meditative or a trance-like state
- Magical or mystical symbols, graphic designs, and rituals
- Objects, such as crystal balls, ouija boards, pendulums, and tarot cards
- Channeling of spirit entities
- Communicating with the dead

Other circumstances, conditions, and situations which can dramatically enhance a person's susceptibility to demonic influence or control are:

- Seeking to have a religious experience like speaking in tongues
- Dabbling in witchcraft or mystical/occult sciences
- Getting in to a hypnotic state which reduces or relinquishes control of one's will
- Having uncontrolled emotion, which allows the mind to become dysfunctional
- Practicing of a religion or philosophy which is in opposition to the Sovereign God's

The avenues and opportunities for the demonic influence of mankind are almost limitless, because it is the nature and proclivity of mankind to do the opposite of what is good and constructive:

"The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that understand and seek God. They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy: there is none that does good, no, not one" (Psa.14:2-3 KJV Para). See also Ecc.7:20; Rom.3:10-12.

COMMUNICATION

The degree to which evil spirits can successfully influence individuals basically depends on how receptive the individual is to evil influence, how tempting something is to a person, and how well tailored and presented the communication is to a given recipient. In order to fully understand the subject of evil influence, it is necessary to know something about physical and spiritual communication.

Communication between individuals is the act of sending or receiving information from one individual to another. This requires both a sender and a receiver of information. True intelligent communication requires that the sender and the receiver comprehend the information being transmitted.
Conventional thinking is that all information communicated to the human mind is only through the five senses of touch, sight, smell, taste, and sound. Clearly, if these five physical senses were the only means that evil spirits could communicate with humans, they would be severely limited in their ability to influence people. However, these five senses are not the only means by which evil spirits can influence humans. Evil spirits can also communicate through spiritual avenues.

Spiritual communication is the means most used by evil spirits to influence people. This type of communication is different from purely physical communication; in that, spiritual communication is mind-to-mind (i.e., spirit-to-spirit). This type of communication can be transmitted to the conscious and sub-conscious mind, either apart from the five senses or in conjunction with them.

This section explores and explains the non-physical spiritual communication, which evil spirits use with great success in influencing a person's thinking and actions.

**Electro-magnetic Communication**

In today's world, people communicate through many forms of electro-magnetic communication devices, such as radio, telephone, television, and the internet. All of these types of communication have one thing in common, each send energy that can be received by an electronic device and transformed into a coherent communication between the sender and the receiver of the information.

**Human Thought**

When a human thought is produced, an electro-chemical interaction in the brain takes place that can be physically detected as electro-magnetic energy. But, is this the sum total of human thought or is there another component that is beyond the ability of physical science to detect and record?

According to the Bible, there is another component to human thought, which is not constrained by physical law, because it originates from the human spirit. This allows a person to access the spirit realm through their thoughts. Although the physical electro-magnetic energy of the human brain can be detected and recorded, the spirit component of human thought cannot be detected or recorded by a physical instrument. Only its effect can be detected and recorded, because it is not physical; it is composed of spirit-energy.

The spiritual component of human thought is of the spirit realm. It is spirit-energy that interacts with the human brain to cause the physical electro-chemical energy in the brain to manifest itself as human thought in the physical world. It is the spirit of man (i.e., the person), which inhabits the human body, that produces thought.
Without the spirit of man to inhabit a living human body, the human body would be in a comatose state. The first verse of a prophecy recorded by Zechariah concerning the end of this age of human rule and the city of Jerusalem shows that God forms the spirit of man within the human body:

"The burden of the word of the Lord for Israel, says the Lord, which stretches forth the heavens, and lays the foundation of the earth, and forms the spirit of man within him" (Zech.12:1 KJV). See also Job 32:7-8, 33:4.

Ezekiel, chapter 37, about the prophetic resurrection of national Israel after Christ returns, and the following statements by the prophet Job and the apostle James clearly show that the human body devoid of the spirit of man is not human, but just an empty shell:

"Then said he to me, Prophesy to the wind, prophesy, son of man, and say to the wind, Thus says the Lord God; Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe on these slain, that they may live. So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army. Then he said to me, Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel: behold, they say, Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost: we are cut off for our parts. Therefore prophesy and say to them, This says the Lord God; Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel. And you shall know that I am the Lord, when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves, And shall put my spirit in you, and you shall live, and I shall place you in your own land: then shall you know that I the Lord have spoken it, and performed it, says the Lord" (Ezk. 37:9-14 KJV).

"But there is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty gives them understanding" (Job 32:8 KJV).

"For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also" (Jms.2:26 KJV).

In order to more clearly understand how evil spirits influence humans, it is important to keep in mind that, from the biblical perspective, a human is a spirit inhabiting a physical body with the freedom to choose the direction their life will take.

**Human to Human Thought**

Have you ever been in a crowd of people and felt that someone was staring at you and when you looked around, there was someone looking directly at you? Have you ever called, texted, or instant message someone and their response was that they had just been thinking about you or they were just about to contact you the instant you contacted them?
Some people think that these and other similar events are coincidence, but they are not always. Many times they are non-verbal communication on a spiritual level being manifested in the physical realm. If humans are able to project their thoughts, certainly spirit-beings who are more intelligent and more powerful than humans can do the same with even greater efficiency and effectiveness.

Luke's gospel record contains an example of Christ's ability to know the thoughts of specific individuals in a crowd:

"And he [Christ] was casting out a demon, and it was dumb [the demon]. And it came to pass, when the demon had gone out, the dumb [the person] spoke; and the people wondered. But some of them said, He casts out devils through Beelzebub the chief of the devils. And others, tempting him, sought of him a sign from heaven. But he, knew their thoughts, and said to them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and a house divided against a house falls” (Lk.11:14-17 KJV). See also Matt.9:4.

Christ could not have known what these individuals were thinking, unless their thoughts radiated coherent energy that is understandable to a person with the ability to detect and understand another person's thoughts. Christ was not guessing at what these people were thinking; he could perceive and understand their exact thoughts.

The scriptures tell us that Christ was given full access to the power of the holy spirit (Jn.3:34); therefore, he could use all of the functions of the holy spirit, including the ability to read another person's thoughts. See Matt.9:4; 12:25; Lk.5:22; 6:8.

Spiritual thought and energy is not constrained by physical law, because it originates from the spirit-realm of existence and can be projected and manifested in the physical realm of existence.

Because human thought transcends the physical realm and can be intercepted and understood by certain individuals and spirit-beings, it is prudent to guard your thoughts and be careful about what you are thinking.

Spirit-to-Spirit Communication

The Sovereign Father is a spirit-being and does not inhabit this physical dimension of existence, so how do his earthly children communicate with him if they cannot speak with him face-to-face? The answers is that we speak to him through prayer, which is a manifestation of our thoughts projected to him. Human thought composed of spirit essence/energy transcends this physical plane of existence. See 1.Chron. 28:9; Isa.66:18; Matt.6:7-8; Rom.8:27.
Oral or silent prayer is an extremely powerful and a readily available communication link with God the Father. Through this vital tool, the Father's earthly children can go directly to his throne and speak with him. Moreover, it is through oral or silent prayer that his elect children can praise him and ask him for help with their needs, desires, and frustrations. This type of communication is spirit-to-spirit or mind-to-mind.

God the Father and Jesus Christ want those called to salvation to use this communication tool to ask for things that will benefit them and help them grow toward spiritual maturity and perfection:

"Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you: For every one that asks receives; and he that seeks finds; and to him that knocks it shall be opened" (Matt.7:7-8 KJV). See also Jn.16:22-24.

"For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are opened to their prayers..." (1.Pet.3:12 KJV). See also Mk.11:24; Rom.12:12; Col.4:2.

The Sovereign God who inhabits the spirit realm of existence hears the prayers and thoughts of his earthly children, because their prayers and thoughts transcend the physical realm and are of the spirit realm of existence.

Even when a child of God is not overtly communicating their thoughts to the Father in prayer to him, their spirit is actively communicating their thoughts, emotions, desires, frustrations, and needs to him and Christ through the holy spirit which dwells within them:

"And likewise the spirit also joins in to help our weakness. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the spirit pleads our case with groaning that cannot be uttered. But the one searching the hearts knows what is the mind of the spirit because it intercedes for the saints according to God" (Rom.8:26-27 Para.).

Truly we do not always know exactly what we need or how to express our emotions, thoughts, needs, and desires. However, one of the functions of the indwelling of the holy spirit is to act as an information gathering and communication system between us and our heavenly Father and our Savior. This function allows the Father and Christ to be aware of the innermost emotions, thoughts, desires, and needs of those called to salvation:

"But when you pray, go away by yourself, all alone, and shut the door behind you and pray to your Father secretly, and your Father, who knows your secrets, will reward you. Don't recite the same prayer over and over as the heathen do, who think prayers are answered only by repeating them again and again. Remember! your Father knows exactly what you need even before you ask him" (Matt.6:6-8 LBP). See also Psa.91:14-15; Isa.41:17; 58:9; 65:24; Matt.6:25-33.
Because the spirit communicates our true physical and spiritual condition to the Father and Christ, the elect can always have the assurance that, even before we ask anything of the Father, he already knows what we need:

"The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord, searching all the inward parts of the belly" (Pro.20:27 KJV).

The Living Bible Paraphrased translates this text as follows:

"A man's conscience [spirit] is the Lord's searchlight exposing his hidden motives" (Pro.20:27 LBP).

This understanding is extremely important because, as these and other scriptures reveal, our thoughts are not private, but can be monitored and understood by spirit-beings:

"For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Heb.4:12 KJV).

According to the biblical record, human thought transcends the physical realm into the heavenly realm and cannot be kept secret from spirit-beings under most circumstances.

Spirit-Beings and Human Communication

It is a biblical fact that both good and evil spirit-beings have the ability to communicate with humans and with other spirits on many levels and through many different methods. Early in the biblical narrative we see angels communicating with people. Satan spoke with the first woman in Genesis, chapter 3, and the angel of the Lord spoke to Hagar in Genesis, chapter 16.

The biblical record tells us Abraham not only had a lengthy conversation with the Creator God in human form but also ate a meal with him and three angels (Gen.18:1-33). The Creator God wrestled and talked with Jacob (Gen.32:24-30), and Christ spoke with evil spirits who were possessing people before casting them out of these individuals. See also Acts 19:13-16.

Spirit-beings can communicate with humans in the same way humans communicate with each other. Additionally, spirit-beings have the ability to manifest visual apparitions and influence humans through dreams, visions, and the projection of emotions and thoughts through music, symbols, graphic designs, and more.
It is not uncommon to hear that people who have committed heinous and irrational crimes claim a voice or God told them to do it. It is also not uncommon to hear individuals who profess to believe what is written in the Bible state that either God or Jesus told them to do something, led them to their ministry, or told them to preach a certain message. But, many times what they do, what they teach, and how they live their lives is in direct opposition to what is written in the Bible.

Where do these individuals actually get their inspiration or instructions to commit these heinous crimes or to teach and preach things that obviously violate the Sovereign God's truth. The reality is that these individuals are either listening to their own thoughts or they are being communicated with or otherwise influenced by evil spirits.

Communications with Evil Spirits

Can a person communicate with an evil spirit through the spoken word or through their thoughts. The answer is absolutely! A person who seeks to make contact with the dark side of the spirit realm can easily do so. Although conceived in this physical realm of existence, a person's thoughts are not constrained to this physical realm. Human thought can be projected into the spirit realm and from mind-to-mind. This is why it is extremely important for people to guard their thoughts.

The Israelites were forbidden to worship idols, pray to idols, or seek advice from astrologers, sorcerers, fortunetellers, witches, diviners, necromancers, and others who practiced the mystical and magical arts. Making contact with the dark side of the spirit realm through these and other means is extremely easy, but can have devastating results.

Dreams and Visions and Deceptions

There are dozens of biblical accounts showing spirit-beings communicating with humans through dreams and visions before and after the advent of Christ.

The apostle Peter said the following about the miraculous events that were taking place on the Feast of Pentecost surrounding the fulfillment of a prophecy for the gospel age of salvation about the gift of prophecy and the giving of visions and dreams to the Sovereign Father's earthly children:

"But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel: And it shall come to pass in the last days, said God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy: And I will shew wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath: blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke: The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come" (Acts 2:16-20 KJV) See also Joel 2:27-32; Dan.2: 28-29; Acts 9:1-12; 10:1-33; 16:9-10.
The English words *visions* and *dreams* are translated from the Greek words *horasis* and *enupniazomai*, which respectively mean *an inspired appearance* and *to dream*. In the context of Peter's quotation of Joel, these visions and dreams are clearly supernatural events.

Although there are many biblical accounts of people being communicated with by righteous spirit-beings through dreams and visions, there are no clear biblical accounts of evil-spirits communicating with people through dreams and visions; however, there are strong indications that this can and does happen.

Many people believe that spirit-beings speak to them through dreams and visions and have provided them with knowledge and insight into various things and sometimes instruct them to do certain things. In some cases, this may be true. However, the problem is that, although righteous spirit-beings have the ability to communicate with people through dreams and visions, evil spirits also have the ability to transmit thoughts into the human mind. So, how does anyone know who is actually doing the communicating and for what purpose?

The obvious difference between good and evil spirit-beings is their intent. Righteous spirit-beings are sent to intervene into events in order to facilitate God's plan for mankind, to encourage, to instruct, to warn, and convey messages from Christ. However, evil spirits seek to influence people into violating God's law and the way of life that he has prescribed for mankind. Evil spirits seek to influence people into making decisions that further their primary goals, which is to control and harm people and to destroy God's creation.

We often hear people who profess to believe what is written in the Bible relate a dream or a vision in which they believe that they have been given certain knowledge or have been instructed to perform a certain task. The question is not whether or not the person actually had a dream or a vision; the question is whether the dream or vision is from a righteous spirit or an evil spirit?

The following instruction to national Israel warns them to beware of people who dream dreams and foretell events that come to pass, but who teach worship systems which are in opposition to the true God:

"If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and gives you a sign or a wonder. And the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spoke to you, saying, Let us go after other gods, which you have not known, and let us serve them: You shall not pay attention to the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for the Lord your God tests you, to know whether you love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul. You shall walk after the Lord your God, and fear him, and keep his commandments, and obey his voice, and you shall serve him, and cling to him" (Deut.13:1-4 KJV Para.). See also Jer.23:1-40; 29:8-9.
This instruction indicates the knowledge these individuals possess about the future and the miraculous works they are able to perform are not from the true God, but are from a source which is in violation of God's law.

A careful analysis of the contents of the dream must be made in order to determine if the message of the dreamer complies with God's truth. If what this person says does not comply with God's truth, it is a good indication that the person may be influenced or even possessed by an evil spirit who has the power to foretell events or cause events to happen. See Rev.13:13-15; 16:12-14; 19:19-20.

The Book of Lamentations reveals that the people's false prophets have seen useless and foolish visions which deceive. In the Book of Ezekiel, we see that, after Christ returns, worthless visions and divination will cease:

"The visions of your prophets were false and worthless; they did not expose your sin to ward off your captivity. The oracles they gave you were false and misleading" (Lam.2:14 NIV). See also Zech.10:1-3.

"For there shall be no more any vain vision nor flattering divination within the house of Israel" (Ezk.12:24 KJV).

Lamentations 2:14 and Ezekiel 12:24 indicate that these visions and divinations are not from a godly source.

It is through the projection of thought that both good and evil spirit-beings are able to manifest visions, dreams, words, and emotions to the human mind; therefore, we should carefully evaluate spiritual revelations through dreams and visions in the light of the biblical narrative.

Hundreds of pages could be written about the instances of personal contact, visions, dreams, and instructions from the Creator God and spirit-beings which individuals and groups of people have experienced. However, the point I want to make is that dreams and visions are not always from God or one of his spirit-messengers. Sometimes dreams and visions are from evil spirits or simply the product of an active or restless mind during sleep. Solomon said the following about this type of dream:

"Be not rash with your mouth, and let not your heart be hasty to utter anything before God: for God is in heaven, and you upon earth: therefore let your words be few. For a dream comes through the multitude of business: and a fool's voice is known by multitude of words" (Eccl.5:2-3 KJV).
It is very clear from even a casual reading of the dozens of biblical accounts of dreams and visions that no righteous spirit-being will communicate with a person through cryptic means. The biblical examples show righteous angels communicating with people in a clear intelligible manner. And if a dream from God is not understood, he will provide an interpreter (e.g., Joseph and Pharaoh).

Angels and the Holy Spirit

The following account of Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch in the Book of Acts shows the communication of God's instructions through a righteous angel and the holy spirit:

"And the angel of the Lord spoke to Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south to the way that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza, which is desert. And he arose and went: and, behold, a man of Ethiopia, a eunuch of great authority under Candace queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treasure, and had come to Jerusalem for to worship, was returning, and sitting in his chariot reading Esaias the prophet. Then the spirit said to Philip, Go near, and join yourself to this chariot" (Acts 8:26-29 KJV).

The English words spoke and spirit in verses 26 and 28 are from the Greek words λαλέω and πνεῦμα, which respectively mean to talk (i.e., to utter words) and spirit (from a word that means a current of air).

The language of this event shows an angel speaking out loud to Philip and the holy spirit giving instructions to Philip in his mind. See also Acts 10:1-20; 11:1-12.

The question that needs to be answered is how do we know if a righteous angel is communicating with us or if a voice which speaks to us out of the air or in our mind is of God?

The apostle John wrote the following instruction and warning about dealing with the spirit realm:

"Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world" (1.Jn.4:1 KJV).

John's warning is worth heeding when we review the accounts in 1. Kings 22:20-23 and 2. Chronicles 18:18-22 which speak of a lying spirit sent to influence and persuade unrighteous individuals to give false prophecies. See also Christ's and Peter's warnings about false prophets (Matt.7:15-20, 24:11; 2.Pet.2:1).

In order to be able to determine if a spirit-being is good or evil, we must know the difference between good and evil and righteousness and unrighteousness according to the biblical definition. Additionally, it is important for us to understand the foundational elements of God's plan for the salvation of mankind and the way of life he has prescribed for those he calls to salvation.

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CAN MOST PEOPLE BE INFLUENCED BY EVIL?

Most rational people, especially people who profess to believe the Bible and follow Christ, do not think they could ever be influenced by an evil spirit. But, they are mistaken. I can make this statement with confidence, because the Bible says that Satan is deceiving the whole world (Rev.12:9) and the Bible is full of examples of people being influenced by evil people and evil spirits. This section contains just a few biblical examples of how susceptible people are to evil influence.

Satan and King David

The name Satan first appears in 1.Chronicles, chapter 21, in the account of Satan influencing King David to take a census of Israel in violation of the Creator's instructions. The result of King David acting on Satan's influence was the death of seventy thousand inhabitants in Israel:

"And Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel. And David said to Joab and to the rulers of the people, Go, number Israel from Beer-sheba even to Dan; and bring the number of them to me, that I may know it" (1.Chron.21:1-2 KJV).

"So the Lord sent a pestilence upon Israel from the morning even to the time appointed: and there died of the people from Dan even to Beer-sheba seventy thousand men" (2.Sam.24:15 KJV).

During Christ's lifetime

During Christ's lifetime, the Levitical Priesthood and the Jewish people whose sacred trust it was to preserve God's truth in its meaning and purity had instead been influenced to follow a perverted version of God's law and worship system.

The Scribes of Christ's time were mostly of the Levitical priesthood whose responsibility it was to preside over the temple and its worship system and teach God's laws, precepts, and principles to the people. But over time, the Priesthood had become derelict in their duty to diligently teach absolute truth and had allowed the sect of the Pharisees to partially usurp their responsibility. Therefore, both the Scribes and the Pharisees were in error in regard to who was responsible for teaching the people God's truth.

The result of the priesthood's failure to diligently perform their teaching function and allow the sect of the Pharisees to teach much error and dictate much of the religious practice of the time was that the Jews and those who lived around Palestine during Jesus' time were in spiritual darkness and did not understand the prophetic meaning of the events which transpired concerning Jesus. Therefore, the people could not recognize him as the Messiah. Moreover, they did not understand the message he brought from his Heavenly Father because they were being influenced by false prophets and people who were perverting God’s truth and teaching false concepts about God’s way of truth.
Jesus said the following about the Scribes and Pharisee who taught an incorrect worship system to the people:

"Hypocrites, well did Isaiah prophecy about you, saying, This people draws near to me with their mouth, and with their lips honor me; but their heart is far from me. But in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the ordinances of men" (Matt.15:7-9 KJV Para.). See Isa.29:13; Ezk.33:31-32.

Although much of the perversion of truth that these men taught came from their own perverted thinking, much came through the influence of evil spirits, which is why Christ said the following to the religious leaders of his day:

"You are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father you will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it" (Jn.8:44 KJV). See also Matt.23.1-33.

Christ's pointed condemnation of these men was extremely severe. In essence, he told them that their thoughts and behavior were so closely aligned with the Devil and his ways that they were, for all intents and purposes, the Devil's children.

The result of following an evil influence, whether a human or a spirit, is the distancing of oneself from the Sovereign God and the benefits derived from a harmonious relationship with him and his son, the Savior of mankind.

**Judas Influenced to Betray Christ**

The love of money (or greed) is often the reason that people are influenced by evil spirits to do things that violate God's law and way of life. Paul told the evangelist Timothy that the love of money is a root of evil (1.Tim.6:10). The account of Mary anointing Jesus' feet gives us some insight into Judas Iscariot's love of money, which eventually opened the way for him to be influenced by Satan to betray Jesus:

"One of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, the one that would betray him said, Why was not this ointment sold for 300 denarii and given to the poor? He said this not because he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief and carried and administered the money" (Jn.12:4-6 Para.).

Luke tells us that Judas was a thief. Clearly Judas was not concerned with the meaning of Mary's act of washing Jesus' feet or the anointing of his head. What concerned Judas was the amount of money that he could have gained from selling the sweet-smelling ointment.
Notice again that money was the motivating factor in Judas' life, which was demonstrated by his seeking to betray Jesus for personal gain:

"Now the feast of unleavened bread drew near, which is called the Passover. And the chief priests and scribes were plotting how they could kill Jesus; for they feared the people. Then Satan entered into Judas called Iscariot, who was one of the twelve. And he went and spoke with the chief priests and captains, about how he could put Jesus into their hands. And they were glad, and agreed to give him money" (Lk.22:1-5 Para.). See also Jn.13:21-29.

The Early Church

Can professing Christians be influenced by Satan and other evil spirits into rejecting God's truth and doing things which are evil? Absolutely they can! Those who profess to follow Christ can be influenced by evil unless they are extremely diligent in their pursuit of a righteous lifestyle. Look at the doctrinal chaos and division that exists today within the professing Christian community and review the many warnings to avoid evil influence, as well as the biblical accounts of people in the early church being influenced by evil spirits.

Shortly after the beginning of the early church, Ananias and Sapphira, a married couple, dedicated all the money that they had received from a land sale to God. Because this money was dedicated to God, it was considered holy and belonged to God. But, Ananias and Sapphira violated the law of holiness by first stealing a part of what they had dedicated to God, and then they lied about the price of the land. This violation of the law resulted in their deaths. Peter said it was Satan who influenced Ananias and Sapphira to make their fatal decision:

"But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession, And kept back part of the price, his wife also being privy to it, and brought a certain part, and laid it at the apostles' feet. But Peter said, Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the holy spirit, and to keep back part of the price of the land?" (Acts 5:1-3 KJV).

But how could Satan influence individuals who apparently had the indwelling of the holy spirit and had dedicated themselves to practicing the Sovereign Father's truth?

The biblical account does not tell us what motivated these two individuals to make the decision to lie about the price of the land. What we do know is that somehow their thought process was open to Satan's influence and they had convinced themselves that they could keep the price of the land secret.
Children of Disobedience

While explaining the spiritual condition of a person prior to their being called to salvation by the Sovereign God (Jn.6:44,65) and subsequently being saved from the second death in the Lake of Fire through the sacrifice of Christ, Paul says that their past condition was due to the influence of the Prince of the power of the air:

"And you has he [God the Father] made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins; Wherein in time past you walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now works in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind: and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others" (Eph.2:1-3 KJV). See also Col.3:6-7.

There are two Greek words in verse 2 that, when understood in context, reveal the tremendous authority, power, and influence that Satan wields over the entire earth.

The English word prince is translated from the Greek word archon, which means a first (in rank or power). The English word power is translated from the Greek word exousia, which means (subjectively) force, capacity, competency, freedom, or (objectively) mastery (concretely, magistrate, superhuman, potentate, token of control), delegated influence.

Because the scriptures clearly show that there are only righteous and unrighteous people, the only logical assumption one can make when Paul speaks of "the children of disobedience" is that he is speaking of everyone except the Sovereign Father's elect children. Therefore, Satan's influence is cast over all mankind in one way or another, except for the Father's elect children who diligently pursue a righteous lifestyle in compliance to their heavenly Father's truth and way of truth.

"Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience. Therefore, be not partakers with them. For you were sometimes darkness, but now you are light in the Lord: walk as children of light: (For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth;) Proving what is acceptable to the Lord" (Eph.5:6-10 KJV).

Paul's instruction is to let no one influence or deceive you with foolish words into forsaking the Father's way of truth. Therefore, he gave the instruction to walk as children of light (i.e., children of truth).
Deceiving, and Being Deceived

Paul gave the following warning to Timothy about individuals who would not only deceive people but also would be deceived themselves:

"But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived. But you continue in the things which you have learned and have been assured of, knowing of whom you have learned them; And that from a child you have known the holy scriptures, which are able to make you wise to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" (2.Tim.3:13-16 KJV Para.). See also 2.Tim.2:14-18.

Some interesting points come to light when we take note of a few of the words used in verse 13. The English word men is translated from the Greek word anthropos, which means a human being and not specifically a man. The English word seducers is translated from the Greek word goao, which means a wizard (as muttering spells), i.e., (by implication) an imposter.

The English words deceiving and deceived are translated from the Greek word planao, which means cause to roam (from safety, truth, or virtue).

Today, there are many men and women who impersonate the Father's true elect and lead the unsuspecting and the gullible elect away from truth and virtue into sin and debauchery through clever deceptions.

Evil spirits and Satan's ministers (2.Cor.11:13-15) take advantage of the fact that the majority of people who profess to believe in the Bible and follow its teachings do not study and meditate on the truth found in the Bible and therefore will not take the time and effort necessary to challenge a cleverly devised deception. This is why evil spirits will inspire false teachers over whom they have influence to use obscure scriptures, texts which are difficult to translate, vague historical references, or scriptures taken out of context in order to promote doctrines which are in opposition to biblical truth.

WARNINGS TO THE EARLY CHURCH

The elect of the early church were continually warned about demonic influence within their ranks, were admonished to keep the "faith once delivered", and instructed to be on guard against evil spirits who wanted to destroy them:

"Now the spirit speaks expressly that in the latter times saying that some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; telling hypocritical lies; having their conscience seared with a hot iron" (1.Tim.4:1-2 KJV Para.). See also 2.Tim.4:3-4; Jude verses 1-19.
The apostle Paul warned that many would depart from the faith because they would pay attention to teachings which were inspired by seducing spirits. Paul calls these teachings "doctrines of devils."

Evil spirits not only influence individuals to teach error but also sometimes control their minds and occupy the bodies of those who teach a worship system or a way of life which is in opposition to the Sovereign God's truth. What these spirits teach through these individuals are cleverly crafted lies designed to cause those who hear them to either never learn God's truth or to depart from it.

Satan and other evil spirits are masters of deception, and throughout the ages, they have cleverly produced many counterfeits of the Father's truth, his good news message, his worship system, and his way of life for humanity. Paul's prediction came true within the early church, and many in this age whom the Father calls to salvation pay attention to teachings inspired by evil spirits. Paul's warning to the evangelist Timothy is just as valid today as it was then. Today, spiritually life threatening teachings come through the printed page and the preaching and teaching of men and women of many religions and philosophies, including professing Christianity.

The historical record shows that the failure of the Sovereign Father's earthly children to take Paul's warning seriously eventually led to the demise and disappearance of the early church as a powerful, organized entity after the death of the apostle John. By the third century A.D., the worship system practiced by the most powerful professing Christian church of that day did not even faintly resemble the teachings of Christ and the apostles noted in the biblical record.

**Question:** Can a person who professes to believe in the Bible and follow Christ be influenced by evil, but not be aware that they are influenced?

**Answer:** Absolutely they can!

Even though the Bible is full of warnings to avoid evil influence and it gives many clear instructions about how to avoid evil influence, the Sovereign Father's earthly family of king-priests can, under certain conditions, be influenced by evil spirits if they do not take these warnings and instructions seriously.

Today, through the influence of evil spirits, many of the false teachings about the Sovereign God, Christ, how to obtain salvation and enter into kingdom of God, which led to the demise and disappearance of the early church, are still being taught to the world at large, as well as to the majority of people who profess to believe in the Bible and follow Christ.
SUMMARY

It is obvious that evil spirits do not want people whom they are attempting to influence and deceive into doing their bidding to know who they are, what they are, and what they are attempting to accomplish. But, how do they accomplish their deception? Evil spirits accomplish much of their deception through influencing people's thoughts without inhabiting and controlling a person's mind and body.

Satan and other evil spirits are extremely powerful, intelligent, and clever. These evil beings have observed human nature for many centuries and know exactly what is required to deceive most of mankind. These evil beings have perfected their skill to blend truth and lies in the same way that Satan did when he deceived Eve into disobeying the Creator's instruction not to touch the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil or eat its fruit.

Solomon said the following about things that sound, look, and feel good on the surface, but are actually destructive and harmful:

"There is a way which seems right to a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Prov.14:12. KJV) See also Prov.16:25.

People's proclivity to do what sounds, looks, and feels good to them without investigating to see if the end result is good is a major help to evil spirits in influencing and deceiving people into doing their bidding and promoting their goal to destroy mankind and its opportunity to enter into the Sovereign Father's Kingdom as his spirit sons.

These extremely evil, intelligent, and clever spirit-beings have the power and ability to project both thought and energy into the physical realm through objects and into and through individuals whom are susceptible to their influence. This power and ability coupled with their skill to blend truth and lies makes it extremely easy for evil spirits to influence and deceive the spiritually gullible and uninformed. Therefore, the best defense against an evil influence is a good understanding of the Sovereign Father's truth and to diligently pursue a righteous lifestyle as set forth in the Bible.

By B.L. Cochere ll
CHAPTER NINETEEN

PREVENTING DEMONIC INFLUENCE, CONTROL, AND POSSESSION

It is unclear how many angels rebelled with Satan and how many are engaged in attempting to frustrate the Sovereign God's plan and purpose for mankind while making an effort to destroy those individuals who have been called to salvation during this age. However, the following two things are clear:

1. Satan and other evil spirits have been influencing and controlling individuals to one degree or another since Adam and Eve were evicted from the garden of Eden.

2. God has given very specific instructions about how to prevent being influenced, controlled, or possessed by evil spirits, but these instructions have mostly been rejected by mankind in general and specifically by the vast majority of those who profess to believe and follow what is written in the Bible.

A person who is serious about entering the Kingdom of God as a son of the Sovereign Father must maintain sobriety in their thinking and continually focus on their awesome calling to salvation. The Father's calling to salvation is not a child's game to be taken lightly; the call to salvation is a serious endeavor which leads to either eternal life in the Kingdom and Family of God or to eternal death in the Lake of Fire, depending on one's attitude and behavior. Only those who take their calling seriously will enter into the Kingdom of God. See Matt.7:13-14; Lk.13:23-28; Rev.2:7-11.

This chapter outlines the biblical instructions which guarantee success in combating evil spirits. To successfully use the biblical instructions on how to prevent demonic influence, control, and possession, you must know the following:

- Your enemy.
- Your enemy's capabilities.
- Your enemy's strategies.
- Your resources and weapons and how to use them.
- Your defenses and protections.
- How to resist.

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YOUR ENEMY

If you are to be successful in resisting evil spirits and their evil influence you must know and understand the following things about these spirit-beings:

- Satan and other evil spirits are mankind's enemies and their goal is to influence, control, harm, and eventually destroy mankind.
- Satan and other evil spirits are extremely intelligent and powerful and have, within certain limitations placed on them by the Sovereign God, the ability to influence, control, and manipulate people and the physical existence.
- Satan and other evil spirits use lies, deception, subversion, miracles, and many other natural and supernatural means to accomplish their goals.

Satan the Destroyer

The following warning needs to be heeded if you are serious about remaining free from evil influence and deception:

"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, walks about as a roaring lion seeking those he may devour" (1.Pet.5:8 KJV).

Clearly understand that Satan is continually seeking ways to destroy individuals whom the Sovereign Father calls to salvation during this gospel age. Satan shows no mercy to those he is able to conquer. Therefore, the apostle Peter's warning about Satan and the danger he poses to your spiritual success should be carefully considered, taken to heart, and acted upon. Although Peter's warning is specific to Satan, this warning also applies, in principle, to all evil spirits.

YOUR ENEMY'S CAPABILITIES

Satan and other evil spirits have tremendous power to interact with and manipulate the physical existence. Additionally, under certain circumstances, they can influence a person's thought process and emotions, control a person's mind, and occupy an individual's body.

An account in the Book of 1Samuel shows King Saul being harassed by an evil spirit which made him fearful (1.Sam.16:14-16).

The Book of Job shows Satan with the authority and power to take life, cause illness, and torment individuals (Job, chapters 1 and 2).

In the Gospel accounts and the writings of the apostles, there are many accounts of evil spirits controlling an individual's ability to manage their own lives, occupying a person's body, causing chronic ailments, and otherwise tormenting people. See Mk.9:17-22; Lk.13: 10-17.
The account of many demons inhabiting and controlling two men who lived among the tombs (Matt.8:28-33; Lk.8:26-36) shows the tremendous power evil spirits can manifest through individuals whom they inhabit and control. Another account showing the enormous power evil spirits can wield through people they inhabit is the account of the seven sons of the priest Sceva being attacked by an evil spirit when they attempt to use an authorization which was not theirs to use. (Acts 19:13-16).

In the Book of Revelation, the prophetic Dragon, Beast, and False Prophet send evil spirits into the earth where they work miracles and influence heads of government into building an army to fight Christ:

"And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty" (Rev.16:13-14 KJV).

Here are three extremely charismatic, persuasive, and powerful demons who, through supernatural works, influence leaders of nations into joining their armies together in order to fight Christ whom they have been deceived into thinking is their enemy.

**Prince of the Power of the Air**

"And you has he [i.e., God the Father] made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins; Wherein in time past you walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now works in the children of disobedience" (Eph.2:1-2 KJV).

Evil spirits can use the atmosphere as a physical media through which to transmit thoughts and emotions in order to influence people. Evil spirits can also interface and interfere with electromagnetic equipment and wreak havoc on the earth by causing atmospheric disturbances, such as storms and drought.

**Supernatural Power and Works**

The Book of Revelation tells us that, in the end of man's rule on earth, Satan and other evil spirits will deceive people, through miraculous works, into following their religions and governmental systems which are in opposition to the Sovereign God's truth. The following are some of the miraculous works an evil spirit will accomplish while controlling and occupying human bodies:
"And it [the False Prophet] does great signs and even makes fire to come down out of heaven upon the earth before men. And it [the False Prophet] deceives those dwelling on the earth, because of the signs which were given to it before the beast; saying to those on the earth to make an image of the beast who has the wound of the sword, and lived. And it was given authority to give a spirit to the image of the beast, so that the image of the beast could speak, and cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed" (Rev.13:13-15 Para.). See Rev.19:19-20.

Some evil spirits are more intelligent and powerful than others, and have the power to create things in the physical realm and manipulate circumstances and events to their advantage, as well as cause and heal all types of physical deformities and sicknesses. See Deut.13:1-3; Matt.7:22-23, 24:24; 2.Thess.2:7-9.

YOUR ENEMY'S STRATEGICS

A great advantage in helping one defeat any enemy is to know the strategies an enemy will use against you. The scriptures clearly reveal that deception is one of the most powerful strategies Satan and other evil spirits use to influence and control people in order to accomplish their goals.

Satan the Deceiver

"And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, that deceives the whole world" (Rev.12:9 KJV).

If you believe the apostle John faithfully recorded what the Messiah revealed to him, you must believe that Satan has indeed deceived the entire world into practicing governmental, educational, philosophical, and religious systems that cause mankind to have attitudes and behaviors which are fundamentally opposed to the way of truth set forth in the Bible, which if practiced will result in true and lasting peace, happiness, and prosperity.

Jesus taught his followers to pray for the Father's kingdom to come, because it is only through God's rule on earth that humanity can be saved from itself. But, Satan and other evil spirits have convinced mankind that it can solve its own problems through its own religions, philosophies, governmental systems, and scientific achievements. However, the reality is that all of these have failed to bring lasting peace, happiness, and prosperity.
Satan’s Religious Strategy

Religious deception is one of the most powerful strategies Satan and other evil spirits use to reach their goals of influence and control over vast numbers of people. Over the centuries, evil spirits have devised many religions, religious philosophies, and counterfeits of the Sovereign God's worship system. Because these spirit-beings know and understand human desires and fears, they have crafted religions and religious philosophies which appeal to people's basic nature. But, in reality these religions are deceptions which allow deceived people to be manipulated into doing the bidding of demons.

Two Basic Religions

Although there are thousands of religions earth, according to the Bible, there are only two basic religions: The Sovereign God’s and Satan’s. According to the Bible, if you practice a religion, you are either worshiping the Sovereign God through his worship system or you are worshiping Satan or evil spirits, either directly or by proxy, through a worship system that is in opposition to the Sovereign God’s worship system. See Jn.8:42-47; 1.Jn.3:1-19; 4:1-6.

A major goal of evil spirits is to cause as much religious confusion as possible through influencing spiritual leaders to promote many conflicting worship systems. This keeps humanity ignorant of the Sovereign God’s plan for mankind, as well as their opportunity to become a god-being in the Family of God. The apostle Paul wrote the following about individuals who are influenced to actively serve Satan's purpose of leading people into demonically inspired worship systems:

"For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works" (2.Corr.11:13-15 KJV). See also Deut.13:1-5; Jer.23:21-22.

It is through these individuals that evil spirits deceive people into worshiping them and serving their purposes.

Seducing Spirits, Doctrines of Devils

The elect of the early church were continually warned and admonished to keep the "faith once delivered" and to be on guard against those who wanted to destroy them:

"Now the spirit speaks expressly that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron" (1.Tim.4:1-2 KJV). See also 2.Tim.4:3-4; Rev.2:9; 3:9,12:9).
Satan and other evil spirits are extremely intelligent, clever, and are masters of deception and subterfuge. Over the centuries, since the creation of mankind, Satan and other evil spirits have honed their ability to blend truth and lies in the same way that Satan did when he deceived Eve into disobeying the Creator's instruction to neither touch the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil nor to eat its fruit.

Doctrines of devils are simply the teaching of concepts, precepts, and principles which are in opposition to the Sovereign God's truth and way of truth as set forth in the Bible. These teachings are cleverly disguised in religious sounding words, symbolism, rituals, religious and secular philosophies, mysteries in scientific jargon, and miraculous works. All of these are crafted to deceive people into thinking that what is presented is logical, true, and beneficial.

This strategy has worked very well over the centuries, especially among the world's largest religions. Look at the results of these great religions' teachings. Are the results of centuries of their teachings positive or negative? Have these great religions brought the world peace, prosperity, and happiness or have the results been just the opposite? You be the judge.

YOUR RESOURCES AND WEAPONS AND HOW TO USE THEM

Without the resources and weapons needed to wage spiritual warfare and the knowledge and understanding of how to use them, your battle against evil spirits is lost before it begins. But, God intends to expand his family through the transformation of people into his spirit sons; therefore, he has provided the necessary resources and weapons for those he calls to be able wage spiritual warfare and defeat the enemy. Moreover, throughout the Bible, he has provided descriptions of the available resources and instructions on how to use the weapons and protections that he provides.

Knowledge Is Power

There is no doubt that knowledge is power when it comes to winning a battle against evil-spirits. In order to acquire the knowledge that will give you the power to resist and overcome evil, you must first know what evil is and is not.

Although instinctively most people have some sense of right and wrong and good and evil, the only place a person can find an infallible and empirical standard of right versus wrong and good versus evil is in the Bible. This understanding is key to being able to win a spiritual battle.

The following foundational knowledge is necessary to enable a person who is serious about their salvation to use the resources and weaponry provided by God to win spiritual battles.
A Way Which Seems Right

Solomon said the following about things which seem good on the surface, but are actually harmful and destructive:

"There is a way which seems right to a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Prov.14:12. KJV). See also Prov.16:25.

Look at the results of mankind's governmental, philosophical, and religious systems. Have any of these brought mankind lasting peace, happiness, and prosperity or have they brought just the opposite? Have the results of centuries of mankind's attempts to better his lot brought the results that God promised to those who follow his way of truth?

People's proclivity to do what seems good to them without investigating to see if the end result is good is a major help to evil spirits in influencing and deceiving people into doing their bidding and promoting their goal to destroy mankind and its opportunity to enter into the Sovereign God's Kingdom as his spirit sons.

Attitudes and Behaviors

Satan and other evil spirits influence people to conduct their lives in opposition to what the Sovereign God deems as the proper attitudes and behaviors which will lead mankind to living in harmony with him and each other. Therefore, you must know what God considers to be unacceptable attitudes and behaviors to prevent yourselves from being influenced or controlled by evil spirits into doing what is unacceptable to the Sovereign God.

The Bible contains crystal clear definitions and guidelines about what attitudes and behaviors are acceptable and which are unacceptable. The Bible is God's instruction manual to mankind and sets forth the boundaries which dictate right and wrong and good and evil attitudes and behaviors for humans. The Bible defines good attitudes and behaviors as righteous, but evil attitudes and behaviors as unrighteous.

The scriptures clearly show that the concepts and principles of righteousness and unrighteousness cannot be separated from God's law, which defines righteous and unrighteous attitudes and behaviors.

Righteousness

The book of Psalms clearly shows the quality of righteousness as being associated with God's law:

"You are righteous, O Lord, and upright are your judgments. Your testimonies that you have commanded are righteous and very faithful" (Psa.119:137-138).

"My tongue shall speak of your word: for all your commandments are righteousness" (Psa.119:172). See also Psa.119:142.
God is a god of law, and it is his law that is the standard against which righteous attitudes and behaviors are measured. This is the same law that the Creator God promised to place within the hearts and minds of people when the Kingdom of God rules the earth:

"Behold, the days come, says the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they broke, although I was an husband to them, says the Lord: But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, says the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people" (Jer.31:31-33 KJV). See also Heb.10:16-17.

Unrighteousness

"Don't you know that the unrighteous will not inherit the Kingdom of God? Don't be deceived: no fornicator, idolater, adulterer, homosexual, thief, covetous, drunkard reviler, or extortioner will inherit the Kingdom of God" (1.Cor.6:9-10 Para.).

"All unrighteousness is sin" (1.Jn.5:17 Para.).

The Apostle Paul said, "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom.6:23 KJV).

All of the Sovereign God's rules for the moral and ethical attitudes and behavior of humans are found within the pages of the Bible and anyone who violates these rules is deemed to be unrighteous (i.e., a sinner) and will eventually be punished with eternal death, unless these sins are repented of, a person's death penalty is removed through the sacrifice of Christ, and a harmonious relationship is established and maintained between a person and the Sovereign God.

Because the result of practicing sin is death, your attitude and response to God's definition of sin and his rules concerning your behavior will either bring you eternal life or death. Therefore, it behooves you to know exactly what sin is.

Transgression of the Law

"Whosoever commits sin transgresses also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law" (1.Jn.3:4 KJV).

Here, you have a clear statement that defines sin. Sin is the violation of God's law, and this law encompass the ten commandments plus all of the precepts and principles set forth in the Bible which define righteous and unrighteous attitudes and behaviors.
In our modern age of science, we have learned there are laws which always function automatically: the laws of physics, chemistry, mathematics and all of the laws necessary to keep the solar system functioning and life continuing. If there is not conformity to these laws, disaster, death, and destruction will occur.

In exactly the same way, all of the laws of God are a point of reference to which all people should look as a standard of attitude and behavior toward God and their fellow humans. The Ten Commandments and God's other laws are empirical laws which result in benefits for obedience and penalties for disobedience (Deut.30:15-19).

In order to avoid an evil influence in your life, you must avoid things which are in opposition to God's percepts, principles, laws, and the way of life he has prescribed for mankind. This is why it is important to know and understand God's law, which defines righteous and unrighteous attitudes and behaviors.

PERSONAL CHOICES

The Bible tells us the whole world is being deceived by Satan (Rev.12:9) and this deception will continue until Christ returns to depose him as ruler of the earth and destroy him (Rev.11:15; Ezk.28:12-18).

Because the majority of mankind is deceived by Satan, they are locked into attitudes and behavioral patterns which are in opposition to the Sovereign God's law and the way of life he prescribed to bring true and lasting peace, happiness, and prosperity. Therefore, the choices most people make are heavily influenced by the world around them, which is influenced by evil spirits.

The only way to break the cycle of evil influence is to make decisions which are in harmony with God's law and way of life. When decisions, attitudes, and behaviors are in harmony with God's law, evil cannot influence or control a person's mind, because an impenetrable barrier has been raised against evil.

All individuals have the ability to make decisions and choices about their personal attitudes and behavior. The exceptions are individuals who are in a mental state which makes this impossible, such as infants, very young children, people with a reduced mental capacity, or individuals who have not matured mentally.

When you know and understand the difference between righteous and unrighteous attitudes and behaviors, using God's precepts, principles, and laws as your guide, you are equipped to prevent evil influence and control. All you have to do to remain free of evil influence and control is to diligently exercise this knowledge and understanding.
Choose Life

After reviewing what God had done for the Israelites and what he had offered them if they would obey and serve the Creator God, Moses records the following:

"I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both you and your seed may live" (Deut. 30:19 KJV).

If you choose to make decisions that are in harmony with God's laws, percepts, and principles, you do not have to fear an evil influence or being controlled by evil spirits. The apostle Paul gave these encouraging words to those who make righteous decisions:

"Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifies. Who is he that condemns? It is Christ that died, yes rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For your sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom.8:33-39 KJV).

PREVENTION

"An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure." This well known proverb from Benjamin Franklin who was one of the founding fathers of the United States is absolutely true when it comes to preventing evil influence, control, and possession. The surest way to prevent demonic influence, control, and possession is to avoid situations where there are evil influences and to immediately, upon recognition, resist all evil influence that may come your way.

The apostle James gives the following advice to those of the Sovereign Father's elect who want to remain free from demonic influence, control, and possession:

"What causes warfare and fighting among you? They come from your sensual desires that battle within you? What you long for, you do not get. You kill and desire to have, yet you do not obtain it. You fight and war, yet you do not have, because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask incorrectly that you may consume it on your sensual desires. You adulterers and adulteresses, don't you know that friendship with the world is being hostile to God? Therefore, whoever will be a friend of the world is the adversary of God" (Jms.4:1-4 Para.).
James' advice also applies to anyone outside of the elect who wants to remain free of evil influence, evil people, and evil spirits. Being a friend of (i.e., being fond of) the world means to have the same attitudes and behaviors as people who God considers unrighteous and are living in opposition to his laws, precepts, and principles. Being a friend of the Sovereign God is to be in a harmonious relationship with him and his son, the Savior of mankind. This harmonious relationship absolutely prevents any evil influence, control, and possession by evil spirits.

PROTECTIVE ARMOR AND WEAPONS

At the close of his letter to the elect at Ephesus, Paul encourages them to be spiritually strong and prepare themselves to do battle against Satan. He warns them that their struggle is not against a flesh and blood enemy, but against principalities, powers, the rulers of the darkness of this world, and spiritual wickedness in high places (Eph.6:12).

During Paul's lifetime, he and all people within the Roman Empire were well aware of the armor and offensive capability of a fully outfitted Roman soldier, as well as the care with which they prepared for battle. They were also aware that the Roman soldier was highly intelligent, disciplined, courageous, and aggressive. This seems to be the tone in which Paul gives the following instruction about how to maintain spiritual strength and gain victory over evil spirits:

"Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil" (Eph.6:10-11 KJV).

The Living Bible Paraphrased translates verse 10 and 11 as follows:

"Last of all I want to remind you that your strength must come from the Lord's mighty power within you. Put on all of God's armor so that you will be able to stand safe against all strategies and tricks of Satan" (Eph.6:10-11 TLB).

The English words strong, power, and stand are translated from the Greek words endunamoo, kratos, and histemi, which respectively mean to empower, vigor (as in the presence of force or power), and to stand.

A person with the indwelling of the holy spirit has the power to stand firm against Satan and ward off his attacks and the attacks of other evil spirits.

What Paul said to the Ephesians about the use of God's power within them must not be taken lightly, because the threat by Satan and other evil spirits to your salvation and physical well-being is very real. Paul's instruction to be strong in the power of his might and to put on the whole armor of God is a reminder to the Ephesians to use the power of the holy spirit that God had given them to repel the attacks of the devil. Indeed, God's children can use this spiritual power if they know and understand how to use it, and then exercise their authority to use it as protection and as an offensive weapon in their spiritual battles.
The enemies of mankind and especially the enemies of those who are of the Sovereign Father's earthly family of king-priests are evil spirit-beings who inhabit the physical and spirit realms of existence:

"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" (Eph.6:12 KJV).

Although the battle being waged may sometimes manifest itself in the physical realm, the battle is a spiritual one. Therefore, if you are to obtain a victory over evil spirits, you must not only know that you have spiritual protection and weapons, but you must also become expert in their usage:

"Wherefore take to you the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand" (Eph.6:13 KJV).

Because evil spirits are extremely intelligent and powerful, Paul instructs the elect to equip themselves with all of the spiritual protection available to them from their heavenly Father.

Truth and Righteousness

"Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness" (Eph.6:14 KJV). See also 1.Thess.5:4-8.

The first piece of protective armor we are instructed to have on is truth and righteousness.

Truth

Prior to going over the brook Cedron to the garden where he was betrayed by Judas, Jesus ask the following of his heavenly Father:

"I have given them your word; and the world has hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that you should take them out of the world, but that you should keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through your truth: your word is truth" (Jn.17:14-17 KJV).

In this prayer, Jesus concisely defines truth as his heavenly Father's word and asks his Father to sanctify these individuals through his truth. The English word sanctify in verse 17 is translated from the Greek word hagiazo, which means to make holy, i.e., (ceremonially) purify or consecrate; (mentally) to venerate.

During Jesus' lifetime his Father's word was found in the Law, the Writings, and the Prophets which existed at that time. Today, we have these collected works, the Gospel accounts, and the writings of the apostles to use as a guide to holiness. Paul and Jesus spoke of the same
truth which you should have as a major part of your protection against evil spirits. See Jn.17:17-19.

The heavenly Father's truth contained in the Bible reveals knowledge, understanding, and instruction into spiritual concepts and principles, which includes how you should comport your life as a holy person.

An individual who maintains their holiness through the practice of their heavenly Father's truth not only declares their holiness but also has holiness as a major part of their spiritual armor. Moreover, a truly holy person, by the biblical definition of holiness, will understand the foundational elements of the Father's truth. A holy person will also have faith in this truth and in the promises contained in it, as well as in the exercise of truth to protect them from evil spirits.

An individual who truly understands the seriousness of combating evil in all its forms will put forth the time and effort, through diligent study and meditation on the Father's truth contained in the Bible, to acquire the knowledge and understanding of God the Father's truth in order to equip themselves to do battle against evil spirits.

Righteousness

Remember that, when Satan came before God and Job was discussed, Satan could not accuse Job of any wrong doing, because Job was a righteous individual and therefore had a harmonious relationship with the Creator God:

"Then the Lord said to Satan, "Have you considered my servant Job? There is no one on earth like him; he is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil" (Job 1:8 NIV). See also Job 2:3.

Satan replies to God's praise of Job's character:

"Does Job fear God for nought? You have made an hedge about him, his house, and everything that he has, You have blessed his work and have increased his livestock and his land" (Job 1:9-10 Para).

God was showing special favor toward Job, because he was a righteous individual. It is this righteous condition that promotes a harmonious relationship between God and individuals and causes God to show favor toward them and protect them. The Psalmist had the following to say about God's special favor toward righteous individuals:

"For you, Lord, will bless the righteous; with favor will you compass him as with a shield" (Psa.5:12 KJV).

"The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry. . . . The righteous cry, and the Lord hears, and delivers them out of all their troubles. . . . Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the Lord delivers him out of them all" (Psa.34:15, 17, 19 KJV). See also Psa.55:22; Prov.10:30; 11:9.
The Sovereign God is aware of his righteous children. He hears their requests for help, and delivers them from problems. See 1.Cor.10:13.

Maintaining righteousness affords tremendous protection, because a person who is continually striving to make righteous decisions in their life is alert to situations that have the potential to provide evil spirits with an opportunity to influence a person's life.

A person who is serious about successfully protecting themselves from being influenced by evil spirits and from an attack by Satan or other evil spirits must wear the breastplate of truth and righteousness.

**The Gospel of Peace**

"And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace" (Eph.6:15 KJV).

The feet are mentioned in the light of something that needs preparation, because the feet are the foundation on which the body stands and is carried around. Anyone who has ever had problems with their feet knows how extremely important the feet are to one's comfort and well-being.

The English word *shod* in verse 15 is translated from the Greek word *hupodeo*, which means *to bind under one's feet* (i.e., put on shoes or sandals). In the context of the Roman soldier, this footwear would have been hobnail sandals which provided for extremely stable footing in battle and allowed a Roman soldier to step on their opponents foot and hold it down while pushing them off balance, making it easier to kill them.

The English word *preparation* in verse 15 is from the Greek word *hetoimasia*, which means preparation; which is derived from a Greek word which means to prepare. A soldier does not go into battle without preparation and neither should you enter into battle with evil spirits without being prepared to do battle and be victorious.

The gospel of peace is the Sovereign Father's good news message which Christ delivered and is the foundation on which you must stand firm in your spiritual battles. This gospel of peace contains the promise of protection from the second death from which there is no return (Jn.11:25-26; Rev.2:11), the promise of eternal life in the Kingdom of God as a son of God the Father (Matt.25:34; Rev.21:6-7), and the promise that the Father and his son will never leave those who diligently pursue their calling (Heb.13:5; Jn.14:16-23).

The English word *peace* in verse 15 is translated from the Greek word *eirene*, which means peace (literally or figuratively); by implication, prosperity. This is the peace Paul spoke of to the elect at Philippi. This peace gives individuals with the indwelling of the holy spirit confidence in the promises of their heavenly Father and their Savior:
"Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus" (Phil.4:6-7 NIV). See also Heb.13:5-6.

Ephesians 6:15 says that a person should make preparations to protect their feet (i.e., their spiritual foundation) with the good news message. Therefore, a person who is serious about their salvation and protection from evil influence should clearly know and understand the message Christ brought and the promises this message contains in order to protect themselves against the trickery of the devil and other evil spirits.

The Shield of Faith

"Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith you shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked" (Eph.6:16 KJV).

The Roman soldier's shield could be used for his protection and in conjunction with his offensive weaponry. The shield of faith refers to your belief and confidence in the promises your heavenly Father and Savior have made to those called to salvation about protection and power to overcome evil.

Faith

Although love is the greatest gift of God (1.Corn.13:1-13), it is through the exercising of faith that all other attributes, qualities, authorizations, and powers of the spirit are accessed, increased, or acquired.

Because having faith is an extremely important part of having access to the power of the spirit, it follows that a person must know what faith is. There are two types of faith that impact spiritual growth and access to spiritual power: 1) faith that is belief in God the Father, Jesus Christ, and their promises; and 2) faith that is power through which works are produced. These two types of faith are different, yet they both must be used in order to gain more spiritual power. The three major components of faith are knowledge, performance, and confidence.

Knowledge

In Acts 2:38, we see that those who want to receive the holy spirit must repent, but a person must have the knowledge of what to repent of before a person can truly repent. Not only must a person know what to repent of, but also understand what repentance is and how to repent.

Acts 5:32 shows that the holy spirit is given to those who obey, but a person must first know what to obey.
Spiritual knowledge and understanding must be based on truth, which is not a nebulous notion or a mystical philosophic idea. Jesus says that the Father's word is truth. It is a lack of knowledge and understanding of God's word that is a barrier to having the kind of faith which pleases the Father and produces powerful works.

Performance

Both Acts 2:38 and 5:32 show that a person is required to take positive action (i.e., repentance, baptism, and obedience) based on what they know and understand in order to receive the holy spirit:

"Then Peter said to them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the holy spirit" (Acts 2:38 KJV).

"And we are witnesses of these things, as is also the holy spirit, whom God has given to them that obey him" (Acts 5:32 Para.).

Confidence

Because the approximately three thousand people who were gathered together on the first Festival of Pentecost after Christ's resurrection knew that the God of Israel was real and believed that Jesus was the Messiah who was sent to save them, they had confidence that they would receive the power of the holy spirit if they did what they were told in reference to repentance and baptism. See Acts 2:37-41.

In Acts 2:38 and 5:32, we see all three components of the type of faith that is belief. A person must have knowledge and take positive action on this knowledge in order to have the confidence that God will fulfill his promise based upon their knowledge and positive action.

Faith That is Belief

Faith that is belief and faith that is power are tied together. Without faith that is belief, a person cannot access or use faith that is power through which works are produced:

"But someone may well argue, You say the way to God is by faith alone, plus nothing; well, I say that good works are important too, for without good works you can't prove whether you have faith or not; but anyone can see that I have faith by the way I act. Are there still some among you who hold that only believing is enough? Believing in one God? Well, remember that the devils believe this too so strongly that they tremble in terror! Dear foolish man! When will you ever learn that believing is useless without doing what God wants you to? Faith that does not result in good deeds is not real faith" (Jms.2:18-20 LBP).

The King James Version renders the last half of verse 20: "Faith without works is dead."
True faith (i.e., true belief) must be followed by positive actions in order to accomplish a righteous way of life and fulfill your calling. Faith that is power can be manifested in the physical and spirit realms (Matt. 17:20). Faith that is belief is the link between faith that is power and the physical and spirit realms of existence. A child of God is able to exercise faith that is power through the exercising of faith that is belief. Therefore, neither kind of faith is independent of the other; both must be used together in order to cause an effect.

**Faith That is Power**

"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Heb. 11:1 Para.).

Here, the English word *substance* is translated from the Greek word *hupostasis*, which means the reality of the things hoped for. If you have the kind of faith that Jesus spoke of in Matthew 17:20, "the thing hoped for" will become reality in the physical or spirit realms of existence, because the spiritual power that will cause it to become reality has been accessed and set in motion through faith that is belief.

Through the gift of faith that is power. All of those mentioned in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews were able to perform great works and have spiritual success in their lives. Please read Heb. 11:1-40:

"For one is given by the spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same spirit; to another faith by the same spirit. . ." (1 Cor. 12:8-9 KJV).

**Faith to Move a Mountain**

While speaking to his disciples about the reason they could not cast a certain demon out of a child, Jesus said:

"For truly I say to you, if you have faith as a grain of mustard; you shall say to this mountain, move from here to there! And it will move. And nothing shall be impossible to you" (Matt. 17:20 Para.).

Faith that is power is much more than just believing in something and hoping that it will happen. Moreover, a child of God who has this kind of faith has the ability to convert spirit-energy into physical energy in order to perform awesome acts.

Faith that is power also has the three basic components of Faith that is belief: knowledge, performance, and confidence. This kind of faith has substance, tangible energy, and power which can be used to produce works.

Through faith that is power, Moses, the prophets, Jesus Christ, the apostles, and many others in the past were able to perform their great supernatural acts.

Jesus truly did great things, because the Father gave him an unlimited supply of spirit-power which he could access through faith. See Jn. 3:34.
Through faith that is power, Jesus healed the sick, resurrected the dead, walked on water, turned water into wine, and performed many other supernatural acts through the power of the spirit. Although Jesus did great works, he says that those who believe in him will do even greater works:

"Truly, truly, I say to you, he that believes on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go to the Father" (Jn.14:12 KJV).

How is it possible to do greater things than Christ did? It is possible because Christ did not fully use the power available to him through faith that is power. The elect who will be given powerful faith just before the return of Christ will be able to perform even greater works through this same spirit-power.

An individual with the shield of faith not only can protect themselves against the attacks of Satan and other evil spirits, but also confidently apply their faith that is power as an offensive weapon in their spiritual battles.

The Helmet

"And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" (Eph.6:17 KJV). See also 1.Thess.5:4-8.

The helmet of salvation protects the head which contains the brain in which the spirit of man resides and through which humans interact with this physical dimension.

The English word salvation is translated from the Greek word soterion, which means defender or (by implication) defense, which is similar to the Greek word soteria, which means rescue or safety.

Paul is instructing the Ephesians on how to protect themselves from evil spirits and thwart their attempt to influence them to sin. Therefore, we can assume that the protection Paul speaks of is to be provided through an individual's faith in God the Father's promise to forgive our sins through the sacrificial blood of Christ, which pays the penalty for our sins and in turn spares us from the second death in the lake of fire. See Matt.26:28; Heb.9:22-28; 13:20-21.

After John the Baptist's birth, his Father Zacharias foretold the following about the salvation and protection which would come through the sacrificial blood of Christ:

"Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he has visited and redeemed his people, And has raised up a horn of salvation [i.e., Christ] for us in the house of his servant David; As he spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began: That we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us" (Lk.1:68-71). See also verses 72-77.
The most powerful enemy that a physical person has is death. Through the sacrificial blood of Christ, the Sovereign Father's earthly children gain victory over death. See 1.Cor.15:54-57. The psalmist David wrote the following about God's salvation:

"Truly my soul waits upon God: from him comes my salvation. He only is my rock and my salvation; he is my defense; I shall not be greatly moved. How long will you imagine mischief against a man? you shall be slain all of you: as a bowing wall shall you be, and as a tottering fence. They only consult to cast him down from his excellency: they delight in lies: they bless with their mouth, but they curse inwardly. Selah. My soul, wait you only upon God; for my expectation is from him. He only is my rock and my salvation: he is my defense; I shall not be moved. In God is my salvation and my glory: the rock of my strength, and my refuge, is in God. Trust in him at all times; you people, pour out your heart before him: God is a refuge for us. Selah" (Psa.62:1-8 KJV).

An individual who truly believes God the Father's promise of salvation and is diligently pursuing a harmonious relationship with him should not fear doing battle with evil spirits, because that person has their heavenly Father's protection and promise of salvation.

The Sword

There are many accounts in the Gospels and the writings of the apostles demonstrating the authorized use of God's spirit-power to resist the influence of evil spirits and to remove evil spirits from their control and possession of individuals through the use of the sword of the spirit:

"And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" (Eph.6:17 KJV).

The sword of verse 17 is an offensive weapon used to kill the enemy in hand-to-hand combat. Warfare with evil spirits is not a no-contact sport; it is extremely personal and deadly serious. Evil spirits are highly skilled in the use of their weaponry and have had centuries of practice in perfecting their attacks on the unsuspecting, the naive, and the unprepared. Therefore, in order to survive an attack of Satan or other evil spirits, you must become highly skilled in the use of your spiritual protection and you must learn to wield the sword of the spirit with authority and accuracy to make your enemy retreat and not return.

The writer to the Hebrews says the following about the sword of God's word:

"For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Heb.4:12 KJV).
The word of God has authority, force, and power to cause an effect. In his messages to the seven churches in Asia, Christ warns the saints at Pergamos that, unless they repent from certain evil practices, he will come quickly and fight against them with the sword of his mouth:

"And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write; These things says he which has the sharp sword with two edges; I know your works, and where you dwell, even where Satan’s seat is: and you hold fast my name, and have not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwells. But I have a few things against you, because you have there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication. So have you also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate. Repent; or else I will come to you quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth" (Rev.2:12-16 KJV).

The English word *fight* in verse 12 is translated from the Greek word *polemeo*, which means *to be engaged in warfare* (i.e., *to battle*). The use of the Greek word *polemeo*, tells us that Christ's words will have a devastating effect on those he comes against. This same concept of words having authority, force, and power to destroy is shown in the prophetic events, which will occur as Christ returns to earth to conquer the nations:

"And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he does judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. And the armies which were in heaven followed him on white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of his mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God" (Rev.19:11-15 KJV).

The creation account in the Book of Genesis clearly shows the power that can be exercised by the words of a righteous spirit-being. "God said let there be light and there was light" (Gen.1:3). Having the intent to create light and merely speaking the words, light was created. In the same way a person who understands that he or she has the authority and power (i.e., the sword) of the holy spirit within them to resist evil spirits and to rebuke them only needs to exercise this spiritual authority and power properly in order to force an evil spirit to comply.

The sword of the spirit is your authorization by God the Father to exercise the power of the holy spirit to thwart attacks from evil spirits, remove evil spirits from your surroundings, and for men who are authorized, to command evil spirits to relinquish possession and control of an individual.
The scriptures show that evil spirits have no defense against the Sovereign God's word and his promises to his elect, because his word (i.e., his truth and way of truth) and his promises are backed up by his authority and power, which no evil spirit can withstand. When a person is armed with God's word and properly exercises the authorizations and promises contained in it, no evil spirit has the power to withstand it.

**Prayer**

After listing the protective armor and weapons available to someone who has the indwelling of the holy spirit, Paul instructs the Ephesians to communicate with their heavenly Father:

"Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints; And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak" (Eph.6:18-20 KJV).

As noted in many biblical accounts, prayer is an extremely powerful weapon that can be brought to bear in a battle against Satan and other evil spirits. The following are two of the reasons that prayer is an extremely powerful and readily available weapon in your battles against evil and trouble of all kinds:

"The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears are open to their cry. The face of the Lord is against them that do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth. The righteous cry, and the Lord hears, and delivers them out of all their troubles" (Psa.34:15-17 KJV).

"For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need" (Heb.4:15-16 KJV).

Paul instructs the Ephesians to pray in the spirit. Because the Father is spirit and lives in the spirit realm, we must communicate with him through spirit-power. In order for us to do this, the Father has provided a function of the holy spirit that communicates our thoughts, emotions, desires, frustrations, and needs to him and Christ.

Those who have the indwelling of the holy spirit should fear neither Satan nor other evil spirits and their influence, because the Sovereign Father's elect have been given tremendous spiritual power to overcome these threats to their salvation.

**The Armor of Light**

The whole armor that Paul instructs the elect to put on is summed up in his instruction to the elect at Rome to cast off the works of darkness:
"And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light" (Rom.13:11-12 KJV).

The English word armor in verse 12 is translated from the Greek word hoplon, which means an implement, or utensil, or tool (literally or figuratively, especially offensive for war).

The scriptures speak of two powerful lights which have protective power and can be effectively used in your warfare against evil: One light is God's word which contains his eternal truth and way of truth (Psa.27:1, 119:105; Jn.17:17), and the other light is the Creator God who became Christ, the light and revelator of God's word (Jn.1:1-10).

Paul says to "cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light." The works of darkness are all things which are in opposition to God's truth, including the incorrect attitudes and behaviors of your former life. These will lead to the second death in the lake of fire if not discarded for righteous attitudes and behaviors.

The armor of light is God's word (i.e., his truth and way of truth), which if diligently practiced, protects you from evil influence, control, and possession and guarantees your entry into the Kingdom of God as one of the Sovereign Father's immortal sons. See 1.Jn.3:1-2; Rev.21:7-8.

There are no magical formulas, incantations, or rituals which can replace biblical knowledge, understanding, and the authority and power of God in your battle against all kinds of evil, including evil spirits.

To be able to fully use the resources, protections, and weapons which are provided by God the Father to repel influence, control, or possession by Satan or other evil spirits, you must study and meditate on the instructions given in the Bible about these things. If you do this and apply the precepts, principles, and laws noted in the biblical record, you will be able to wage a winning battle against evil spirits.

The spiritual warfare which the elect of God are engaged in is a life and death matter. A major goal of Satan and other evil spirits is to destroy God's elect. In order to become victorious over these evil beings, you must know and understand who and what the enemy is, as well as its strengths and weaknesses. If you do not know these things about your enemy, the battle can be lost before it even begins. Once you know the enemy and its potential for destruction, you should thoroughly acquaint yourself with the superior weaponry of God's spirit, which is given to each person who has the indwelling of the holy spirit in order for them to be successful in overcoming evil.

By B.L. Cocherell
The Sovereign God has placed certain limits on evil spirits that prohibit them from destroying all mankind or controlling the minds and bodies of people at will; otherwise, they would have controlled and destroyed all of mankind long ago. Moreover, Satan and all other evil spirits must obey the authority of a person who is legitimately exercising the power over evil spirits that is given to them by their heavenly Father.

Neither Satan nor any other evil spirit has the ability to influence, control, or otherwise force anyone with a sound mind to take a course of action he or she is not willing to take. For someone who has a sound mind to be influenced or controlled by an evil spirit, they would need to put themselves in a situation that compromises their ability to resist. Moreover, the Bible teaches that each individual the Father calls to salvation is totally responsible for their own spiritual success or failure. See Phil. 2:12-16; Eph. 4:21-24; Rom. 12:1-2; 14:10-12; 2 Cor. 5:10.

Worship and service to the Sovereign God and his son, the Savior of mankind, is not a passive experience. The life of a person whom the Sovereign God calls to salvation must be one of growth toward spiritual maturity; therefore, God's children must continually and carefully weigh their attitudes, behaviors, beliefs, choices, and decisions against the empirical standards of righteousness set forth in the Bible. This must be done not only to become spiritually mature but also to have the knowledge needed to know how and when to wield their authority and power effectively in their struggle against evil in this world.

The apostle Peter sums up the attitude and behavior that anyone who is serious about their salvation must have in order to obtain eternal and immortal life in the Kingdom of God:

"For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile: Let him shun evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and pursue it. For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil" (1 Pet. 3:10-12 KJV).

Within his instructions to pray for a brother in the faith who is practicing things that are outside the bounds of proper behavior for a righteous person, John writes the following:
"If any man sees his brother sin a sin which is not to death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not to death. There is a sin to death: I do not say that he shall pray for it. All unrighteousness is sin and there is a sin that is not to death. We know that whoever is born of God does not sin; but he that is begotten of God keeps himself, and that wicked one does not touch him" (1.Jn.5:16-18 KJV Para.).

The English word keeps is translated from the Greek word tereo, which means in the context of verse 18, to guard (from loss or injury, properly, by keeping the eye upon). The English word touch is translated from the Greek word haptomai, which means in the context of verse 18, to attach oneself to, (i.e., to touch in many implied relations).

How do you protect yourself and prevent Satan or any other evil spirit from having an influence in your life? The Apostles James and Paul give the following advice to those who are serious about resisting all evil influence:

"Resist the devil, and he will flee from you" (Jms.4:7).

"Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret" (Eph.5:11-12 KJV).

Throughout the writings of the apostles, the instruction to be proactive in resisting evil in all its forms is shown to be the key to successfully defeating evil influences and maintaining your holiness.

In his letter to the elect at Ephesus, Paul gave them a long list of which attitudes and behaviors to cultivate and which attitudes and behaviors to discard. In the middle of this list, he says, "Neither give place to the devil" (Eph.4:27).

The English word place is translated from the Greek word topos, which seems to primarily mean a spot (general in space, but limited by occupancy); i.e., location (as a position, home, tract, etc.); figuratively, a condition or an opportunity.

In the context in which Paul's instruction is framed, he clearly shows that a person who is righteous should not allow attitudes or behaviors which are inconsistent with a righteous lifestyle to intrude into their life. Clearly, resisting and avoiding unrighteous attitudes and behaviors eliminates the devil's opportunity to influence a person.

After listing many unrighteous attitudes and behaviors to be avoided by the elect at Rome, Paul gave the following instruction and advice to those seeking to secure their salvation:

"The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light" (Rom.13:12 KJV).
Putting on the armor of light means to prepare to do battle against the forces of evil by having God's word firmly in your mind with the understanding and the faith that you have the authority and power to overcome evil.

WALKING WITH GOD AND RESISTING EVIL

In the following prophecy recorded by the prophet Amos about the Creator God's promised punishment of national Israel for their rebellion and failure to keep their agreement with him, the Creator asks them a question that is still relevant today for all who profess to follow the teachings of the Bible:

"Only you have I known out of all the families on earth; therefore I will punish you for your lawlessness. Can two walk together, except they are in agreement?" (Am.3:2-3 Para.).

The answer to the Creator's question is; no! two cannot walk together unless they are in agreement. In order to walk with God, (i.e., live in such a way that you have a harmonious relationship with him), you must live a righteous life of resistance to the evil that permeates this world.

In his letter to the saints at Rome, the apostle Paul wrote the following about the attitude a truly converted person who has the indwelling of the holy spirit, must have toward all evil:

"Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good" (Rom.12:9 KJV).

In verse 9, the English word abhor is translated from the Greek word apostugeo, which means to detest utterly. The English word cleave is translated from the Greek word kollao, which means to glue, i.e., (passively or reflexively) to stick.

An important point to consider is that Paul is speaking of evil which violates the precepts and principles of righteousness as set forth in the biblical record; he is not saying to detest the person committing the evil, but to detest the act of evil (i.e., all things that are in opposition to God's laws, precepts, and principles).

When dealing with Satan or any other evil spirit, passive resistance is no resistance at all. There can be no neutral response to evil. Either you accept evil into your life or you resist it. To not resist evil is tacit approval of evil.

For resistance against evil spirits to be effective, you must be armed with the proper knowledge and weapons which will enable you to successfully resist and thwart evil. Resistance must be well thought out and swiftly executed.

Along with the warning to beware of Satan because he is your enemy who must be resisted, the apostle Peter gave us a powerful key to preventing influence from Satan and other evil spirits:
"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walks about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world" (1.Pet.5:8-9 KJV).

Although Peter's warning is directed to the Sovereign Father's earthly family of king-priests, he says that these same dangers exist for everyone in the world (Greek: Kasmos). The reality is that the devil (i.e., Satan) will destroy any person, if given the opportunity. But, he especially wants to destroy those whom the Sovereign God has personally called to salvation during the gospel age of salvation.

To prevent Satan or any other evil spirit from having an opportunity to destroy you, resist evil and pay careful attention to how you conduct your life. Make sure your surroundings, your associations, and the various situations in which you find yourself do not place you in jeopardy of being influenced or controlled by Satan or other evil spirits.

In 1 Peter 5, verse 9, the English words resist, steadfast, and faith are translated from the Greek words anthistemi, stereos, and pistis, which respectively mean, to stand against (i.e., to oppose), be solid or stable, and persuasion (i.e., credence; moral conviction of religious truth).

In order to resist the devil as instructed by Peter, you must be well grounded in The Faith. This means that you must be diligently perusing a righteous lifestyle as set forth in the pages of the Bible. If you are well grounded in The Faith you will be able to resist the Devil and any other evil spirit or evil influence with the assurance that you have the spiritual authority and power to successfully protect yourself from being corrupted by evil.

After the apostle James lists a number of attitudes which are in opposition to righteousness, he notes that these attitudes are the result of the pulls of human nature and gives the following advice:

". . . Therefore he says, God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble. Therefore, submit yourselves to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double minded" (Jms.4:6-8 KJV Para.).

James sets forth the following seven extremely important principles to which you should pay close attention in order to successfully keep yourself from being influenced or controlled by Satan or other evil spirits:

1. God opposes a person who has an arrogant, superior, and disdainful attitude.
2. God is gracious toward a person who has a humble attitude.
3. A righteous person should live in obedience to God, which means practicing the Sovereign Father's truth and way of truth.
4. A righteous person must resist the Devil.
5. You must draw near to God if you want God to draw near to you.
6. Sin creates a barrier to a harmonious relationship with God; therefore, sin must be eliminated from your life.
7. A person who wants to have a harmonious relationship with God cannot vacillate between good and evil.

Be Proactive in Resisting Evil

Both Peter and James clearly make the point that proactive opposition to Satan is necessary in order to make him want to avoid contact with you. Proactive resistance is the opposite of acceptance.

Although knowing there are evil spirits who are intent on influencing, harming, controlling, or possessing the bodies of humans is extremely important, the most important thing to know is how to eliminate the possibility of being influenced or controlled by an evil spirit.

The absolute best way to make sure you do not become influenced, controlled, or possessed by an evil spirit is to be proactive in your resistance to evil and resolved to maintain your righteousness through drawing near to God and the way of life he has instituted for his holy children.

FIGHT TO WIN

At the end of the apostle Paul's warning to Timothy about avoiding the inordinate lusts for the physical things of this world and his encouragement to pursue righteousness, Paul tells Timothy: "Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereto you are also called, and have professed a good profession before many witnesses" (1.Tim.6:12 KJV).

In verse 12, the first instance of the English word Fight is translated from the Greek word agonizomai, which means to struggle, literally (to compete for a prize). The second time fight is used, it is translated from the Greek word agon, which means a place of assembly (as if led), i.e., (by implication) a contest.

There is nothing casual about Paul's instruction to lay hold on eternal life. Paul's exhortation to "Fight the good fight of faith" is in the context of a person engaged in a contest in which he or she must put forth an extreme effort to win.

Those called to salvation during the gospel age of salvation are in a struggle to overcome their old nature and keep themselves from being corrupted with the evils of this world; so that, they can obtain eternal and immortal life in the Kingdom of God. Winning this fight through faith in the promises of God the Father and Christ guarantees eternal and immortal life in the Kingdom of God. But, losing this fight of faith will lead to the second death in the lake of fire from which there is no return.
The Sovereign Father's earthly children must never forget that evil spirits present a powerful threat to our eternal destiny and that, if we are to overcome this threat, we must fight to win:

"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" (Eph. 6:12 KJV).

The existence of evil spirits was common knowledge to those who were called to salvation during the days of the early church. Paul explains to the Romans that no physical trial or evil spirit is strong enough to overcome the power of God in our life:

"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For your sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 8:35-39 KJV).

The reason nothing is able to separate a child of God from the love of the Father in Christ is that the love of the Father and Christ is within the child of God through the holy spirit dwelling in us and no outside force can break this bond.

Although a powerful adversary, no evil spirit can control an individual who truly believes and has faith in God the Father, Jesus Christ, and their promises, because that individual has the spiritual power available to them through the holy spirit to overcome all spirit adversaries.

CONFRONTATIONS WITH EVIL SPIRITS

Very few individuals have personal confrontations or conversations with Satan or evil spirits. However, if you do encounter an evil spirit (or an evil influence being projected by an evil spirit) and have prepared yourself to use the available protection and weapons, listed in the Bible, you should be more than able to do battle and be victorious.

No evil spirit is a match for those who believe in the promises of God the Father and Jesus Christ to protect those who trust in them. Evil spirits cannot be victorious over those who have been given and use the power and authority to overcome evil in all its forms.
An Offer of Power and Glory

"And the devil, taking him [Jesus] up to a high mountain, showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And the devil said to him, All this power will I give you, and the glory of them: for this is delivered to me; and to whomever I will give it. If you will worship me, all shall be yours" (Lk.4:5-8 KJV Para.).

Satan could make this offer because he is the god of this world. He has been in authority over this world from its creation and at the beginning of the Sovereign God's plan for humanity.

"And Jesus answered and said to him, You get behind me, Satan: for it is written, You shall worship the Lord your God, and him only shall you serve." (Lk.4:8 KJV Para.).

As a man having the indwelling of the holy spirit, Jesus exercises his prerogative to resist Satan's offer and refutes Satan's claim to be worthy of worship.

"And he brought him to Jerusalem, and set him on a pinnacle of the temple, and said to him, If you are the Son of God, cast yourself down from here: For it is written, He [the Sovereign God] shall give his angels charge over you, to keep you: And in their hands they shall bear you up, lest at any time you dash your foot against a stone. (Lk.4:9-11 KJV Para.).

Satan appeals to Jesus to prove that he truly is the prophesied Messiah, but Jesus knew who he was and the purpose for which the Sovereign God had sent him to earth—he had nothing to prove to Satan:

"And Jesus answered him and said, It is said, You shall not tempt the Lord your God. And when the devil had ended all the temptations, he departed from him for a season" (Lk.4:12-13 KJV Para.).

The account of Satan testing Jesus shows that the knowledge of God's truth and a proactive resistance to evil are keys to successfully defeating an evil spirit's attempt to influence you into violating God's law.

A Rebuke to Satan's Influence of Peter

The following event which occurred just before Jesus was betrayed into the hands of the Jewish religious leaders reveals that, when given an opportunity, Satan can and does influence people who are being led to salvation and are being dealt with on a personal level by the Sovereign God and Christ:

"Then he charged his disciples that they should not tell anyone that he was Jesus the Christ. From that time forward Jesus began to show his disciples, how he must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes and be killed and be raised again the third day" (Matt.16:20-21 KJV Para.).
After Jesus explains the events which must take place in order for him to fulfill his mission as the Messiah, Peter is influenced by Satan and begins to protest against what Jesus was about to do:

"Then Peter took him aside, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from you, Lord: this shall not happen to you. But he turned, and said to Peter, You get behind me, Satan: you are an offence to me: for you are not concerned with the things that are of God, but those that are of men" (Matt.16:22-23 KJV Para.).

What we see happening in verses 22-23 is Peter being influenced by Satan in an attempt to thwart the Sovereign God's plan for the salvation of mankind. This is why Jesus addresses his rebuke to Satan and tells him that what he (Jesus) is doing does not concern him (Satan). Jesus tells Satan that his concern is with those who are not being dealt with by his heavenly Father. In other words, Jesus told Satan to keep his nose out of things that do not concern him and stick to his own business.

There is no doubt that Peter had a deep respect and love for Jesus. However, Peter and most Jews of his day were expecting a Messiah who would deliver them from their physical bondage and restore national Israel as a world power. They were not looking for spiritual enlightenment or for the Messiah to come and sacrifice himself for the sins of humanity. Because Satan knew this, he used his power to project his thoughts and emotions into Peter's mind in order to influence him to attempt to prevent Jesus from the course of action that he was about to take.

Although Peter was selected to work with Jesus in proclaiming the Kingdom of God at that time and in the future, Peter did not have the holy spirit dwelling in him as a son of the Sovereign God's new creation; otherwise, Peter would not have been so easily influenced by Satan.

This account shows that if a person is not clear concerning God's will in a given situation, an evil spirit may take advantage of the situation and influence a person into thinking and doing things that are in opposition to God's will. Moreover, this account shows that a person with the indwelling of the holy spirit, like Jesus, has the authorization to forbid an evil spirit from interfering in the affairs of those with whom the Sovereign God is working.

Joshua the High Priest

At the end of this age and just a few short years before Christ returns, there will be a high priest in Jerusalem and another individual who will be given great power and authority to perform awesome supernatural works and provide a warning to mankind to repent of their evil ways; so that, they can escape the wrath of God which will be coming on all the earth and its inhabitants:
"And he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to accuse him. And the Lord [Christ] said to Satan, The Lord [Sovereign God] rebuke you Satan; even the Lord that has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?" (Zech. 3:1-2 KJV Para.).

Satan knows that this high priest is a sinner and does not want him to repent and be forgiven of his sins, become righteous, and to fulfill the destiny for which God has chosen him. Christ who was the Creator God reprimands Satan through the authority of the Sovereign God of all that exists, thereby rendering Satan’s accusations ineffective. For a full explanation of the angel of the Lord mentioned in Zechariah 3:1, see chapter 4 of this study.

Harassment by an Evil Spirit

The account of the apostle Paul and others who ministered with him being harassed by a young woman who was possessed by an evil spirit shows that those with God's spirit do not have to tolerate such harassment:

"Once when we were going to the place of prayer, we were met by a slave girl who had a spirit by which she predicted the future. She earned a great deal of money for her owners by fortune-telling. This girl followed Paul and the rest of us, shouting, "These men are servants of the Most High God, who are telling you the way to be saved." She kept this up for many days. Finally Paul became so troubled that he turned around and said to the spirit, "In the name of Jesus Christ I command you to come out of her!" At that moment the spirit left her" (Acts 16:16-18 NIV).

Besides showing that we are not required to abide harassment by evil spirits, this account tells us the following five things:

1. Evil spirits recognize the servants of the true God.
2. Some evil spirits will harass the elect until they are removed from the person whom they are controlling and possessing.
3. Authority to remove evil spirits comes through Christ.
4. Paul was able to speak directly to the evil spirit.
5. Evil spirits must comply with the legitimate demands of true servants of God the Father and Christ.

Encounters with Evil Spirits

The following are a number of encounters with evil spirits of which I have personal knowledge. These encounters demonstrate that a person does not have to tolerate an intrusion into their life by an evil spirit. These encounters also show that, when the proper action is taken, evil spirits must cease the course of action in which they are engaged.
A College Student Resists Evil

A college student related to me the following encounter he had with an evil spirit who threatened to kill him:

"It was a pretty typical day for me at S.J.S.U. I was trying to get my homework done between classes. The weather was nice and I decided to study in the quad area near the student union.

There were some people milling about in the amphitheater, and sitting here and there were a few groups of students.

One group of students stood out to me as I sat reading an article. They appeared to be mentally disabled, but that was not what stood out. It was one of the students in particular that I got a cold feeling from. He seemed to have zeroed in on me and his eyes and stare were cold. I had a cold feeling come across me, one I felt as a child before—a feeling of pure evil. All of a sudden he seemed to realize I had picked up on this and he immediately came over to me and said he was going to kill me.

I can't remember everything he said, but when he said he was going to kill me it was as if someone else was saying it. I then in my mind, rebuked the individual by saying my Master and Savior is greater than yours. Leave me alone. It was amazing. As soon as I finished my thought, he wandered off to rejoin his group."

In this account, a demon recognized a person under God's protection and attempted to frighten him, not knowing that this young man had been taught as a child to resist evil and clearly understood that God is far more powerful than anything he has created. When challenged with a superior authority and power, this demon released his control over the individual.

A Ouija Board and a Demon

A gentleman who had researched a number of biblical topics for me telephoned to ask my advice about a frightening situation stemming from his use of a ouija board. He told me that he and his friends were asking questions and getting answers using the board, but decided it was time to stop playing with it. However, the board would not let them stop. When they asked the board if they could stop, it told them "No."

I advised him to throw the board into the fireplace and burn it. He telephoned later to tell me that he had followed my advice and thrown the board into the fireplace, and that he and his friends had left the house for a short time. But, when they returned and entered the room where they had been using the ouija board, the room was in a shambles and the Bible they kept in the room was now stuck to the wall with the fireplace poker.

Evil spirits are powerful and can be vindictive when they do not get their way. This is yet another reason to never initiate or encourage communication with evil spirits by using seemingly innocent games which have spiritual overtones. These type of games can be used as a tool by evil spirits to influence or posses unsuspecting or careless individuals.
Three Faces of Evil

An elderly lady who attended the same congregation as I told me that, as she was praying beside her bed, three men's faces appeared to her in the room. When she told me the names of the men represented by the faces, I explained to her that these were evil spirits manifesting themselves in the form of actual people. Through discernment, it was obvious to me that these three men were either possessed or highly influenced by evil spirits.

I explained to her how to protect herself from this kind of intrusion. She took my advice and was no longer bothered by these evil spirits.

It was later discovered that these three men had been secretly working to discredit the congregation's leadership, initiate controversy, and generally undermine the congregational unity in order to destroy the congregation and draw a following to themselves.

Grandson and the Neighbor's Boy

When one of my grandsons, who was about six years old at the time, was living with us, he would often play outside with a neighbor's boy who was about the same age. One day, I was outside watching them play and the neighbor's boy began behaving badly, so I told him to stop and reprimanded him for his bad behavior. To this, he replied with the threat that he would get his "big guy" to take care of me. The boy's words seemed rather strange to me, because I was a bit taller and bigger than his step-father, so I wondered who this "big guy" could be.

I related the boy's odd behavior and strange threat to a brother in the faith who had the ability to determine if the boy was influenced by an evil spirit. He told me that the boy was possessed by a evil spirit and that the "big guy" he referred to was a demon, who had once possessed a large man who was boxer.

Upon learning this, I decided to prevent the demon from harming my grandson through the neighbor's boy and ordered the demon to never be present when my grandson played with the neighbor's boy. After this, the boy always acted like a normal child whenever he was around my grandson.

The biblical examples, the encounters, and the experiences of individuals in this age with evil spirits clearly show that evil spirits only have the power and authority to influence people who are receptive to their influence, and that taking decisive action will end any problem with evil spirits, because once they are challenged by a superior authority and given a legitimate command, they must comply.
A Time Wasting Demon

The most precious possession humans have is their life. The extent of a person's physical life is expressed in time, which is a finite amount of hours, days, months, and years between their birth and their death. Once time has passed, it cannot be recovered; it is gone forever. This is why there are many scriptures which encourage those who are serious about their salvation to use their time wisely. See Psa.90:12; Eph.5:14-17.

Most people must work many hours to supply the necessities of life, such as food, shelter, and clothing, and they have precious few hours left for family life, worship, study, service, and rest.

Evil spirits are eternal and have no need to sustain their existence, because their life is sustained by the Sovereign God's power. Time has no meaning to them, because they are not constrained by time, which only pertains to the physical existence. Because evil spirits hate humans and would kill all of them if they were allowed, the next best thing for some demons is to harm humans by causing them to waste their most precious possession (their life) by using up their time.

One afternoon, a friend called and said that a radio host whom she did not know and had no previous contact had telephoned her and struck up a conversation about some supposedly mutual acquaintances. She said that this man called several times and talked for extended periods of time and knew details about people, places, and events in her life that he should not have known. My friend was puzzled as to why this man would want to call a perfect stranger and engage in long conversations.

I told her I did not know the individual and had no idea why he was calling her. Shortly after our conversation, the same man telephoned me one evening and rambled on and on. It seemed that, every time I would begin to think about a person or an event he would soon engage me in that subject. As the conversation continued, this happened more frequently and the thought occurred to me that this man was possessed by a time wasting demon. Immediately after this thought had cleared my mind, he loudly exclaimed in a surprised tone, "gotta go." These words ended our conversation and neither my friend nor I ever heard from this man again.

My conclusion was that this man was possessed by a time wasting demon, which had the ability to read a person's thoughts in order to waste their time by engaging them in lengthy, frivolous conversations in an attempt to distract them from doing God's will in their lives. If allowed, such a demon will attempt to waste your time and cause division by instigating gossip and controversy.
There are many warnings by the apostles not to waste your time engaging in frivolous conversations that are not constructive and can lead to gossip, controversy, and division. These warnings clearly apply in our age, especially because so many people are influenced or possessed by evil spirits. See Eph. 5:6; 1 Tim. 1:4-6, 6:20-21; Titus 3:8-10. Being a courteous listener is one thing, but being duped by an evil spirit into wasting your precious time in meaningless conversation is very different and should not be tolerated.

Projected Influence

One Sabbath, while I was speaking before the congregation, I suddenly felt an intense and disturbing presence in the room and noticed a woman quietly entering the back of the meeting room. At that same instant, I noticed an elder abruptly turn to look toward the back of the room. After the worship service had ended, I ask the elder if he had also felt the presence, and he told me that he too had felt it, which is why he turned to see what it was and noticed the woman who had just entered the room.

This event was disturbing, because we had previously forbidden evil spirits from entering our congregational meetings, but we clearly understood that the presence we felt as the woman entered the room was evil. As we discussed this matter, it became apparent that either God had invalidated our command forbidding evil spirits to enter our congregational meetings or the command we gave was lacking an important piece of information.

Understanding that evil spirits only obey the letter of the law and will seek to circumvent commands which are not carefully thought out and inclusive, we found that we had neglected to also forbid evil spirits from projecting their influence into our congregational meeting through individuals under their control. Once we issued this command, this type of encounter never occurred again.

SUMMARY

Do Not Fear Evil Spirits

A person with the indwelling of the holy spirit has no reason to fear Satan or any other evil spirit because the Sovereign Father only calls people to salvation during the gospel age whom he knows have the ability to succeed when given the tools for success.

While encouraging Timothy, the apostle Paul mentions three spiritual gifts, which a person is provided at the moment they receive the indwelling of the Father's holy spirit:

"Therefore, I put you in remembrance that you stir up the gift of God, which is in you by the putting on of my hands. For God has not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind [i.e., self-control]" (2 Tim. 1:6-7 KJV Para.).
Verse 7 tells us several things about the spiritual make-up of the Father's newly adopted children.

The English word fear is translated from the Greek word deilia, which means timidity. (i.e., the characteristic of being fearful).

Christ warns that a person who becomes spiritually fearful and timid will not be in his Father's kingdom (Rev.21:7-8). Therefore, it is important to know that this negative characteristic (i.e., emotion) of timidity and fearfulness is absent in those whom the Father places his holy spirit into at their adoption into his family, otherwise one's chance of success would be constantly hampered by this negative emotion.

The English word power in verse 7, is translated from the Greek word dunamis, which especially means miraculous power (usually by implication, a miracle itself). This is the very power through which all things in the spiritual and physical realms were and are created and maintained. A person with the authority to wield this kind of awesome power has nothing to fear from Satan or any other evil spirit.

Also in verse 7, the English phrase sound mind is translated from the Greek word sophronismos, which is derived from the word sophronizo, which means to discipline or correct. Sophronismos, basically means self-control.

Once you have the gift of a spiritually sound mind (i.e., you are in control of yourself) and learn how to use the spiritual tools available to you, as well as the awesome authority and power which resides within you, all you have to do to resist an evil influence or thwart an attack of Satan or any other evil spirit is to properly exercise your authority and power.

Ask for Knowledge and Understanding

God the Father and Jesus Christ have an intense desire for those who are called to salvation to succeed in becoming immortal beings in the Kingdom God. Therefore, powerful spiritual tools have been provided to help those who are called to be successful in overcoming their old nature, becoming spiritually mature, and resisting evil influence and thwarting the attacks of evil spirits.

The apostle John gives the following encouragement regarding the Father's attentiveness to our needs and the confidence that we should have in asking him for help:

"This is the confidence we have in making requests of the Father. If we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us, we know that he will give us what we request of him" (1.Jn.5:14-15 Para).
Is it the Father's will that you successfully resist evil and be victorious in your battle against evil spirits? Absolutely, it is his will. Therefore, you should take full advantage of the Father's desire for your success and heed the following advice of Christ:

"And I say to you, ask and It shall be given you: seek and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you. For everyone that asks receives; and he that seeks finds; and to him that knocks it shall be opened" (Matt.7:7-8; Lk.11:9-10 Para.).

Here, Jesus reveals the keys which guarantee the Father will fulfill our legitimate requests. You must put forth the effort to request that the Father give you the things contained in his promises. Immediately following the promise to give to those who ask, seek, and knock, both Matthew and Luke record Jesus' explanation of what will be given through this promise:

"Is there a father that will give his son a stone, when his son asks for bread? If a son shall ask bread of you who is a father, will you give him a stone? or if he asks for a fish, will his father give him a serpent? Or if he shall ask an egg, will his father offer him a scorpion?" (Matt.7:9-10; Lk.11:11-12 Para.).

When asked for food, will a father who truly loves his child give them harmful things instead of the food that they need to sustain their life? Of course not! If it is within his power to do so, a loving father will give what is needed and more:

"If you being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the holy spirit and good things to them that ask him" (Matt.7:11; Lk.11:13). See also Jn.14:13-14, 15:7.

The Father is more than willing to give his children the good things which will help them grow toward spiritual maturity. And he is more than willing to protect us from evil spirits if we will ask for his help and are willing to do our part in resisting evil (See Jms.4:6-8).

The writer to the Hebrews wrote the following, which should give anyone who is serious about their salvation great confidence in their heavenly Father and their Savior's willingness to help in situations concerning their effort to succeeded in their calling to salvation:

"Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do. Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need" (Heb.4:13-16 KJV).
The key to acquiring the necessary tools, knowledge, and understanding to resist an evil influence and do battle with evil spirits is to sincerely ask the Father for the tools, knowledge, and understanding. Then, put forth the required effort through study and meditation in the Bible to become familiar with the tools, knowledge, and understanding provided and how to effectively use them.

**Education**

Although our heavenly Father has provided the spiritually immature person in the faith a certain amount of protection from evil spirits, the expectation of the Father and Christ is that a person will grow toward spiritual maturity and learn how to exercise the authority and power which resides within them in order to remain free of evil influence. The writer to the Hebrews wrote the following about the necessity to grow spiritually and to discern between good and evil:

"For every one that uses milk is unskillful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongs to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil" (Heb.5:13-14 KJV).

Long ago, God inspired the prophet Isaiah to reveal one of the keys to discovering and understanding the many secrets hidden within the scriptures, which includes how to resist and defeat Satan and other evil spirits:

"Whom shall he teach knowledge? and whom shall he make to understand doctrine? them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts. For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little:" (Isa.28:9-10 KJV).

Just as there is a physical growth process from infancy to adulthood, there is a spiritual growth process in the acquisition of spiritual knowledge and understanding. The more you learn and practice what you have learned, the more spiritually skillful and mature you become and the more spiritual knowledge and understanding that can be added to what you already know and understand.

After acquiring a basic understanding of God and his way of life, you can progress toward gaining knowledge and understanding into his more complex teachings. However, to do this, you must be willing to spend time and effort in diligently studying God's word and meditating on what you find there.

**Recognizing Good and Evil**

In order to avoid an evil influence or thwart an attack by an evil spirit, you must first recognize the threat. In order to recognize a threat, you must first know the difference between good and evil.
Although people in general inherently know, to a certain degree, what is right and wrong in attitude and behavior, all people do not know and understand the biblical definition of right and wrong and good and evil. This is the knowledge and understanding which enables us to recognize spiritual evil. The apostle Paul said the following about those with spiritual discernment:

"But the spiritual one discerns all things, but he is discerned by no one. For who knew the mind of the Lord? Who will teach him? But we have the mind of Christ" (1.Cor.2:15-16 Para.).

A truly converted person with the indwelling of the holy spirit has the ability to recognize spiritual things (1.Cor.2:11-12). It is important to understand that this ability must be constantly exercised in your daily life or it will become dormant.

We must exercise and improve spiritual discernment because recognizing evil spirits, evil people, and unrighteous attitudes, behaviors, and situations alerts us to the fact that righteous judgement must be exercised and the appropriate action must be taken in order to thwart evil and maintain our righteousness.

Resisting evil in all its various forms is the perfect strategy for defeating an evil influence or being victorious in a confrontation with an evil spirit. If diligently practiced, resistance guarantees success as noted by the apostle James when he wrote: "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you" (Jms.4:7).

By B.L. Cocherell

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CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

PEOPLE, PLACES, AND THINGS TO AVOID

Most people go about their daily lives oblivious to the existence of the millions (and perhaps billions) of extremely evil and dangerous spirit-beings that have access to this world. Therefore, most people have little or no idea of how to avoid them and remain free of their influence, control, or possession.

As the world in general becomes increasingly evil in attitude and behavior, it becomes more important to be aware of people, places, and things to avoid; so that, you do not place yourself in circumstances where there are evil influences.

Resisting and avoiding evil are life choices; either you choose to resist and avoid evil or you choose not to. For an evil spirit to influence, control, or inhabit a person's body, an evil spirit must be given an opportunity through either circumstances beyond a person's control or an open invitation. An open invitation is granted when a person is a willing participant in activities conducive to demonic influence and control, or when someone willingly use or possess items through which an evil spirit can manifest its influence.

In order to be proactive in resisting and avoiding evil, you must distance yourself as much as possible from people, things, and activities that are not conducive to righteousness. Moreover, you should be careful not to consciously tolerate, inadvertently entertain, or participate in evil or unrighteous behavior. This chapter contains what I believe to be the kinds of people, places, and things which should be avoided in order to minimize the opportunities available to evil spirits in their attempt to influence, control, or posses a person.

RELIGIONS DECEPTION

According to the Bible, there are only two religions on earth: The Sovereign God's and Satan's. Therefore, a religious worship system or a religious philosophy of behavior is either guided and regulated by the Sovereign God's laws, precepts, and principles or it is guided or influenced by Satan or other evil spirits.

Because a major source of deception by evil spirits is religion and religious philosophies and practices, any religion, philosophy, or practice in opposition to the Sovereign God's laws, precepts, and principles must be avoided in order to protect yourself from evil influence, control, or possession.
Today, there are thousands of differing professing Christian churches ranging from one extreme to another. There are small personal groups, to arena sized congregations. Some offer a quiet, scholarly intellectual atmosphere, while others offer the noisy frenzy of Pentecostalism. One may choose an ornate cathedral or a humble outdoor tent in which to worship.

There seems to be no end to the choices a person has when seeking a religious experience. However, it is the responsibility of each person who has the Father's holy spirit dwelling within them to carefully study the Bible in order to make informed decisions about whom to put their trust in concerning spiritual matters, especially when we consider the following warning from Christ:

"Not every one that says to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but only the ones doing the will of my Father in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name cast out demons, and in your name do many works of power? And I will tell them, I never knew you; depart from me you who practice lawlessness!" (Matt. 7: 21-23 Para.). See also Matt.15:3-9; Lk.6:46-49.

Miracles, wonderful works, or the ability to preach, teach, and cast out demons are not necessarily the credentials of a converted mind or a righteous person. Many spiritual leaders who profess to believe in the God of the Bible do supernatural works and are dynamic, charismatic preachers and teachers, but they teach things which are in opposition to the Sovereign Father's truth—their words and works teach lawlessness. See 2.Cor.11:13-15.

Many charismatic preachers who claim to follow Christ and teach the good news message use the casting out of demons, physical healing, and speaking in tongues as entertainment and a way to draw crowds. These types of exhibitions have no biblical basis or support and can, in fact, lead to the demonic influence, control, or possession of the participants. Anyone who has viewed and researched these types of religious exhibitions in the light of the biblical record will readily come to the conclusion that these events are pure entertainment and contain little, if any, truth or substance. See Matt.7:15-23.

**Associating with Evil**

God's law not only strictly prohibits the worship of other gods but also a close association with individuals practicing forbidden religions and philosophies, as well as the possession and use of their forbidden religious objects. The Creator God instructed national Israel to destroy implements of religious practices which were in opposition to his worship system:
"Obey what I command you today. I will drive out before you the Amorites, Canaanites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites. Be careful not to make a treaty with those who live in the land where you are going, or they will be a snare among you. Break down their altars, smash their sacred stones and cut down their Asherah poles. Do not worship any other god, for the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God" (Ex.34:11-14 NIV).

Ancient Israel was prohibited from practicing or tolerating any other religions and were to distance themselves from these religions by purging all objects of worship they found in the land that they were to occupy.

"Be careful not to make a treaty with those who live in the land; for when they prostitute themselves to their gods and sacrifice to them, they will invite you and you will eat their sacrifices. And when you choose some of their daughters as wives for your sons and those daughters prostitute themselves to their gods, they will lead your sons to do the same" (Ex.34:15-16 NIV). See also Deut.7:1-6; 12:1-4.

Solomon and Ancient Israel

Despite God's warnings, King Solomon who the biblical record says was given wisdom above all other men, allowed himself to be influenced by his many wives into thinking he could worship and serve the Creator God while catering to his wives' desires to worship their idols and gods. This false assumption led Solomon to forsake his allegiance to the Creator God who had personally appeared to him twice and resulted in the destruction of national Israel as a unified nation:

"But king Solomon loved many strange women, together with the daughter of Pharaoh, women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Zidonians, and Hittites; of the nations concerning which the Lord said to the children of Israel, You shall not go in to them, neither shall they come in to you: for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods: Solomon clung to these in love" (1.Kgs.11:1-2 KJV).

If you are serious about worshiping and serving the Sovereign God and his son, the Savior of mankind, you cannot participate in other religions or have a close association with them or the things pertaining to these religions.

"And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines: and his wives turned away his heart. For it came to pass, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods: and his heart was not perfect with the Lord his God, as was the heart of David his father. For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites" (1.Kgs.11:3-5 KJV).
Solomon's first mistake was having wives forbidden to him under God's law. But, his greatest mistake was allowing himself to become accustomed and familiar with his wives' religions to the point that he began to practice and perpetuate these forbidden religions in Israel.

"And Solomon did evil in the sight of the Lord, and went not fully after the Lord, as did David his father. Then did Solomon build an high place for Chemosh, the abomination of Moab, in the hill that is before Jerusalem, and for Molech, the abomination of the children of Ammon. And likewise did he for all his strange wives, which burnt incense and sacrificed to their gods" (1.Kgs.11:6-8 KJV).

Solomon's violation of God's law and his acceptance of his wives' religions, religious structures, and related objects of worship into Israel led him away from God.

"And the Lord was angry with Solomon, because his heart was turned from the Lord God of Israel, which had appeared to him twice, And had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods: but he kept not that which the Lord commanded" (1.Kgs.11:9-10 KJV).

After Solomon's death, the nation of Israel was broken into two distinct nations. Throughout the histories of these two nations, only a few of their kings obeyed God's law. Most flagrantly violated God's law about the practice and close association with forbidden religions and philosophies. See 2.Chron.14:2-4; 1.Kgs.14:21-24.

The history of ancient Israel clearly shows that nations and individuals cannot have a close association with forbidden philosophies, religions, and prohibited religious objects and continue to have a harmonious relationship with the God of the Bible.

If you believe the apostle Paul's warnings to the elect at Corinth about associating with other religions, Satan's ministers, and their teachings, you must also believe that the majority of professing Christian religions are influenced by evil spirits, because most practice things which are in opposition to easily understood biblical concepts and principles:

"What say I then? That the idol is anything, or that which is offered in sacrifice to idols is anything? But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that you should have fellowship with devils. You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of devils: you cannot be partakers of the Lords table, and of the table of devils" (1.Cor.10:19-21 KJV).
The English word *fellowship* in verse 20 is translated from the Greek word *koinonos*, which does not mean *friendship*; it means *to have a close association*. A large part of the question being discussed by Paul in chapter 10 pertains to how close an association the Sovereign God's elect can have with a religion which is in opposition to his worship system and still maintain a righteous attitude and good relationship with God. Paul answers this question in verse 23:

"I can do all things that are lawful; however, doing these things is not always expedient: Although I can do all the things that are lawful, doing all these things is not always constructive" (1.Cor.10:23 Para.).

Paul was addressing the problem of eating things sacrificed to idols; however, the principle of avoiding a close association with any religion other that the Sovereign God's is clear. Paul also wrote, "Abstain from all appearance of evil" (1.Thess.5:22). Surely, this would include avoiding participating in religions, religious practices, and religious associations which are in opposition to the Sovereign God's worship system as Paul noted in his second letter to the elect at Corinth:

"Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said: I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people. Therefore come out from them and be separate, says the Lord. Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you. I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty." (2.Cor.6:14-18 NIV). See also 2.Cor.11:3-4,13-15; Gal.1:6-9; Deut.13:1-5; Jer.23:21-22; Rev.18:1-5.

**FORBIDDEN PRACTICES**

The practice of communicating and interacting with the dark side of the spirit dimension for any purpose other than what is permitted by God is strictly forbidden. The following are some of the instructions to ancient Israel about communication and interaction with the dark side of the spirit world:

"When you come into the land which the Lord your God is giving you, you shall not learn or do the hateful acts of those nations. There shall not be found among you one that passes his son or daughter through the fire, or a person that uses divination, or an observer of clouds, or a fortune-teller, or a whisperer of spells, or a magic-charmer, or a person who communicates with and questions evil spirits, or a wizard, or a person that communicates with and questions the dead. (Deut.18:9-11 KJV Para.).
All of these various forms of interacting with the spirit realm and evil spirits are strictly forbidden and strongly condemned by the God of the Bible. The practice of communicating and interacting with evil spirits draws people away from truth and into error:

"For all doing these things are an abomination to the Lord your God and because of these abominations the Lord your God drives them out from before you. You shall be perfect with the Lord your God. For these nations, which you shall dispossess, listen to observers of times, and to diviners: but as for you, the Lord your God does not allow you to do so" (Deut.18:12-14 KJV Para.).

"You shall not inquire of those who are possessed of evil spirits; and you shall not seek after spiritualists and become defiled by them; I am the Lord your God" (Lev.19:31 KJV Para.). See also 2.Chron. 33:1-25; Isa.8:19-20.

"The person who inquires of people possessed with evil spirits, or inquires of a spiritualist, and seek them as one seeks a whore to forniciate with them, I shall set my face against that person, and cut him off from the midst of his people" (Lev.20:6 KJV Para.).

Witchcraft and Mystical Arts

There are many different and competing forms of witchcraft and other mystical arts. On the surface, some seem to be benign, providing seemingly beneficial results, while others are easily recognized as evil, with the capability of causing great harm.

The vast majority of professing Christians who casually practice witchcraft and other mystical arts do not understand they are interacting with extremely dangerous powers and spirit-beings whose goal is to destroy mankind. The Creator God considered the practice of witchcraft and mystical arts capital crimes and gave the following instructions to ancient Israel:

"You shall not allow a sorceress to live" (Ex.22:18 KJV Para.).

"A man also or woman that has a familiar spirit, or that is a wizard, shall surely be put to death: they shall stone them with stones: their blood shall be upon them" (Lev.20:27 KJV).

Throughout history, there have been people who have discovered how to use the existence of unseen physical and spiritual power to gain knowledge and insight or to affect the natural and supernatural existence. An account in the Book of Acts shows that during the beginnings of the early church, the Sovereign Father called some individuals to salvation who had once used their knowledge of the physical and spiritual dimensions of existence for the wrong purposes, but they destroyed the books which held this knowledge after they understood their error:
"And this was known to all the Jews and Greeks also dwelling at Ephesus; and fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified. And many that believed came, and confessed, and showed their deeds. Many of them also which used curious arts brought their books together, and burned them before all men: and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver. So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed" (Acts 19:17-20 KJV).

The context of Acts 19:17-20 shows the apostle Paul working many miracles and exhibiting greater supernatural power than that of the practitioners of mystical arts. Because Paul could demonstrate that his power was not magic and was greater than those who practiced the mystical arts, many believed Paul's message and abandoned their practice of magic and mystical arts.

There is a huge difference between the supernatural works performed by the servants of the Sovereign God, works of natural science, and that which is considered magical and mystical. The magical and mystical are to be avoided because their results are accomplished through an interaction with evil spirits.

**INSIGHT AND POWER THROUGH OBJECTS**

Many people seek to gain knowledge, insight, or access to spirit-energy and power through the use of physical objects, such as taro cards, ouija boards, pendulums, crystals, animal intestines, potions, tea leaves, graphic and geometric designs and symbols, amulets, and more.

The Creator God communicated with the Levitical priesthood and certain other individuals through the ephod, breastplate, urim, thummin, and teraphim. He also communicated through the use of lots in order to answer questions put to him and to give knowledge, insight, understanding, and instructions to the Israelites. The apostles also made use of lots to determine who would replace Judas. Moreover, the biblical record reveals that not everyone was authorized to use these devices, which were only to be used specifically to communicate with God under the conditions he set forth for their use. See chapter 24 for information about sanctioned objects and their use.

The biblical record shows that spirit power and energy can be accessed and transmitted through objects to affect the physical realm, and whatever God authorizes for use by those who represent him must be used to advance his plan and purpose on earth. However, using objects and rituals which are the product of evil spirits to access the spirit realm, is strictly forbidden by God and is considered by him to be a capital crime, punishable by death. See Lev.20:6, 27; Deut.18:9-14.

The following are several biblical references recording the use of objects through which supernatural works were performed, knowledge was gained, and people were deceived.
Before Christ

Moses and Aaron were authorized to use their staffs as objects through which many supernatural wonders were to be performed in order to carry-out their responsibilities. See Exodus, chapters 4 through 14.

Both of the prophets Elijah and Elisha used Elijah's robe, which seemed to be symbolic of a prophet's authority, to access and use spirit-energy to part the waters of the Jordan river, so they could cross over it. See 2.Kgs.2:8-14.

Elisha caused a single pot of oil to continuously produce more oil as a blessing for a widow who was so destitute that her creditors were about to take two sons as indentured servants in order to satisfy her debt. (2 Kings 4:1-7). See also 1.Kgs.17:13-16.

During Christ's Ministry

On one occasion, Jesus used physical objects as a part of the process through which he performed a miraculous healing using spirit power and energy:

"As he went along, he saw a man who was blind from birth. His disciples asked him, "Teacher, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind? "Neither this man nor his parents sinned," said Jesus, "but this happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life. As long as it is day, I must do the work of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work. While I am in the world, I am the light of the world." Having said this, he spit on the ground, made some mud with saliva, and put it on the man's eyes. "Go," he told him, "wash in the Pool of Siloam." So the man went and washed, and came seeing." (Jn.9:1-7 NIV Para.). See also Matt.14:14-21.

During the Gospel Age

Miracles performed by the apostle Paul document that power and energy from the spirit realm can be projected through objects:

"And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul: So that from his body were brought to the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them" (Acts 19:11-12 KJV).

These miracles performed by the apostle Paul reveal the following important things about his contact with the spirit realm:

• The spirit-power to perform these miracles came from God.
• Contact with the spirit realm and its spirit-power came through the use of a physical object.
Perhaps, the spirit-power to perform these miracles was transmitted through these objects or they were necessary to initiate the flow of spirit-energy to perform the miracle. It may also be that these objects were symbolic of the miracle to follow.

In addition to the special miracles God allowed Paul to perform, the early church was instructed by the apostle James in the method through which sick individuals within the congregations of the elect were to be healed. Notice that this method incorporated the use of prayer in conjunction with an anointing oil:

"Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him" (Jms.5:14-15 KJV).

Praying for individuals and anointing them with oil for healing is still practiced within many congregations with varying degrees of success.

Judas' Replacement

After Christ's resurrection and the death of Judas who betrayed him, the remaining eleven disciples were together with over a hundred other followers of Christ. During this meeting Peter, stood up and explained that, according to the prophecy in Psalms (Psa.109), a replacement for Judas must be chosen:

"For it is written in the book of Psalms, Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein: and his office let another take. Therefore, of these men which have associated with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, Beginning from the baptism of John, to that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection. And they appointed two, Joseph called Barsabas, who was sur-named Justus, and Matthias. And they prayed, and said, You, Lord, who know the hearts of all men, show which of these two you have chosen, That he may take part of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place. And they gave forth their lots; and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles" (Acts 1:20-26 KJV Para.).

Notice that it was through the use of lots that a replacement for Judas was chosen. It would have been extremely presumptuous of these men to use lots to choose a replacement for Judas if they had not been authorized to do so. Because they knew they were authorized to use this method, they had the confidence that their answer would come from the Sovereign God through Christ.
The Image of the Beast

In the Book of Revelation, there is a prophecy which seems to be speaking of the leader of a state religion, which is in opposition to the Sovereign God and Christ. This leader has tremendous supernatural power used to deceive people and to discredit the supernatural works done by the Sovereign God's earthly children as they proclaim the good news message of the Kingdom of God and Christ's return:

"And it does great signs and even makes fire to come down out of heaven upon the earth before men. And it deceives those dwelling on the earth, because of the signs which were given to it before the beast; Saying to those on the earth to make an image of the beast who has the wound of the sword and lived. And it was given to it to give a spirit to the image of the Beast, so that the image of the beast could speak, and might cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed" (Rev.13:13-15 Para.).

This religious leader will issue an edict for those under the control of the Beast to make an image of the Beast for the purpose of worshiping it. It is through his supernatural power that this religious leader will make the image a conduit for an evil spirit or spirits, which will speak through it and cause the death of anyone who will not worship the Beast through this image.

EVIL MANIFESTATIONS THROUGH OBJECTS

Today, many people display pictures, statues, fetishes, graphic designs, and other religious objects in their homes or businesses. On the surface, such things may seem harmless; however, some of these objects and designs are extremely dangerous to a person's well-being, because they were designed to act as gateways or conduits through which the spirit realm can be accessed and evil spirits and their influence can enter this physical realm.

The following two accounts, of which I have personal knowledge, demonstrate the dangers associated with possessing certain objects:

A Loss of Vision

One day, I received a telephone call from a minister with whom I was working. He said that, for no apparent reason, his vision had suddenly begun to rapidly fail after receiving a letter from a former associate. The letter explained the man had started practicing an ancient religion, focused on spiritual exercises enabling practitioners to experience what its followers call "the Light and Sound of God."

Suspecting that he was under attack by a demon, I consulted with another minister who was knowledgeable about the dangers of the occult and the ability of some evil spirits to focus energy through physical objects in order to harm people. Our conclusion was that the letter contained some type of hidden geometric design or symbol through which the demon was causing the vision loss. Once this was known and
the appropriate action was taken, the minister's vision returned to normal.

**A Magazine and a Face**

A woman came to me telling me that she was seeing a face appear in her bedroom, which made her feel uneasy and frightened. Because I knew that she was a person of good character who would not knowingly violate God's laws, precepts, and principles, I asked her if she had brought anything new into her room. The only thing that she could think of was a book with strange symbols in it. I told her to remove the book and rebuke any evil that may have come along with the book. Once she did this, the problem was resolved.

This was a case of a person inadvertently coming into possession of a book, which an evil spirit had influenced someone to publish with geometric symbols that could be used as a gateway through which an evil spirit could manifest itself to unsuspecting people.

**Contact with the Spirit Realm**

There are many objects, methods, and techniques through which contact can be made with the spirit realm. However, regardless of which is used, all except those specifically set forth by the God of the Bible to be used for his purpose are strictly forbidden and must not be used if a person wants to avoid the possibility of an interaction with an evil spirit.

Likewise, the possession or use of charms, chants, oils, amulets, spells, fetishes, words, potions, geometric designs and symbols, hand gestures, clothing, and any other objects or rituals designed to gain knowledge, insight, or access to spirit-energy and power is strictly forbidden in God's law and must be avoided if you do not want to provide evil spirits with an opportunity to interact with you.

**EMOTIONS, ATTITUDES, AND BEHAVIORS**

Mankind was created with a whole range of emotions which can easily, if not controlled, adversely impact our attitude and behavior. Because our emotions are difficult to control, we sometimes find ourselves in situations which are in opposition to manifesting godly character and are inconsistent with the righteous lifestyle set forth in the Bible.

Although there are countless situations which can present themselves to a person, the following are specifically noted by the apostle Paul as situations that, if not dealt with in a righteous manner, can provide an opportunity for an evil spirit to attempt to influence a person.

**Husbands, Wives, and Sexual Relations**

Paul warns husbands and wives not to defraud each other sexually, because this act has the potential to allow Satan to influence a person into thinking and doing things that are not consistent with a righteous attitude and behavior:
"The man should give his wife all that is her right as a married woman, and the wife should do the same for her husband: for a girl who marries no longer has full right to her own body, for her husband then has his rights to it, too; and in the same way the husband no longer has full right to his own body, for it belongs also to his wife. So do not refuse these rights to each other. The only exception to this rule would be the agreement of both husband and wife to refrain from the rights of marriage for a limited time, so that they can give themselves more completely to prayer. Afterwards, they should come together again so that Satan won't be able to tempt them because of their lack of self-control" (1.Cor.7:3-5 TLB).

Forgiveness

In his letter to the saints at Corinth, Paul instructs them to forgive the individual who had committed incest and who had repented of his sinful act:

"I wrote to you as I did so that I could find out how far you would go in obeying me. When you forgive anyone, I do too. And whatever I have forgiven (to the extent that this affected me too) has been by Christ's authority, and for your good. A further reason for forgiveness is to keep from being outsmarted by Satan, for we know what he is trying to do" (2.Cor 2:8-11 TLB).

The righteous principle that Paul puts forth is that a person must not harbor ill feelings toward another person no matter what they have done, especially when a person has truly repented of their actions and is seeking forgiveness. To do otherwise violates the principle of godly love and places one in violation of God's law which requires love and concern for other people.

Although you may be the one offended or wronged, your responsibility before God is to have the correct attitude toward the other person and act in a righteous manner. If you do not, you place your salvation in jeopardy. See Mk.11:25-26.

We should all know how very easy it is to wrong or offend another person. Many times, we do not even realize that we have wronged or offended someone, because the offence may be done through ignorance, carelessness, or poor judgment and is unintentional.

To harbor a grudge, hatred, or ill feelings toward a brother or sister in the faith or anyone else is in opposition to God's law concerning a righteous attitude and behavior and must be repented of in order to maintain a harmonious relationship with our heavenly Father and our Savior. (See 1.Jn.2:7-11; 3:15; 4:20). An unforgiving person opens an opportunity for Satan or other evil spirits to influence his or her thinking.

The apostle Paul wrote about forgiveness in relationship to Satan, when he was encouraging the saints at Ephesus to put away their old lifestyle and live righteously:

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"Be angry, but do not sin. Do not let the sun go down upon your wrath: Do not give an opportunity to the devil" (Eph.4:26-27 Para.).

After giving this advice, Paul continued to list many unrighteous attitudes and behaviors, which violate God's way of truth. If these unrighteous attitudes and behaviors are not overcome, they will result in a person being punished by the second death from which there is no return.

Clearly, we provide a tremendous opportunity for Satan and other evil spirits to influence us if we are behaving badly. This is why Paul encouraged the saints at Ephesus to bring their lives into harmony with the righteous laws, precepts, and principles to which they had been taught to conform.

**Bitterness**

The writer to the Hebrews wrote the following which clearly shows that the end result of bitterness is spiritual defilement:

"Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord: Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled" (Heb.12:14-15 KJV).

If you are striving for spiritual maturity, you should resolve interpersonal problems as quickly as possible; so that, you do not allow bitterness in your mind and spirit to provide an opening for evil to influence your life:

"Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: and be kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake has forgiven you" (Eph.4:31-32 Para.). See also Matt.5:21-24, 6:14-15; Mk.11:25-26; 1.Jn.5:14-17.

Humans are emotional beings, and each individual expresses their emotions to differing degrees. Some people have the ability to control their emotions rather than letting their emotions control them. Those of us working toward spiritual maturity must strive to control our emotions in order to live in harmony with righteous principles.

**PEOPLE, THINGS, AND ACTIVITIES**

Today, individuals who are attempting to live a righteous life face essentially the same basic types of problems and must avoid the same things as individuals of the early church.

The following are a number of people, things, and activities which I believe will significantly increase the opportunity for an evil spirit to influence people and should be avoided in order to actively resist evil:
People

It is impossible not to associate and interact with people during the course of our life, even when practicing a righteous lifestyle. Therefore, the problem becomes one of being a righteous example of God's truth without being influenced by evil attitudes and behaviors. To do this, we must avoid participation and close association with the following:

- Religions and philosophies which violate God's laws, precepts, and principles as set forth in the biblical record
- People whose attitude and behavior is clearly evil and in opposition to godliness
- Constant companionship with people who are engaged in activities which violate God's laws, precepts, and principles as set forth in the Bible
- Business or organizational relationships that promote ideas, concepts, principles or products which violate God's laws, precepts, and principles as set forth in the Bible

Things

The possession or use of the following religious, occult, and magical/mystical objects encourages and promotes evil influence:

- Amulets, charms, and talismans
- Statues or illustrations of saints, demons, angels, and icons
- Shrines dedicated to gods, saints, demons, angels, or mystical entities
- Pendulums, potions, taro cards, and mystical, graphic geometric designs and symbols
- Astrological charts
- Crystal balls
- Ouija boards
- Placards, papers, scrolls, and books of mystical and magical, chants and words
- Pornography and obscene or hateful music

Activities:

Participation in the following activities encourages and promotes lifestyles which are in opposition to righteousness and provides opportunities for evil spirits to interact and influence individuals:

- Excessive use of alcohol
- Use of recreational, mind altering drugs
- Seeking to have a religious experience, such as speaking in tongues
- The practice of witchcraft, or mystical or occult arts
- Hypnotic, meditative, or trance-like states which relinquish control of your will
• Uncontrolled emotion, which allows the mind to become dysfunctional
• Participation in religious events, ceremonies, or rituals which are forbidden in the Bible
• Participating in magical or mystical rituals
• Attending events which are not conducive to righteous behavior or lifestyle
• Channeling spirit entities
• Attempting to communicate with the dead through prayer or other means
• Engaging in sexual deviation or erotic dance in which movements have a spiritual meaning or are meant to entice someone into violating God's law
• Use of forbidden objects or rituals designed to access spirit-energy and power
• Animal sacrifice to gods, angels, or demons

Although the above lists are not complete, the items noted do give an overview of some of the more obvious people, things, and activities to avoid if you are serious about resisting evil. While it is true that a righteous person must live in this world until Christ returns, it is also true that a righteous person must not tolerate evil and must distance themselves from evil as much as possible in order to set a righteous example and remain righteous.

REMAIN FREE FROM EVIL

In his letter to the elect at Rome the apostle Paul reminds them that they have been set free from the death sentence imposed on them because of their sins (i.e., the violation of God's law) through the sacrifice of Christ, and that they should now remain free from sin through practicing a righteous lifestyle.

What Paul wrote about the avoidance of sin in order to live a righteous lifestyle applies to resisting and avoiding evil influences. It matters little whether an evil influence is the product of evil spirits or evil people, because the result is the same. All evil is in opposition to a righteous attitude and behavior and can lead to undesired interaction with evil spirits, if not resisted or avoided.

"Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield you your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin: but yield yourselves to God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. For sin shall not have dominion over you: for you are not under the law, but under grace" (Rom.6:12-14 KJV).
Sin (i.e., violation of God's law) should not rule anyone who has dedicated themselves to the pursuit of godliness. One who is no longer under the law (i.e., its death penalty) by the grace of God should not willingly give themselves over to sinful attitudes, behavior or an evil influence. The Father's grace, which he extends to those he calls to salvation, is not a license to violate his law with impunity:

"What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid. Know you not, that to whom you yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants you are to whom you obey; whether of sin to death, or of obedience to righteousness?" (Rom.6:15-16 KJV).

The English word servants in verse 16 is translated from the Greek word doulos, which is a derivative of the Greek verb deo, which means to bind, i.e., a slave. Doulos means to be in subjection or subserviency.

To avoid becoming influenced by evil, a person with the indwelling of the holy spirit must resist all evil by avoiding attitudes, behaviors, and situations which are in opposition to God's law.

When we are focused on our primary goal of becoming immortal and living forever in our heavenly Father's Kingdom, are activity resisting and avoiding evil, and are engaged in doing the things which will guarantee our success, there is no opportunity for the devil or any other evil spirit to influence our lives.

"Resist the devil, and he will flee from you" (Jms.4:7). See also Eph.4:27.

"Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret" (Eph.5:11-12 KJV).

Throughout the writings of the apostles, the instruction to be proactive in resisting and avoiding evil in all its forms is shown to be the key to successfully defeating evil influences and maintaining holiness.

By B.L. Cocherell

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In today's world, the existence of evil spirits is either dismissed altogether or the danger they pose to humanity is ignored or underestimated. The Bible has much to say about these creatures from the spirit realm who can, if allowed, possess and control a human. The Bible describes evil spirits as extremely powerful and dangerous beings that should be dealt with accordingly. This chapter answers the following questions about demonic possession:

• What is demonic possession?
• What do evil spirits hope to accomplish by controlling a human?
• Under what conditions can an evil spirit take control of a human?

Before answering these questions, it is necessary to briefly review the following subjects which will form a foundation for the answers to the questions noted above.

• What is a human?
• The holy spirit
• Before mankind
• Before the great flood
• Disembodied spirits

WHAT IS A HUMAN?

In order to understand exactly what demonic possession and control is and the circumstances surrounding an evil spirit's possession and control of a person, it is necessary to clearly understand what defines a human being from the biblical perspective.

Many believe that what makes us human are purely our physical attributes; however, the Bible says humans have a spirit and it is this spirit in us that makes us human. But, is this spirit a physical creation or is it from another dimension of existence?

Two Elements of Human Existence

The scriptures show there are two distinct dimensions of existence, and that humans are composed of elements from both dimensions. There is both a physical and a spiritual dimension of existence and each is separate from the other in function and creation. But, both work together to enable humans to exist on a higher plane of consciousness than the rest of the physical creation.
Jesus says there are two elements of the human existence and we must fear the God who can terminate both the physical and non-physical elements:

"Do not fear them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him [God the Father] which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" (Matt.10:28 KJV Para).

In this verse the English word body is translated from the Greek word soma, which means a human/animal body or a corpse. The Greek word for soul is psyche, which can be translated as life or mind. The English word destroy is translated from the Greek word apollumi, which means to destroy fully, to kill, to perish, and to completely do away with.

There is no doubt that the words used in Matthew 10:28 mean the Sovereign God has the power to completely destroy both the physical and non-physical elements of human life. The apostle Paul also refers to these two elements of human existence in his letter to the Thessalonians:

"And may the God of peace Himself fully sanctify you, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1.Thes.5:23 Para.).

In verse 23, the English words spirit, soul, and body are translated from Greek words pneuma, psyche, and soma, which mean respectively, the physical breath or the soul, the spirit or the mind, and the physical body.

The Physical Element

The following scriptures tell us the human body is composed of the elements of the earth and returns to the basic elements from which it is formed at death:

"And the Lord God formed the man out of the dust of the ground, and blew into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul" (Gen.2:7 Para.). See also verse 8; Deut.32:18.

In this scripture, The English word soul is translated from the Hebrew word nephesh, which means a breathing creature or animal, vitality, beast, body, or breath. There is absolutely nothing in the word nephesh that indicates anything other than physical life: human or animal. The Hebrew word nephesh literally means a state of being alive. God created a lifeless body in the form of man and made it a living soul (nephesh) by blowing air into its lungs; thus giving it life.

"In the sweat of your face shall you eat bread, till you return to the ground; for out of it you were taken: for dust you are, and to dust shall you return" (Gen.3:19 KJV).

"You hide your face and they are troubled; you gather your breath, and they expire and return to their dust" (Psa.104:29 Para.; Job 34:13-15).
Physical Life

In this modern age, we can understand the biological implications of the following scriptures in which the role of life sustaining blood and life giving oxygen are noted:

"For the life of the flesh is in the blood: ... Therefore I said to the children of Israel, No soul of you shall eat blood, ... For it is the life of all flesh; the blood of it is for the life thereof: ..." (Lev.17:11-14 KJV).

"And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul" (Gen.2:7 KJV).

"The spirit of God has made me, and the breath of the almighty has given me life" (Job 33:4 KJV).

If God had not activated Adam's life functions by inserting air into his lungs in order to oxygenate his blood, Adam would not have lived. But, is human life no more than a chemical-electric reaction of a well designed structure of gas, fluid, and solid matter reacting to internal and external stimuli? If this is the sum of what God created as physical man, humans would be no different from any other animal.

While it is true that animals have the same breath as humans (Ecc.3:19-21), they do not have the same quality of existence as humans. Humans are different from animals and the rest of the physical creation in many obvious ways. Humans are on a higher plane of life existence than the rest of creation. But, what is it that makes mankind different? The answer is that the unseen spirit element of the human creation makes us different from the rest of creation. See Dan.4:4-37; 1.Cor.2:11.

The Spiritual Element

There is another element to human life besides the physical. This element is the spirit in man which separates mankind from the rest of creation:

"But there is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty gives them understanding" (Job 32:8 KJV).

"The burden of the word of the Lord for Israel, says the Lord, which stretched forth the heavens, and laid the foundation of the earth, and forms the spirit of man within him" (Zech.12:1 KJV). See also Ecc.12:5-7.

The English word spirit in these two verses is translated from the Hebrew word ruwach, which means wind or mind. It does not mean a physical being or even a being at all. Rather, it denotes something that is not physical.
The scriptures reveal that there is a non-physical element which is an integral part of the human creation. It is this non-physical element—the human spirit (i.e., the human mind)—which resides within the human body and gives humanity the ability to be on a higher thought-plane than all other physical creatures on earth. Without a sentient spirit to inhabit a human body, the body would be nothing more than a life-form in a comatose state.

The prophecy of the dry bones and the resurrection of national Israel in Ezekiel, chapter 37 and the following statement by the apostle James clearly show that the human body devoid of the human spirit is not human; it is just an empty vessel:

"For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also" (Jms.2:26 KJV).

The spirit a human is only one of the two elements of human life which the scientific community does not understand or ascribe to human life function. Nevertheless, the spirit in man is of major importance to human life after death. See Ecc.12:6-7.

The God of Spirits

The scriptures show that God formed the spirit which lives within the human body. It is this spirit that gives humans the ability to conceive of and worship God. It is also this spirit that is an integral part of our potential to become immortal. Animals do not have the potential for immortality and they do not relate to God in the same way as humans. Furthermore, they do not have the ability to worship or interact with God as humans do (Rom.8:14-16):

"And they fell on their faces, and said, O God, the God of the spirits of all flesh, shall one man sin, and will you be angry with all the congregation?" (Num.16:22 Para.).

"Let the Lord God, the God of the spirits of all flesh, set a man over the congregation" (Num.27:16 Para.).

"The burden of the word of the Lord for Israel, says the Lord, which stretches forth the heavens, and lays the foundation of the earth, and forms the spirit of man within him" (Zech.12:1 KJV).

The spirit in man is not an undefinable essence nor is it mysteriously apart from man—the spirit of man is man. The physical body is the habitation of the spirit, which is the sentient and conscious element of the human creation.

The Human Life-Form

Human life is unique in all of creation; a human being is the only life-form on earth that is both physical and spiritual and has the opportunity to be elevated to the highest of all life-forms: a spirit-being in the Family of God.
The spirit of man is in reality a sentient being (i.e., the individual) created by God (Zech. 12:1) and placed in the human body to inhabit it. This habitation affords us the ability to interact with this physical realm through conscious and sub-conscious control of the body. When we decide to move or to speak, a complex thought process takes place and the body we inhabit responds accordingly. When there is a disconcert between the spirit and the body, one of two things happens: 1) The spirit cannot control the body's voluntary and involuntary movements; 2) The body dies and the spirit of man returns to God who created it:

"Or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken, or the pitcher be broken at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern. Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return to God who gave it" (Ecc. 12:6-7 KJV). See also Ecc. 3:20-21.

THE HOLY SPIRIT

Now that we have established what a human is from the biblical perspective and understand that the human body is just a physical mechanism in which the human spirit resides, it becomes much easier to understand what takes place when an evil spirit controls an individual's mind and inhabits a person's body.

Many people who profess to teach biblical concepts teach that, when a person makes a commitment to follow Christ and is baptized with water, the holy spirit takes possession of a person's mind and body. Others teach that a person must request or allow the holy spirit to cause them speak in a language unknown to them as evidence that the holy spirit dwells in them. Although the teaching that the holy spirit takes possession of a person's mind is believed by many who profess to follow the teachings of the Bible, this teaching and belief is without biblical support.

The following information is presented in order to refute the teaching that the holy spirit takes possession of the mind and body at baptism and to reveal what the holy spirit is and its function and importance in the life of a person who is called to salvation during this gospel age.

What Is The Holy Spirit?

One of the most confusing religious teachings today concerns the definition of the holy spirit. This confusion is primarily the result of the false teaching that the Father, the Son, and the holy spirit are somehow a composite of two or three personalities which comprise a single being who has no individual personality. Because of this and other similar teachings, the majority of people are confused about who the Father and the Son are and what the holy spirit is.
God the Father and Jesus Christ are spirit-beings who inhabit a spirit dimension of existence. It is through God the Father's spirit-power, energy, and force that he animates, creates, controls, and sustains all that exists. It is this spirit that God the Father gives to those whom he has called to salvation.

It is unfortunate that many English translations of the Bible use the pronoun he when referring to the holy spirit. Because the Sovereign God's holy spirit is a thing and not a personage, the holy spirit should be referred to as it, not as he. The spirit of God and the holy spirit are the same thing, and both God the Father and Jesus Christ have this spirit essence, energy, and power.

The Promise of the Spirit

Before and after his death and resurrection, Jesus promised to send the holy spirit to assist those whom the Father calls to salvation:

"If you love me, keep my commandments. And I will petition the Father, and he will give you another comforter that it may remain with you forever the spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive because it does not see him, nor know him. But you know him, for he abides with you, and shall be in you" (Jn.14:15-17 Para.). Also see Jn.16:13-14; Acts 1:4-8.

"And he said, Yes, it was written long ago that the Messiah must suffer and die and rise again from the dead on the third day; and that this message of salvation should be taken from Jerusalem to all the nations: There is forgiveness of sins for all who turn to me. You have seen these prophecies come true. And now I will send the holy spirit upon you, just as my Father promised. Don't begin telling others yet—stay here in the city until the holy spirit comes and fills you with power from heaven" (Lk.24:46-49 LBP).

The English word power in verse 49 is translated from the Greek word ἂνάμαι, which means power to perform. This is the same power that Jesus had while he was on earth. It is the same power through which he performed all of his great works, and it is the same power and energy which the apostles and members of the early church had as a part of their being.

The following are three important things to take note of from John and Luke's account of Christ's promise to send the spirit of God:

1. Christ would go to where the Father dwells and ask for the holy spirit to be sent to his followers.
2. The power of the holy spirit is placed within the Father's earthly children (i.e., his elect) and continues to reside within them. See Jer.31:31-33; Heb.8:6-10; Jn.14:15-17.
3. Although it is the Sovereign Father who has absolute control of the holy spirit, it is Jesus who is the administrator of the holy spirit to his Father's earthly children. See Jn.1:33; 14:25-26; Lk.3:16; Acts 11:15-16; Gal.3:1-5; Eph.2:13-18.

Pentecost a Day of Transformation

It is very important to firmly establish in one's mind that the New Testament writers were inspired to repeatedly record the great differences between the physical and the spirit worlds, and that humans cannot enter into the spirit world unless they are completely changed into spirit.

On the first Festival of Pentecost after Christ's resurrection, the first step in the process of being transformed from a mortal human into an immortal god-being for those who were found to be under the redemptive power of the sacrificial blood of Jesus Christ.

Standard Equipment

The first human life-form is a physical creation with only the spirit of man. This spirit of man is human and lives within a flesh and blood body. The human spirit is standard equipment; it is the intellect that allows the human life-form to exist on a higher plane than the rest of the physical creation. See Gen.2:7-8; Deut.32:18; Job 33:4, 6; Ecc.12:5-7; Zech.12:1.

Optional Equipment

The optional equipment in man is the Sovereign Father's holy spirit. It is this spirit that transforms humans into sons of God and makes them a part of his divine family. At the moment of spiritual transformation, the Father places his holy spirit into the spirit of man, which causes a human being to become a different life-form.

The original spirit of man is merged with God's holy spirit and becomes a new and different creation. This new creation is unlike the original creation because this new person now has the potential to have eternal life and become immortal as a member of the Family of God. Man's spirit alone does not have this potential, and humans can only exist as sentient beings in this physical dimension of existence. The addition of God's spirit transforms the human spirit into a new creation with entirely new potential.

The Beginning of a New Life

The Day of Pentecost is symbolic of the ending of our old life and the beginning of our new life as a son of God. In the baptismal waters, the old human life-form symbolically dies. During this ceremony, we are purged of all sin by the power of God through the sacrifice of Christ and are released from our death sentence.
When the holy spirit is placed in us, the old person literally dies and ceases to exist, because God the Father merges his spirit with the human spirit. The person with the indwelling of the holy spirit is a new creation—a son of the Sovereign God with the same genetic makeup as other members of the Family of God. Although still physically alive and in the physical form of a human, a converted spirit-filled person is a new creature:

"So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!" (2.Cor.5:16-17 NIV).

"Do you not know, that as many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection" (Rom.6:3-5 KJV Para.). See also Rom.6:6-11; 8:1-16.

Christ is dead to sin and so are those of the New Creation. We can consider ourselves to have already obtained immortality. All that we must do to ensure that we will enter into eternity and immortality after the death of the physical body is to continue to obey God and follow his ways.

God the Father and Jesus Christ possess the highest form of life: immortality on the divine plane of existence. This kind of life springs forth from itself; it is not dependent upon any other source to sustain it because it is self-sustaining. It is this kind of life that those of the New Creation have the opportunity to attain through the power of the Sovereign God's spirit which resides within us. See 1.Cor.15:50-54.

The Spirit of Adoption

In his letter to the Church at Rome, Paul draws upon the example of the Roman adoption system to illustrate how a person becomes a son of God:

"For as many as are led by the spirit of God, these are the sons of God. For you did not receive a spirit of slavery again to fear, but you received a spirit of adoption by which we cry, Abba! Father! The spirit itself witnesses with our spirit that we are the children of God" (Rom.8:14-16 KJV Para.).

Roman adoption was extremely difficult to accomplish, because the Roman father was the absolute controlling power over the family. No matter how old a son became, he was still in absolute possession and under absolute control of his father. This made adoption into another family a very serious and difficult thing to accomplish.
Under Roman law, there were a number of symbolic ceremonies and rituals requiring many witnesses which had to take place before any adoption was considered legal and binding. Moreover, once a son was legally adopted into his new family, he lost all rights to his old family and gained the rights of a legitimate son in his new family. By law, his old life was completely wiped away (e.g., all debts were canceled). He was regarded as a completely new and different person who was entering a new life upon which the old life had no meaning or importance. Under Roman law, he was considered the son of his new father.

Paul said the holy spirit is the witness of the adoption into the Family of God, whereby the past life is wiped away—it is gone. After this adoption, all debts are canceled and the new son of God begins a new life in the Family of God with all the rights of sonship.

When we are transformed from the original human creation into the New Creation by the power of God's spirit, we become a child of God in the Family of God. The reason God's spirit is a witness to a person being a child of God is that the spirit of God has merged with the human spirit, which produces the New Creature—a composite of the spirit of man and the spirit of God. Jesus Christ was the first of these new creations before being resurrected to eternal life and immortality. See Lk.3:21-23.

The indwelling of the holy spirit is not the possession of a person's mind and body by the holy spirit. The indwelling of the spirit is just that; the holy spirit dwells within the Sovereign Father's children because it is a part of what we are—a new creation with the spirit of man and the spirit of God merged into one being. The Sovereign Father's holy spirit does not possess any of his children; it dwells within us and becomes a part of what we are as a child of God and a member of his earthly family of king-priests.

Attributes and Functions

The apostle Paul mentions twenty-one separate attributes and functions of the holy spirit which were available to those of the early church. The holy spirit does not take possession of a person's mind and body like some who profess to follow the teachings of the Bible believe. The holy spirit is the Sovereign Father's power, which has many functions. This power is given to those whom the Father calls to salvation and adopts into his family in order to help us successfully obtain spiritual maturity and perfection, perform the work for which we were called, and enter into the Family and Kingdom of God as immortal sons.

BEINGS IN HUMAN FORM

No one will dispute that beings in human form and appearance inhabit the earth, and few who study the Bible will dispute the fact that humans can, under certain circumstances, become controlled by an evil spirit. However, there is much controversy as to what a human is, the mental and physical condition of a human possessed by an evil spirit, and the spiritual make-up, if any, of the different types of what appear to be
human beings which inhabit the earth. I believe that there are at least the following six types of creatures in human form and appearance that presently inhabit the earth:

1. Humans of the original creation who have only the spirit of man. See Zech.12:1; 1.Cor.2:11.
2. Humans of the original creation who have been transformed into a new creation with the spirit of man and the holy spirit as a part of their genetic make-up. See 2.Cor.5:17; Gal.6:15; Rom.8:14-16.
3. Humans of the original creation with the spirit of man but controlled by an evil spirit. See Matt.8:28; Mk.9:17-18; Lk.8:1-2.
4. Those of the new creation who have blasphemed the holy spirit or are willingly in violation of their agreement with their heavenly Father. These are awaiting the termination of their life in the Lake of Fire. See Matt.12:31; Acts 5:1-11; 1.Tim.1:18-20; Rev.21:8.
5. A human body without the spirit of man, but inhabited by an evil spirit. See 2.Thess.2:3-11.
6. Evil spirits in human form who inhabited the earth before and after the two great destructions of the earth's surface. See chapters 2 and 3 of this study and Dan.2:43.

WHAT ARE EVIL SPIRITS?

Evil spirits are eternal beings who rebelled against the Sovereign God's authority and rule over their life and refused to fulfill the functions and responsibilities for which they were created and to which they were assigned.

Biblical accounts reveal that evil spirits, other than Satan, have the ability to exist on earth as physical flesh and blood beings in human, animal, and other forms, as well as existing as invisible sentient beings. These evil beings are extremely intelligent and have tremendous spiritual power at their disposal through which they can manipulate the physical environment and influence and control humans and animals within certain limited boundaries set by the Sovereign God.

The biblical record does not describe the physical appearance of the angelic beings who inhabited the earth before the creation of mankind (with the spirit of man), but it does describe the covering cherub (Lucifer) who administered God's government on earth. The Bible reveals that, after the covering cherub's rebellion, his appearance was changed to something resembling a serpent and a red dragon. See Ezek.28:11-14; Gen.3:1–4: Rev12:3-9.
The narrative of Genesis, chapter 6, verses 1-4, and the Book of Enoch both indicate that there were spirit-beings inhabiting the earth before the great flood. These beings had the form and appearance of men and took wives of female humans and fathered children through them. Therefore, it seems logical that the spirit-beings who inhabited the earth even before the creation of mankind also had the form and appearance of men.

The biblical record reveals that Satan still has a physical body and a spirit body, albeit not the same one he had before his rebellion against the Sovereign God. Therefore, some of the spirit-beings who rebelled with him before the creation of mankind may also continue to have both physical and spirit bodies. Moreover, it seems logical to assume that many of the angelic beings who rebelled after the creation of mankind escaped the great flood with their physical bodies intact.

Understanding the form and appearance of evil spirits and that some still have physical bodies is important to understanding the realities of demonic possession, because these evil beings still roam the earth in physical forms. Some appear as flesh and blood humans or animals, as well as apparitions that appear to be human or animal. Evil spirits also manifest themselves through objects and as invisible sentient beings. Also in order to promote their agenda of deception and destruction, these evil beings have the ability to project their influence or control over people without leaving their physical or spirit-form.

Satan Enters Judas

The following account of Judas Iscariot being entered into and controlled by Satan during the last Passover meal, which Jesus partook of with his disciples, is an example of the power of an evil spirit to control a person who is susceptible to its influence and control:

"I tell you the truth, one of you is going to betray me." His disciples stared at one another, at a loss to know which of them he meant. One of them, the disciple whom Jesus loved, was reclining next to him. Simon Peter motioned to this disciple and said, "Ask him which one he means." Leaning back against Jesus, he asked him, "Lord, who is it?" Jesus answered, "It is the one to whom I will give this piece of bread when I have dipped it in the dish." Then, dipping the piece of bread, he gave it to Judas Iscariot, son of Simon. As soon as Judas took the bread, Satan entered into him. "What you are about to do, do quickly," Jesus told him, but no one at the meal understood why Jesus said this to him" (Jn.13:21-28 NIV). See also Lk.22:1-5.

The English word entered in verse 28 is translated from the Greek word eiserchomai, which means to enter (literally or figuratively).
Because of his attitude, Judas was open to Satan's influence. The fact that Judas did not have the holy spirit dwelling in him as a son of the Sovereign God's new creation also left him more vulnerable; otherwise, Judas would not have been so easily influenced by Satan.

The account of Judas being entered into by Satan reveals that an evil spirit can project its thoughts in order to control the mind and body of a person who is susceptible to its influence.

**DISEMBODIED SPIRITS**

The biblical record documents that the surface of the earth was twice made unhabitable by land based life-forms: once during a war between God and Satan and his followers before the creation of mankind and once after the creation of mankind during the Great Flood.

If the spirit-beings who inhabited the earth in physical bodies were created with eternal life, but did not escape either of these two worldwide destructions to another dimension of existence or to other inhabitable planets, their physical bodies would have died. This would have left them as disembodied spirits.

The scriptures indicate that some of the spirit-beings with physical bodies escaped the two destructions of the earth's surface, while others did not. So, what happened to the spirit-beings who did not escape, but whose physical body died, either in the war before the creation of mankind or during the great flood which destroyed all land based flesh that was not saved in Noah's ark? See Gen.6:13-16.

Because angels were created with eternal life, once their physical bodies died, they would have become disembodied spirits. They would no longer have a physical body in which to interact with the physical creation in the same way that a physical body can.

We can assume that some of these disembodied spirits are the ones held captive for various reasons and awaiting their punishment as noted in the scriptures (1.Pet.3:18-20; 2.Pet.2:4; Jude 5-7), while others are left free to roam both the spiritual and physical realms of existence. It is these disembodied spirits, along with other evil spirits with physical bodies, who trouble mankind and roam the earth influencing possessing, inhabiting, and controlling the minds and bodies of humans.

With this understanding, we can now begin to analyze and answer the following and many other questions about demonic possession:

- What is demonic control and possession?
- What do evil spirits hope to accomplish by controlling a human mind and body?
- Under what conditions can an evil spirit take control of a human mind and body?
WHAT IS DEMONIC CONTROL AND POSSESSION?

The English word *possessed*, as used in the King James Version of the New Testament in reference to demonic possession, is translated from two Greek words: *daimonizomai* and *echo*, which respectively mean *to be exercised by a demon* and *to hold*.

Demonic possession is very different from evil influence, because the success of demonic influence is predicated on a person's willingness to have certain attitudes, make certain decisions, and behave in certain ways. A person being influenced by evil has the freedom to resist evil influence and make their own decisions and control their own actions, but a person possessed by an evil spirit does not have this freedom.

Demonic control of a person is not dependent on an individual's willingness to have certain attitudes, make certain decisions, and behave in certain ways, because a person controlled by an evil spirit is not in control of their decision making process. This control or possession can be absolute or partial, depending on the intent and purpose of the evil spirit controlling or possessing the individual.

When an evil spirit is in absolute control of an individual's mind and occupies a person's body, the demon suppresses or blocks the individual's ability to control their body. The spirit of man is still present in the body; it has not been evicted from the body, but it is controlled and rendered inoperable to one degree or another by the evil spirit in control. This means the individual with the spirit of man (i.e., the original occupant of the body) is no longer in control of the body or its functions.

A demon occupying a human body has access to all aspects of that body and its functions, including the individual's speech and knowledge (except knowledge which is held secret by God). Whether or not the person being controlled by the evil spirit is aware of what is happening while being controlled depends entirely on the degree of control being exercised by the demon in control.

Reasons for Control and Possession

What do evil spirits hope to accomplish by controlling and possessing a human mind and body? The following are three of the many reasons evil spirits want to inhabit and control humans:

1. To Interact in this Physical Environment

Because rebellious angels were created with eternal life, once their physical bodies died either in the war on earth before the creation of mankind (Gen.1:1-2; Jer.4:14-28) or in the worldwide flood of Noah's time (Gen. chapters 6-9), they became disembodied spirits with life and sentient thought, but without a physical body in which to interact with the physical creation in the same way as a physical entity can.
The scriptures show that many evil spirits are free to roam both the spiritual and the physical realms of existence (Job 1:6-7; Rev.12:7-13; 1.Pet.5:8). Because the scriptures show that spirit-beings have a body composed of spirit material, a spirit-being can fully interact in a spirit dimension and environment; however, in order to be able to fully interact in this physical dimension and environment, that same spirit-being requires a physical body. Herein is one answer to why disembodied evil spirits seek to control a human mind and inhabit a human body. Disembodied spirits must inhabit a physical body in order to freely interact with the physical environment.

2. Religious and Political Deception

Religious deception is a primary reason many evil spirits desire to control an individual's mind and occupy their body. It is through these individuals that they can deceive vast numbers of people into worshiping them and serving their purposes. The apostle Paul wrote the following about individuals who were actively serving Satan:

"For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works" (2.Cor.11:13-15 KJV). See also Deut.13:1-5; Jer.23:21-22.

Satan has many ministers disguised as true ministers of God (Rev.2:9; 3:9). Although some of these individuals are truly deceived themselves, some are willing servants of Satan and others are controlled and occupied by evil spirits.

The elect of the early church were continually warned and admonished to keep the "faith once delivered" and to be on guard against evil men and women who wanted to destroy them. Paul's warning to the evangelist Timothy is just as valid today as it was then:

"Now the spirit speaks expressly that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron" (1.Tim.4:1-2 KJV). See also 2.Tim.4:3-4.

Paul warns that there would be seducing spirits and doctrines of devils. It is obvious that evil spirits do not want people whom they are attempting to deceive with their false teachings to know who and what they are. So, how do they accomplish their deception?

In 1.Timothy 4, verse 1, the English word seducing in the phrase seducing spirits is translated from the Greek word planos, which means roving (as a tramp), i.e., (by implication) an impostor or one who misleads.
Evil spirits accomplish their deception through influencing people's thoughts or by controlling a human mind and body. Once an evil spirit is in control of a human mind and body and has placed the human mind in an unconscious state, rendering the person unable to have sentient thought or to control their own body, the evil spirit then has access to whatever knowledge the person has and possesses complete use of the person's body, including the person's speech through which the evil spirit can promote its agenda.

Adolph Hitler

The more intelligent and powerful evil spirits have the ability to use a person's knowledge and body effectively in their deceptions. One example of an extremely effective use of a person's body and mind is that of Adolph Hitler. Many of Hitler's speeches were extraordinarily powerful and dynamic. Through his perverted and evil concepts and his power of persuasion, he was able to deceive and persuade millions into following, idolizing, and worshiping him.

Some individuals who were present in the crowds while he gave his speeches have remarked that a presence could be felt while he was speaking and that some people listening to him seemed to be in a trance-like state. This is the same persuasiveness that is found in many other charismatic individuals who have the ability to raise a following for themselves through religious and political movements.

3. To Destroy Mankind

Although the apostle Peter wrote the following to those of the Sovereign Father's earthly family of king-priests, the reality is that Satan the devil and all evil spirits hate the entire human race and are actively planning its ultimate destruction as soon as mankind is no longer useful to them:

"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, walks about as a roaring lion seeking those he may devour" (1.Pet.5:8 KJV).

The biblical record clearly indicates that angels were created to serve God and mankind. Angels were not created with the potential to be more than they already are. However, mankind was created with the potential to become immortal god-beings who are true sons of the Sovereign God, that will ultimately rule with Jesus Christ who was the Creator God. Satan and other evil spirits know this and are envious of mankind's potential to become sons of God. They are also angered by the fact that future sons of God will replace all evil spirits who now rule the earth. Therefore, these evil beings delight in causing as much trouble for mankind as they can.
Concerning religious deception and its destructive nature, Christ said the following:

"Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. You shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree brings forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree brings forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that does not bring forth good fruit is cut down, and cast into the fire. Therefore by their fruits you shall know them" (Matt.7:15-20 KJV).

Jesus is not speaking of individuals who will purposely deceive people for the sake of personal gain or through ignorance. He is speaking of individuals who are maliciously deceiving people in order to destroy them. Many individuals in this category are insane, highly influenced by evil spirits, or totally possessed and controlled by evil spirits.

Speaking to the Scribes and Pharisees about their behavior and intentions to kill him, Jesus said the following:

"You are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father you will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it" (Jn.8:44 KJV).

Eve had a choice in whether or not she would disobey the Creator God's instruction not to touch the Tree of The Knowledge of Good and Evil or eat its fruit. However, through his deception of Eve, Satan caused death to come on all mankind, as well as the future death of millions of angelic-beings through deceiving them into following him in his rebellion against the Sovereign God.

Satan was indeed a murderer from the beginning. Through King Herod, Satan attempted to murder Christ as an infant, and he is continuing his murderous ways in attempting to destroy those whom the Sovereign God is calling to salvation and sonship in his kingdom.

**Conditions for Control and Possession**

Under what conditions can an evil spirit take control of a human mind and body? In order to become controlled and possessed by an evil spirit, an individual does not need to believe in the spirit realm, utter mystical words, or perform a complex ritual. All a person has to do to become possessed by and evil spirit is to be receptive to an evil spirit's influence.
Both individuals with a sound mind and those without a sound mind are in danger of becoming possessed by an evil spirit. The only difference between these two types of individuals is that a person with a sound mind must do something to invite demonic possession and a person who does not have a sound mind can become a victim of circumstances beyond their control.

The conditions under which an individual can become possessed by an evil spirit are not complex or difficult to understand. There are basically two ways an evil spirit is allowed to control an individual's mind or inhabit a person's body: free will possession and forced possession.

**Free Will Possession**

Within the biblical record, there are a number of prohibitions against certain interactions with the spirit realm. Whether or not a person is aware of these prohibitions, they exist. If these prohibitions are not violated, they will help protect an individual with a sound mind from demonic influence and possession.

Individuals who intentionally seek to interact with the spirit realm in violation of the prohibitions and constraints noted in the biblical record, or seek to interact with the spirit realm to acquire knowledge, power, or abilities not obtainable through normal human channels are willingly placing themselves in a condition which is conducive to demonic influence or possession.

**Forced Possession**

A person with a sound mind has the ability to make sound decisions which affect their attitude and behavior and should be able to resist an evil influence if they are willing to do so. Conversely, a person without a sound mind or someone with a physically impaired or dysfunctional brain, which affects the interaction between the spirit in man and the physical brain, are at a serious disadvantage when it comes to decision making and susceptibility to evil influence or possession. These types of individuals may not have the mental capacity necessary to resist evil influence or control. Therefore, they can become a victim of circumstances beyond their ability to control.

Seeking physical or spiritual influence, knowledge, power, or other benefits through the following methods can dramatically enhance a person's susceptibility to demonic influence and control:

- Use of mind altering drugs
- Getting into a meditative or a trance like state
- Performing magical or mystical rituals
- Using objects, such as a crystal ball, ouija board, pendulum, and tarot cards
- Channeling spirit entities
- Communicating with the dead
The following are circumstances, conditions, and situations which can dramatically enhance a person's susceptibility to demonic influence and control:

- Seeking to have a religious experience, such as speaking in tongues
- Dabbling in witchcraft, or mystical and occult sciences
- Getting into a hypnotic state which reduces or relinquishes control of your will to resist
- Having uncontrolled emotion which allows the mind to become dysfunctional

**POWER AND CONTROL**

The following biblical account clearly demonstrates the power and control an evil spirit can exercise over a person and the results which an evil spirit can manifest through the use of this power and control:

**A Mute Spirit**

"And one of the multitude said, Master, I have brought my son to you, who has a mute spirit; And wherever he takes him, he tears him: and he foams, and gnashes with his teeth, and pines away [i.e., to desiccate; to shrivel; to become rigid]: and I asked your disciples to cast him out; and they could not" (Mk.9:17-18 Para.).

The indication is that this type of demon is either a silent demon that does not communicate with people or it has limited or eliminated the individual's ability to speak, rendering him mute.

"He [Christ] answered him, and said, O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I suffer you? Bring him to me. And they brought him to him: and when he saw him, straightway the spirit tore him; and he fell on the ground, and wallowed foaming. And he asked his father, How long ago did this come on him? And he said, From and infant. And often it has cast him into the fire, and into the waters, to destroy him: but if you can do something, have compassion on us, and help us" (Mk.9:19-22 Para.). See also Lk.9:37-43.

From a very early age, this demon had taken control of this individual and had been intentionally abusing and destroying the body it was possessing and controlling. This shows the tremendous hatred and disrespect that this demon has for mankind and the degree to which an evil spirit can exercise it power and control over an individual.

**A Spirit of Infirmity**

"And he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath. And, behold, there was a woman which had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together, and could in no wise lift up herself" (Lk.13:10-11 KJV).
This account shows a woman who has been the victim of a demonically induced affliction, which has caused her to be permanently bent over.

"And when Jesus saw her, he called her to him, and said to her, Woman, you are loosed from your infirmity. And he laid his hands on her: and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God" (Lk.13:12-13 KJV).

"And the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, because that Jesus had healed on the Sabbath day, and said to the people, There are six days in which men ought to work: in them therefore come and be healed, and not on the Sabbath day. The Lord then answered him, and said, You hypocrite, do not each one of you on the Sabbath loose his ox or his ass from the stall, and lead him away to watering? And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath day?" (Lk.13:14-16 KJV).

The English word Satan in verse 16 is translated from the Greek word satanas of Aramaic origin, which means the accuser, (i.e., the devil). If taken literally, Jesus is saying that it is Satan himself who caused this affliction. Whether or not it was actually Satan who afflicted this woman, the result was the same—her affliction was caused by an evil spirit who had the power to cause permanent damage to her body.

Multiple Possession

Matthew and Mark both relate the same account of multiple demons possessing individuals. Matthew's account describes two men controlled and possessed by violent evil spirits leaving a graveyard. Mark's account initially mentions one individual possessed by an evil spirit, then goes on to say there are two individuals possessed with many evil spirits, which agrees with Mathews account of this event:

"And when he was come to the other side into the country of the Gergesenes, there met him two possessed with devils, coming out of the tombs, exceeding fierce, so that no man might pass by that way" (Matt.8:28 KJV).

"And they came over to the other side of the sea, into the country of the Gergesenes. And when he was come out of the ship, immediately there met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit. Who had his dwelling among the tombs; and no man could bind him, no, not with chains: Because that he had been often bound with fetters and chains, and the chains had been plucked asunder by him, and the fetters broken in pieces: neither could any man tame him. And always, night and day, he was in the mountains, and in the tombs, crying, and cutting himself with stones" (Mk.5:1-5 KJV).
The demon controlling and inhabiting this person manifested super-human strength through him. Perhaps this was made possible through either enchanting the body's own physical potential or a manifestation of the evil spirit's own energy. Whichever was the case, the possessed man could not be held captive.

"And he asked him, What is your name? And he answered, saying, My name is Legion: for we are many" (MK.5:9 KJV).

Jesus' question about the name of one of these evil spirits and the answer that he received gives insight into the ability of multiple evil spirits to inhabit a single body.

The word *legion* in this verse refers to Roman regiment, which at full strength contained six thousand men. However, the word *legion* may have been used in verse 6 to indicate a very large number.

Both Matthew and Mark note that these evil spirits recognized Jesus for who he was and wanted to know if he had come to punish them before the appointed time:

"And, behold, they cried out, saying, What have we to do with you, Jesus, you Son of God? are you here to torment us before the time?" (Matt.8:29 KJV Para).

Because these spirits knew that they must obey Jesus and did not want to be without a body to inhabit, they asked to be allowed to enter into a herd of swine:

"But when he saw Jesus afar off, he ran and worshiped him, And cried with a loud voice, and said, What have I to do with you, Jesus, you Son of the most high God? I adjure you by God, that you do not torment me. For he said to him, Come out of the man, you unclean spirit" (Mk.5:6-8 KJV Para.).

The punishment and the time these evil spirits referred to is the time when many evil spirits will be destroyed and others will be evicted from all dimensions of God's realm (Mal.4:3; Jude 13).

"And he besought him much that he would not send them away out of the country. Now there was there near to the mountains a great herd of swine feeding. And all the devils besought him, saying, Send us into the swine, that we may enter into them" (Mk.5:10-12 KJV).

"And forthwith Jesus gave them leave. And the unclean spirits went out, and entered into the swine: and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the sea, (they were about two thousand;) and were choked in the sea" (Mk.5:13 KJV).

Although the scriptures do not tell us how or why multiple demons would want to control and occupy one individual the scriptures clearly record that it does happen:

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"And it came to pass afterward, that he went throughout every city and village, preaching and showing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God: and the twelve were with him, And certain women, which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary called Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils and Joanna the wife of Chuza Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others, which ministered to him of their substance" (Lk.8:1-3 KJV). See also Mk.16:9.

Evicted Spirits

Jesus said the following about an evicted evil spirit which reveals that, when a disembodied spirit is evicted from a body, it will search for another body to inhabit. If possible, an evil spirit will reenter the body from which it was evicted and bring others with it:

"When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walks through dry places, seeking rest, and finds none. Then he says, I will return to my dwelling from where I came; and when he goes back, he finds it empty, swept, and garnished. Then he goes, and takes with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first. Even so it shall also be with this wicked generation" (Matt.12:43-45 KJV Para.). See also Lk.11:24-26.

Being empty, swept, and garnished (i.e., decorated) means that there is nothing within the man which can prevent the demon from returning to control his mind and occupy his body. After the demon is cast out of a person, in order to prevent it from returning (and possibly bringing more with it), someone with a higher authority and power than the demon must forbid its return, or the person who was once possessed must have the will to resist an evil spirit and understand and practice how to prevent demonic control and possession.

Degrees of Control

Someone who is controlled by an evil spirit may be aware of what their body is doing and the words that are coming out of their mouth, but sometimes they are not aware and are in a hypnotic-like state in which they have no awareness of what is happening. The following are two encounters with evil spirits of which I have personal knowledge. These encounters demonstrate both types of possession and control.

Limited Control

On one occasion a gentleman telephoned me to ask how I came to know and understand certain information and spiritual concepts. Not receiving satisfactory answers, the evil spirit which had been influencing this man to ask these questions took total control of him and angrily spoke directly to me. When the demon was through speaking, he released control of the man who was dismayed and shocked at what had just happened to him. He told me that he never had anything like this happen to him before.
In this particular incident, the demon allowed the man to remain conscious of what was happening, but would not allow him to interfere with what was being said.

**Total Control**

On another occasion a gentleman telephoned to ask my advice about how to deal with a minister at the congregation he attended. He told me that the minister in the congregation that he attended had been acting in an unfriendly manner toward him and he was concerned that the minister wanted to reprimand him or harm him in some way. This minister had scheduled a meeting with him and he wanted my advice as to what to do when he met with the minister. I told him that the minister was possessed by an evil spirit and advised him how to handle the situation.

A week or so later the man called to tell me that, when he met the minister, he rebuked the evil spirit as I had instructed him and the minister immediately began to act confused, and could not remember why he had arranged the meeting and asked the man what the meeting was about. The man reminded the minister that he was the one who requested the meeting. So he and the minister went to a restaurant to have coffee and talk, during their conversation the minister would act confused and comment that it was a strange meeting.

The man asked me to explain what happened to the minister. I told him that, when he rebuked the evil spirit, it released its control over the minister and left his body. This was the reason he was confused and did not understand why he had scheduled a meeting.

This was a case of total control over an individual by a demon and a total release of this control when required by an authority and power superior to his.

There are two important things that these examples show:

1. The degree of control an evil spirit exercises over an individual depends entirely on the purpose for which the demon is inhabiting the person.
2. An evil spirit does not enter into the mind of an individual (i.e., the spirit of man), but it can control a person's ability to make conscious decisions for themselves. In other words, an individual can be placed in an unconscious state oblivious to what is happening to them or around them.

**THE ELECT AND POSSESSION**

Is it possible for an evil spirit to possess a person who has the indwelling of the holy spirit? If so, is it possible for that person to be restored to their former status in the Father's family?
Although no scriptures specifically deal with these two questions, there are principles given which allow us to determine whether or not a person with God's spirit can become possessed by an evil spirit and the consequences of allowing this to happen.

Because each person who has the indwelling of the holy spirit is free to choose good or evil, a person can choose to resist evil or accept it into their life. This means that someone with the indwelling of the holy spirit can indeed become possessed if he or she makes the wrong choice.

**Making the Wrong Choice**

What the apostle Paul wrote about two men of the faith who went astray and his warning not to fellowship with those of the brotherhood who are living in sin, clearly shows that a person with the indwelling of the holy spirit can choose to disregard their commitment to live a righteous life:

"This charge I commit to you, my son Timothy, according to the prophecies going before as to you, that you might war a good warfare by them, having faith and good conscience, which some having thrust away made shipwreck concerning the faith; of whom are Hymeneus and Alexander, whom I delivered to Satan, that they may be taught not to blaspheme" (1.Tim.1:18-20 KJV). See also 2.Tim.2:16-18).

Although it is not pleasant to contemplate, some individuals will not continue in sound doctrine and will go their own way (2.Tim.4:3). When people do this, they become spiritually shipwrecked and normally seek to subvert and destroy others in the congregation by speaking about things that are blasphemous. Here, Paul speaks of two such individuals whom he put out of the church and gave over to Satan to punish in hopes that they will learn to obey God and repent of their evil ways.

Paul also reprimanded those at Corinth for tolerating sin in their midst instead of putting the sinful individuals out of the congregation. Furthermore, he commands them to not fellowship with sinful brethren and to separate a wicked individual from fellowship:

"I wrote to you in a letter not to fellowship with fornicators: Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then you would have to leave this world. But I have written to you not to fellowship with those of the brotherhood who are named as a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such a one do not even have a meal. Is it my Job to judge outsiders? Do you not judge those that are within the church? But those who are without, God judges. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person" (1.Cor.5:9-13 KJV Para.).

The apostle Peter also wrote about the condition of people who, after receiving the indwelling of the holy spirit would turn away from the faith and teach heresies:
"For when they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who live in error. While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage. For if after they have escaped the pollution of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire" (2.Pet.2:18-22 KJV).

People who receive the indwelling of the holy spirit can and do make wrong choices, and if they do not repent, they are left vulnerable to demonic influence and possession. The reason for this is that a child of God who is living an unrighteous lifestyle is not actively resisting evil and has discarded their protection against evil spirits and their influence.

If a person chooses to resist evil, no evil spirit can control or possess that person (Jms.4:7-8). However, if a person chooses to interact with evil spirits on any level other than that which is authorized in order to resist or control evil spirits and their influence, that person is willingly accepting evil into their life and is in danger of being possessed by an evil spirit.

THE TEMPLE

The issue of whether or not an evil spirit can possess a person who has the indwelling of the holy spirit concerns the issue of defilement of the Sovereign Father's temple where his spirit presence resides.

The Creator God required the Israelites who were his chosen people to be and remain a holy and an undefiled people in order for him to interact with them and dwell among them in his spirit presence. The same requirement is true today for those whom the Sovereign Father has chosen to be his earthly children who have the indwelling of his holy spirit. See Lev.20:7; 1.Pet.1:16.

Being holy and undefiled is a spiritual reality. This quality of existence is derived from the Sovereign God through the power of his holy spirit. It is this sacred quality of existence that separates the holy from the unholy.

Defilement

The two sons of Aaron disregarded the instruction which the Creator God gave to keep all physical contamination out of his presence. By bringing unholy fire to the tabernacle, Nadab and Abihu committed a serious violation of the law concerning ceremonial and physical purity. By placing the impure fire in their censers, they defiled themselves and
their censers, which made them unfit to minister before God. Because they failed to make and maintain a difference between the holy and the unholy, they were killed by the fire of God's presence, which cannot interact with anything unholy without destroying it. See Lev.10:1-2, 9-10, 12.

The very nature of a holy being in its glorified spirit-form prevents it from interacting with the physical existence. Therefore, in order for the Creator God to be able to dwell among the Israelites and to commune with them in his spirit-form and presence, the tabernacle, the priesthood, the people, and all things that came into close contact with God had to become holy and be kept in a condition of physical and spiritual purity. See Ex.29:36-46; Lev.19:2; Deut.23:14; 1.Pet.1:15-16.

The consequences for the defilement of any holy thing were clearly detailed in the covenant which the Creator God made with national Israel. The consequences for defiling the Sovereign Father's earthly temples, which are holy, are also clearly detailed in the agreement which he has made with his elect children today. See 1.Cor.3:16-17; 1.Pet.1:16.

The placing of the ark of the covenant in the temple of Dagon and the destruction of the statue of Dagon in the presence of the ark clearly reveals that nothing representing God, his holiness, and his power can cohabit with anything unholy. See 1.Sam.5:1-7.

The apostle Paul wrote the following about the Sovereign Father's earthly children being his temples in which his holy spirit resides:

"Don't you know you are the temple of God, and that the spirit of God dwells in you? If any man defiles the temple of God, him God shall destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which you are" (1.Cor. 3:16-17 Para.).

The English words defiles and destroy in verse 17 are both translated from the Greek word phtheiro, which basically means to spoil, or to ruin.

The defilement of the Sovereign Father's earthly temple by the person inhabiting this temple will result in the destruction of that individual. Paul continues to explain the sacredness and nature of those who have the indwelling of the holy spirit:

"Do you not know that your bodies are the members of Christ? shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an whore? God forbid. What? Do you not know that he which is joined to an whore is one body? for two, says he, shall be one flesh. But he that is joined to the Lord is one spirit. Flee fornication. Every sin that a man does is without the body; but he that commits fornication sins against his own body" (1.Cor.6:15-18 KJV Para.).

Paul uses the example of God's law concerning sexual sins and sexual fidelity, to illustrate defilement of the Sovereign Father's earthly temples through sinful behavior.
"What? Do you not know that your body is the temple of the holy spirit which is in you, which you have of God, and you are not your own? For you are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" (1.Cor.6:19-20 KJV Para.).

The Sovereign Father's earthly temples are not only the physical bodies of his children but also their minds, because this is where his holy spirit resides as an intrinsic part of their being. Can one who has the indwelling of the holy spirit coexist with an evil spirit in the Sovereign Father's temple? The answer is no; they cannot do so and remain holy.

In his second letter to the elect at Corinth, Paul again speaks of the elect being the Sovereign Father's temple and that righteousness and unrighteousness cannot coexist:

"Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship has righteousness with unrighteousness? and what partnership has light with darkness? And what harmony has Christ with Belial? or what part has he that believes with an infidel? And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God; as God has said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people" (2.Cor.6:14-16 KJV Para.).

If a person with the indwelling of the holy spirit becomes possessed by an evil spirit, that person is defiled and is no longer holy. The holy spirit and an evil spirit cannot both exist within a person. If the holy spirit resides within a person, that person is holy. If an evil spirit resides within a person, that person is not holy and is without the indwelling of the holy spirit. See Rom.6:16.

The writer to the Hebrews address the condition of those who receive the indwelling of the holy spirit, and then choose to depart from the faith to the point of rejecting the sacrifice of Christ and their heavenly Father's truth or to the point of not resisting evil and allowing themselves to become possessed by an evil spirit:

"Therefore, leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on to perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. And this will we do, if God permit" (Heb.6:1-3 KJV).

"For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the holy spirit, And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, If they shall fall away, to renew them again to repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame. For the earth which drinks in the rain that comes oft upon it, and brings forth herbs meet for them by
whom it is dressed, receives blessing from God: But that which bears thorns and briers is rejected, and is nigh to cursing: whose end is to be burned” (Heb.6:4-8 KJV Para.).

When a person accepts the sacrifice of Christ for the forgiveness of their sins and commits to live a righteous life, he or she must then go forward toward spiritual maturity and perfection; there is no turning back to the old life without incurring the punishment of the second death.

Forgiveness and Blasphemy

The Sovereign Father is willing to forgive all kinds of sin, including the most vile things that are spoken against his firstborn Son, the Savior of humanity. However, he will not forgive the ridicule of the holy spirit, which is actually a rejection of the things that the holy spirit represents. Blasphemy of the holy spirit is a conscious rejection of the Father's power, grace, and right to rule in one's life; therefore, it is an attitude and a behavior that is unforgivable. See Matt.12:31-32.

A child of God who becomes a habitual and unrepentant sinner destroys the ability of the temple (which they are) to house God's spirit. When the Father removes his personal spirit, his holy spirit, and the spirit of Christ from one of his elect children, that person has no more hope of eternal life.

The extinguishing of the holy spirit causes a breach between the Father and his disobedient child that is irreparable. This breach results in the death penalty being passed upon the unrepentant sinner who has defiled God's temple. This person's spirit will go back to the Father in a corrupted state to await the resurrection to the second death, which is destruction in the lake of fire.

Is it possible for a person with the indwelling of the holy spirit who has allowed themselves to become possessed by an evil spirit by departing from practicing righteousness to receive the indwelling of God's spirit again and obtain salvation? The answer is no. See Matt.22:11-14, 25:30; Lk.13:26-28.

SUMMARY

Although demonic possession is a subject that is unpleasant to deal with, the control and possession of people by evil spirits is a biblical fact and a reality in today's world that cannot be ignored by individuals who are serious about their salvation.

The biblical record indicates that there are hundreds of millions and perhaps billions of evil spirits that exist, many of which are confined to earth, and they roam the earth seeking to influence, control, or possess a human body. Therefore, it seems inevitable that, at some point in a person's life, they will come into close contact with one or more of these evil spirits.
An encounter with an evil spirit is a win or lose situation; there will either be a positive or a negative outcome from the encounter. For there to be a positive outcome, a person must properly exercise their authority in order to control the situation and dictate the outcome of the encounter.

If you come into contact with an evil spirit (or spirits) and find that you must deal with one or more of them on a personal level, you must be prepared with the knowledge and understanding about your authority to deal with evil spirits, because it is too late to gain this knowledge and understanding during an encounter with an evil spirit.

By B.L. Cocherell
Because members of the Sovereign Father's earthly family are engaged in a spiritual work and evil spirits are opposed to this work, it is inevitable that, at some point in time, the path of a righteous person will cross the path of an evil spirit in control and possession of another person. Therefore, the authority over or removal of evil spirits from the individuals whom they control or possess is a primary area of concern for those of the Sovereign Father's earthly family of king-priests as we go about performing the work of the church and interacting with the world at large.

The removal of evil spirits from individuals by Jesus Christ and those to whom he has delegated this authority is well documented throughout the New Testament (Matt.17:14-18; Mk.16:17-19; Lk.10:17-18). It is also very clear that, unless a person is authorized to remove evil spirits, they place themselves in great danger if they attempt to do so (Acts.19:13-16).

Evil spirits clearly understand exactly what authority the Father's earthly children have and do not have over them. Therefore, the first question you should ask yourself before attempting to cast out an evil spirit is whether or not you have the authority and power to do so. Evil spirits also understand that the Sovereign God is a God of law and all things must be done in accordance with his law and within the boundaries of a fixed set of rules. Therefore, you must understand your authority and the rules that determine how to deal with evil spirits.

Although the scriptures do not give detailed instructions about how one of God's children knows he or she has been given authority and power in specific situations (e.g., the authority to end an evil spirit's influence or control of an individual), it is very clear that those who are given this authority and power know they have it.

Authorizations to enable individuals to perform certain functions, responsibilities, and tasks are communicated to individuals through many different means. For example, Moses was told by the Creator God himself (Ex.3:15-22; 4:1-9); Elisha the prophet was told by Elijah the prophet; Christ told his disciples (Mk.3:14-15; Matt.28:19-20; Acts 1:6-8); Christ told Ananias in a vision to tell Paul (Acts 9:10-18); and Paul told Timothy (1.Tim.4:14; 2.Tim.1:6-7).
Regardless of the means of communication, when a person is informed that they have been given a special authorization (e.g., the gift of prophecy, the ability to perform miracles, or the ability to cast out evil spirits), that person will know what authorization or power has been given, what it is to be used for, and how to use it. Otherwise, the authorization and power would not be given.

Spiritual authorizations and powers which a member of the body of Christ is blessed with are not for the person's own personal aggrandizement or entertainment. All authorizations and powers are given for the purpose of performing the work of the church and the benefit, edification, and enrichment of the Sovereign Father's elect (1 Cor. 14:1-12; Eph. 4:1-14) who are being prepared to serve all of humanity through the Family and Government of God.

The scriptures show that there are three primary reasons for the removal of evil spirits:

1. To show compassion for people in order to improve their lives by removing the control and possession of evil spirits
2. As a witness of God's authority and power over evil spirits
3. To eliminate an impediment to the proclamation of the good news concerning Christ and the Kingdom of God

There are five fundamentals to carefully consider in the removal of an evil spirit which is in control and possession of an individual. Without understanding the following, the removal of evil spirits can be a very dangerous undertaking for both the person attempting to remove the evil spirit(s) and for the one controlled and possessed by the evil spirit(s):

1. Who is the sovereign authority and power over all that exists?
2. Who has the authority to command evil spirits to relinquish control of an individual?
3. What method must be used to command an evil spirit to relinquish control of an individual?
4. How does one prevent evil spirit(s) from returning to take control and possession again.
5. What should be considered in the decision to remove (or not to remove) an evil spirit from an individual?

THE SOVEREIGN FATHER'S AUTHORITY

When dealing with evil spirits, it is important to fully understand that all existing authority and power resides in the Sovereign Father and that he controls, energizes, and sustains all that exists, whether physical or spiritual, and nothing can or will exist unless he allows it to. This is one reason evil spirits fear the authority of the Father, Jesus Christ, and those who have been delegated authority over them.
As he was preparing his disciples for his death and resurrection, Jesus told them that his heavenly Father's authority and power is greater than his:

"I [Jesus] said to you, I go away and come again to you. If you loved me you would rejoice, because I said, I go to the Father: for my Father is greater than I" (Jn.14:28 KJV).

Jesus tells Pilate that authority is given by the Sovereign God:

"Where do you come from? When Jesus did not respond to him, Pilate said, Why don't you speak to me? Don't you know that I have the authority to crucify you, and I have the authority to release you? Jesus answered and said, You would have no authority over me if it were not given to you from above . . . [i.e., from the Sovereign God]" (Jn.19:9-11 Para.).

The apostle Paul wrote the following to the elect at Rome about the Sovereign God's authority and power:

"Let every soul be subject to higher authorities, for there is no authority except from God [the Sovereign God]; but the authorities that exist have been ordained by God [the Sovereign God]" (Rom. 13:1 Para.).

The apostle Paul was also inspired to foretell the presentation of the earth and all righteous individuals to God the Father by Jesus Christ at the completion of the plan for the salvation of humanity. Paul's message reveals two important facts: 1) God the Father is the Sovereign God who is in authority over all that exists and 2) Jesus Christ rules God the Father's kingdom for him:

"Then comes the end, when he [Jesus Christ] shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he [Jesus Christ] shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he has put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death" (1.Cor.15:24-26 KJV).

Paul begins this prophecy with the statement "Then comes the end." But the end of what? This end refers to the end of the physical existence as God the Father arrives to make the earth the focal point of his realm.

"For he [God the Father] has put all things under his [Jesus Christ's] feet. But when he says all things are put under him, it is manifest that he [God the Father] is excepted, which did put all things under him [Jesus Christ]" (1.Cor.15:27 KJV).

Paul speaks of a time far into the future when all resistance to the Kingdom of God will have been overcome and Christ will rule as the Supreme Sovereign of the earth for his Father:
"And when all things shall be subdued to him [the Father], then shall the Son [Jesus Christ] also himself be subject to him [the Father] that put all things under him, that God [the Father] may be all in all" (1.Cor.15:28 KJV).

CHRIST'S AUTHORITY

Jesus Christ has been delegated authority and power over all the physical and spiritual dimensions of existence in order for him to carry out the work that he has been charged with throughout his heavenly Father's Kingdom. Only the Sovereign Father is above Jesus Christ in authority and power, because the Father is the Sovereign in whom and from whom all authority and power resides and emanates. Notice what Christ told the disciples after his resurrection concerning his authority:

"Then the eleven disciples went into Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had appointed them. And when they saw him they worshiped him: but some doubted. And Jesus came and said to them, saying, All authority is given to me in heaven and in earth" (Matt.28:16-18 Para.).

The English word authority in verse 18 is translated from the Greek word exousia, which means ability to perform an action, the right, authority, or commission conferred by a higher court, and it denotes external power.

Jesus sits at the right hand of God the Father and is second in authority in his heavenly Father's kingdom. Jesus is responsible for managing all aspects of the Kingdom of God (See 1.Cor.15:22-28; Heb.12:1-2), which includes all angels, authorities, and powers (1.Pet. 3:22), as well as his Father's earthly family of king-priests (Eph.5:23).

Because God the Father has delegated to Jesus Christ authority and power over all things, Christ has full discretionary use of spirit-power and can also authorize authority and power to those within his Father's earthly family of kings and priests in order for them to perform the functions and responsibilities they are called to perform during this gospel age of salvation.

Christ's Authority over Evil Spirits

Mark's account of Jesus meeting a man in a synagogue who was possessed with a demon clearly shows that Christ had the authority to remove evil spirits from individuals.

An important point to understand is that authority is an extremely important issue when it comes to who is authorized to command demons to remove themselves from a person and not return:
"And they went into Capernaum; and straightway on the Sabbath day he entered into the synagogue, and taught. And they were astonished at his doctrine: for he taught them as one that had authority, and not as the scribes" (Mk.1:21-22 KJV).

"And there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit; and he cried out, Saying, Let us alone; what have we to do with you, you Jesus of Nazareth? are you come to destroy us? I know you, you are the Holy One of God" (Mk.1:23-24 KJV; Lk.4:33-35).

In verse 24, the English word destroy is a translation of the Greek word appolumi, which means to destroy fully, complete destruction, to perish, or to die. This same word is used many times to describe the utter destruction of individuals and places (See Matt.10:28, 12:14, 21:41; Lk.17:29). All of the examples noted of the word apollumi are used to convey utter or complete destruction. Both the Hebrew and the Greek words for destroy mean the destruction and cessation of existence.

The question the demon asked is important because it tells us four essential facts about evil spirits:

1. Evil spirits recognize those who have authority over them.
2. Evil spirits know they can be destroyed.
3. Some evil spirits know they are going to die for their rebellion.
4. Jesus has the power to destroy evil spirits.

"And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold your peace, and come out of him. And when the unclean spirit had torn him, and cried with a loud voice, he came out of him. And they were all amazed, insomuch that they questioned among themselves, saying, What thing is this? What new doctrine is this? for with authority commanded he even the unclean spirits, and they do obey him" (Mk.1:25-27 KJV).

The Twelve Disciples/Apostles

Jesus had the authority to remove evil spirits from individuals, as well as the authority to authorize others to do the same:

"And when he had called to him his twelve disciples, he gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease" (Matt.10:1 KJV). See also Matt.10:8.

Even after Christ's death and resurrection, all of the apostles continued to have authority and power over evil spirits in order to remove their control and possession of individuals:
"And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people; (and they were all with one accord in Solomon's porch. And of those remaining no man ventured to join with them: but the people magnified them. And more believers were added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women.) Insomuch that they brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that at the least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them. There came also a multitude out of the cities round about to Jerusalem, bringing sick folks, and them which were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed every one" (Acts 5:12-16 KJV Para.).

Although Satan and evil spirits can cause all sorts of diseases, deformities, and physical disabilities, we must be careful not to ascribe all of these conditions to demonic possession, because most of these conditions are the product of natural circumstances or accidents.

The Seventy

Besides the twelve men who were Jesus' constant companions and were chosen to eventually be the leaders of the early church, Jesus chose seventy other men to proclaim the Kingdom of God. These men were also authorized to wield spiritual power, including the power to cast out evil spirits:

"After these things the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, where he himself would come" (Lk.10:1 KJV).

"And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject to us through your name. And he said to them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven. Behold, I give to you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you. Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject to you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven" (Lk.10: 17-20 KJV).

Paul The Apostle

Although the apostle Paul was not of the twelve or the seventy who proclaimed the Kingdom of God with Jesus, Paul was also given many authorizations of spiritual powers, including the authority to remove evil spirits:

"And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul: So that from his body were brought to the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them" (Acts 19:11-12 KJV).

The account in the Book of Acts in which Paul casts a demon out of a woman at Philippi demonstrates his authorization to remove evil spirits and provides insight into how this authority is used and recognized:
"And it came to pass, as we went to prayer, a certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination met us, which brought her masters much gain by soothsaying" (Acts 16:16 KJV).

The English word *divination* in verse 16 is a translation of the Greek word *puthon*, which is taken from the name of the region of Delphi where the seat of the famous oracle was located. By analogy *puthon* means a diviner, inspiration, soothsaying.

The English word *soothsaying* in verse 16 is a translation of the Greek word *manteuomai*, which means a prophet (to rave through inspiration); to divine, i.e., utter spells (under the pretense of foretelling).

The indication is that this young woman was controlled and possessed by an evil spirit that cast spells (i.e., performed witchcraft), pretended to foretell the future, and revealed knowledge which could not be obtained through natural means. Whatever the ability projected through this young woman by the evil spirit, it was extremely lucrative for her owners.

"The same followed Paul and us, and cried, saying, These men are the servants of the most high God, which show to us the way of salvation. And this did she many days. But Paul, being grieved, turned and said to the spirit, I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And he came out the same hour" (Acts 16:17-18 KJV).

When Paul decided to remove the evil spirit, he did so by making sure those around him and the spirit itself understood where his authority came from. Paul did not engage the evil spirit in a lengthy conversation; he just commanded the spirit to leave by saying, "I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her." As soon as the spirit had been commanded to leave, it did so because it knew Paul spoke with the authority of God the Father and Christ. This event tells us the following things:

- Evil spirits recognize the servants of the true God.
- Some evil spirits will harass the elect until they are removed from the person they are controlling or possessing.
- Paul recognized the evil spirit for what it was.
- Authority to remove evil spirits comes through Christ.
- Paul spoke directly to the evil spirit.
- Evil spirits must comply with legitimate demands of true servants of God the Father and Christ.

**Philip**

During Saul's persecution of the early church before his conversion, the apostle Philip went about preaching Christ, healed people, and cast evil spirits out of them:
"As for Saul, he made havoc of the church, entering into every house, and taking men and women committed them to prison. Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word. Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ to them. And the people with one accord gave heed to those things which Philip spoke, 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 palsy, and that were lame, were healed" (Acts 8:3-7 KJV).

**The Stronger Casts out the Weaker**

In addition to being accused of using the power of Satan to remove evil spirits, Christ was also accused of being possessed by evil spirits (Matt.9:34). Through a parable, Christ explained he was stronger than Satan and this accusation constituted blasphemy:

"And the scribes which came down from Jerusalem said, He has Beelzebub, and by the prince of the devils he casts out devils. And he called to them, and said to them in parables, How can Satan cast out Satan? And if a kingdom be divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. And if a house be divided against itself, that house cannot stand. And if Satan rise up against himself, and be divided, he cannot stand, but has an end" (Mk.3:22-26 KJV).

The only way Satan and other evil spirits will relinquish control and possession of an individual is if someone stronger forces them to do so.

These Scribes clearly understood that a household divided against itself falls apart from internal division, strife, power struggles, and squabbles. Christ simply asked them why Satan would destroy his kingdom, because the Scribes knew that Satan is the god and ruler of this world. But, we know that Satan will only rule this world until Christ deposes him at his return. Satan cannot cast himself out of a person by force. However, he can voluntarily relinquish control of a person if it suits his purpose.

Continuing his rebuke of the Scribes, Christ tell them his authority is greater than Satan's.

"No man can enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he will first bind the strong man; and then he will spoil his house" (Mk.3:27 KJV).

In Luke's account of this event, Christ says his authority and power comes from the Sovereign God, which means that he is righteous and of the household of God.

"And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your sons cast them out? therefore shall they be your judges. But if I with the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt the Kingdom of God is come upon you" (Lk.11:19-20 KJV). See also Matt.12:27-28.
The framing of Christ's question indicates that, either at that time or before his ministry, there were sons of the spiritual leaders of the Jews who had the ability to cast out evil spirits. Because demonic possession was prevalent among the Jews and people of other nations, the Creator God either authorized specific individuals with the ability and power to cast out evil spirits or he honored their prayers requesting the removal of these evil spirits. Whatever the case, Christ states that evil spirits were cast out by sons of the spiritual leaders of the Jews. The scribes could not answer Christ's question, because he had already shown them that it takes someone more powerful than Satan to cast out Satan and they knew that God is the only being with more authority and power than Satan.

In Mark, Christ informs the Scribes that they are on dangerous ground by accusing him of being possessed by Satan:

"Truly I say to you, All sins shall be forgiven to the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme: But he that shall blaspheme against the holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation Because they said, He has an unclean spirit" (Mk.3:28-30 KJV).

These scribes had either personally seen or heard about Christ proclaiming the Kingdom of God, teaching God's truth, performing acts of compassion through healing people, miraculously feeding people, and casting out evil spirits, yet they accused him of doing these things through the power of Satan. They could find no fault with what Christ taught and the miracles he performed, except that the truth he taught condemned them as unrighteous individuals. Therefore, they attacked his character, accusing him of being possessed by an evil spirit and using satanic power to perform supernatural works.

This is why Christ told them there was no forgiveness for blasphemy against the holy spirit (i.e., God's power and the essence of his existence as a spirit-being). Blasphemy against God's power is the same as showing disrespect for the Sovereign God himself. The result of blasphemy against the holy spirit is the second death from which there is no return. See Matt.12:31-33.

TWO DIFFICULT TEXTS

There are two difficult texts in Mark and Luke about casting out evil spirits which must be dealt with before we move on to the next section. These texts tell of a man who cast out evils spirits using Christ's name. However, he was not one of the twelve or the seventy Christ sent to proclaim the Kingdom of God. Moreover, he was not among the people who performed miracles in Christ's name whom Christ called lawless.
Keep in mind that this event happened during Christ's ministry and under the covenant with national Israel, which was terminated after his death and resurrection. The agreement God the Father makes with the sons of his new creation is different in many ways from the covenant with national Israel. God the Father's agreement contains many different authorizations and rules of conduct which must be adhered to in order to receive benefits under this agreement which were not a part of the covenant with national Israel (See the Book of Hebrews). One of these authorizations pertains to who is allowed to cast out evil spirits and how this power is to be used during the gospel age of salvation:

"And John answered him, saying, Master, we saw one casting out devils in your name, but he does not follow us: and we forbid him, because he does not follow us. But Jesus said, Do not forbid him: for there is no man which shall do a miracle in my name, that can lightly speak evil of me. For he that is not against us is on our part" (Mk.9:38-40 KJV Para.). See also Lk.9:49-50.

Christ told his disciples not to forbid this man from casting out evil spirits. Apparently, this man had the authority to cast out evil spirits under the terms and conditions of the Creator God's covenant with national Israel and was neither violating God's law nor teaching in opposition to Christ's message; otherwise, Christ would have said so. Moreover, the evil spirits would not have allowed him to cast them out if he did not have the authority and power to do so.

The question Christ put to the spiritual leaders of the Jews about their sons casting out evil spirits, which is noted twice in the gospel accounts also indicates that some men under the covenant with ancient Israel were authorized by God to cast out evil spirits. See Matt:12:27-28; LK.11:19

Although no specific instructions can be found in the laws given to ancient Israel about the removal of evil spirits from people, there are many instructions not to allow people to remain in Israel who associated with evil spirits or practiced witchcraft:

"When you enter the land the Lord your God is giving you, do not learn to imitate the detestable ways of the nations there. Let no one be found among you who sacrifices his son or daughter in the fire, who practices divination or sorcery, interprets omens, engages in witchcraft, or casts spells, or who is a medium or spiritist or who consults the dead. Anyone who does these things is detestable to the Lord, and because of these detestable practices the Lord your God will drive out those nations before you. You must be blameless before the Lord your God" (Deut.18:9-13 NIV).
Because some of the Scribes' sons had the ability to cast out evil spirits (Lk.11:19-20), it seems logical that this ability was also given anciently to Israelite men in order to perform God's law, which mandated the removal of all who were associated with evil spirits or practiced witchcraft. This probably would have occasionally necessitated the removal of an evil spirit from a person.

People Who Oppose God's Law

The following is a serious warning to people who perform supernatural works and claim authority from Christ when he has not given them this authority:

"Not every one that says to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but only the ones doing the will of my Father in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name cast out demons, and in your name do many works of power? And I will tell them, I never knew you; depart from me you who practice lawlessness!" (Matt. 7:21-23 Para). See also Matt.15:3-9; Lk.6:46-49.

These people have deceived themselves into thinking they are God the Father's children and are authorized by Christ to do supernatural works. But, Jesus says, "I never knew you."

These people are not converted; they are not the Father's children and they do not have the holy spirit dwelling within them. Otherwise, Christ would know them. But, where do these people whom Jesus refers to as lawless get their authority and power to perform supernatural works? The following are three possible sources of their authority and power to foretell future events, cast out evil spirits, and perform other supernatural works.

1. Deception by Evil Spirits

Through many means, evil spirits can easily influence susceptible people into believing they have been given a gift of prophecy from God.

Evil spirits are extremely intelligent, clever, powerful, and deceptive. These spirit-beings existed long before humans were created and have amassed a tremendous amount of knowledge about the physical environment and human behavior, which gives them the ability to predict environmental events and the end result of certain human behaviors. Moreover, these spirit-beings have the power to manipulate the physical environment within certain limits and cause humans who are susceptible to their influence to make decisions and behave in certain ways in order facilitate a predicted outcome.

The removal of an evil spirits presence in a place or their influence or control of an individual is easily accomplished by evil spirits. There is no doubt that, if it fits their goals, they can voluntarily or pretend to remove their presence in a place or their influence or control over a person's mind or body.
The scriptures clearly show that some spirit-beings are more powerful than others. Therefore, it is logical to assume that, in order to deceive people, a more powerful evil spirit who is inhabiting a person or performing works for a person can remove control or possession of a lesser demon from a human body.

An evil spirit who controls or possesses a person or performs works for a person can easily manifest supernatural works and cause people who are susceptible to their influence to believe the person has been given these powers from the true God.

2. Discovered Knowledge

Throughout history, there have been people who discovered how to use physical and spiritual powers to gain insight and knowledge or to affect the physical and supernatural realms. During the beginnings of the early church, the Father called some people to salvation who had used their knowledge of the physical and spiritual dimensions of existence for the wrong purposes. But, after understanding their error regarding these forbidden practices, they repented and destroyed their books which held this knowledge:

"And many that believed came, and confessed, and showed their deeds. Many of them also which used magical arts brought their books, and burned them before all: and the price of these books was about 50,000 pieces of silver. So the word of God grew greatly and prevailed" (Acts 19:18-20 KJV Para.).

God strongly condemns the use of unauthorized knowledge and power, because its practice draws people away from truth and into error, which will lead to eternal death if not repented of.

3. Secret Knowledge

There are three categories of people who have the knowledge and ability to manipulate or affect the physical and spirit dimensions of existence through physical or spiritual power:

1. People who have discovered this knowledge and gained this ability through studying the natural and spirit realms of existence without being influenced by evil spirits.
2. People who have been guided into or given this knowledge and ability by evil spirits.
3. People who have been guided into or given this knowledge and ability by God the Father and Jesus Christ through their physical or spirit-servants or through the influence of the holy spirit.
Whether or not you choose to believe there are people who have knowledge and abilities which are outside the norm of human experience, history and the biblical record clearly show that many people have possessed this secret knowledge which gave them the ability to interact with the physical and spirit dimension of existence in order to perform supernatural works.

The Seven Sons of the Priest

The account of the seven sons of the priest Sceva contains an extremely serious warning about the danger of attempting to cast out a demon without the authorization of Christ:

"Then certain of the vagabond Jews, exorcists, took upon them to call over them which had evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preaches. And there were seven sons of one Sceva, a Jew, and chief of the priests, which did so" (Acts 19:13-14 KJV).

These seven brothers were not followers of Christ; they wandered around as conjurers working magical spells, a practice forbidden by God (Lev.19:26; 21:27; Deut.18:10-12).

"And the evil spirit answered and said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are you? And the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, and overcame them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded" (Acts 19:15-16 KJV).

These brothers seemed to have thought the name of Jesus contained magical power and by uttering his name they could force their will on an evil spirit. However, this is not the case at all. Neither the phonetic name of the Messiah nor its vocalization are endowed with magical power as some teach. It is through Christ's authorization to use the power of the holy spirit that a person can perform righteous works and utilize spiritual gifts, such as the authority to remove evil spirits from a person.

This evil spirit recognized the authority of Jesus and Paul and it knew these seven men did not have authority over it. This is why it said it did not know them.

How did this evil spirit recognize the difference in authority between Jesus and Paul and the sons of Sceva? How did it know that these seven men did not have the authority to cast out evil spirits?

The sons of Sceva were not of the Sovereign Father's new creation; they were not his sons with the indwelling of his holy spirit, which makes his sons entirely different, in a spiritual sense, from humans with only the spirit of man as a part of their existence.
All spirit-beings, whether good or evil, can easily recognize the difference between the spiritual essence of normal human beings and those who have been reborn as part of the Sovereign Father's new creation. Moreover, all spirit-beings know the authority that individuals have and do not have in the spirit realm.

**Dangerous Associations**

The ability to foretell future events, cast out demons, and perform awesome supernatural works is not necessarily evidence of a converted mind or a righteous person. Jesus says that some individuals who do these things are lawless, which means they are not in harmony with the Sovereign God's truth and therefore will not be granted permission to enter the Kingdom of God. See Matt.7:21-23; Gal.5:19-21; Rev.22:14-15. Moreover, there are people who do not believe in the God of the Bible, but are of different religions and philosophies who are able to perform supernatural works.

It is wise for those who are serious about their salvation and their physical safety to be aware of the dangers associated with practices which are forbidden by God's law and individuals who seem to be righteous, but are not.

**SHOULD EVIL SPIRITS ALWAYS BE REMOVED?**

Should an evil spirit always be removed from someone? You may think that the answer is always yes, but, each confrontation with an evil spirit is unique, so how to deal with an evil spirit depends entirely upon the circumstances. In fact, removing an evil spirit from someone may not always be prudent in light of the extremely serious warning Christ gave about the inherent danger to the person over whom an evil spirit has relinquished its control and possession:

"When the spirit is gone out of a man, he walks through dry places, seeking rest, and finds none. Then he says, I will return into my house from where I came out: and when he comes, he finds it empty, swept, and garnished. Then he goes, and takes with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first. Even so shall it be also to this wicked generation" (Matt.12:43-45 KJV Para.). See also Lk.11:24-26.

Although this warning was primarily meant for the Pharisees and the House of Judah who lived where Jesus proclaimed his heavenly Father's good news message, this warning also reveals why it is possible for an evil spirit to possess a person again, after it already relinquished control. Jesus' warning also explains what makes it possible for other evil spirits to then have an opportunity to control and possess that same person.
Being empty, swept, and garnished means that such a person is without any protection from demonic attack, control, and possession. This would seem to be a hopeless situation for a person who becomes controlled and possessed by an evil spirit if it were not for the following record of Jesus casting out the particularly cruel demon noted in Mark, chapter 9:

"When Jesus saw that the people came running together, he rebuked the foul spirit, saying to him, You dumb and deaf spirit, I order you, come out of him, and do not enter him again" (Mk.9:25 Para.).

Jesus orders this evil spirit to leave the boy and never return. This record reveals that a person who has the authority and power to cast out evil spirits can also forbid them from returning to possess the same person again. This command is especially important when an evil spirit is removed from infants, very young children, and people who for whatever reason do not have a strong will or the mental capacity to resist evil influence.

It is possible to cast out an evil spirit and forbid it from returning, but nothing will prevent other evil spirits from controlling and possessing a person who has had an evil spirit cast out of them, unless one or more of the following circumstances exists:

- A person who has the authority and power to cast out evil spirits also has the authority to forbid all evil spirits to influence, control, or possess the person who was formerly possessed. This type of command may be necessary for infants, young children, or people in a mental state which makes it impossible for them to resist evil.
- The Sovereign Father is asked by righteous individuals to protect the formerly possessed person from future control and possession by evil spirits and the Father honors the request.
- The formerly possessed person has the mental maturity and a willingness to resist evil influence, in order to remain free from demonic influence, control, and possession.

The Ability To Resist Evil

The apostle James wrote the following to the elect about protecting ourselves from evil influence:

"Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. . ." (Jms.4:7-8 KJV).

Although James was writing to people who knew and understood the Sovereign Father's truth, his instruction reveals a spiritual law that has force and power in the spirit realm.
The result of resisting an evil spirit's influence is that the evil spirit will leave, because it has no power to influence, control, or possess a person who is resisting it. This law of resistance not only affords protection to the Sovereign Father's earthly children who have the indwelling of his holy spirit but also to anyone else who will apply its force and power to resist an evil spirit's influence.

The apostle James' instruction to resist evil is predicated on a person having some knowledge and understanding of God's truth which defines good and evil. Although a person may not have the indwelling of the holy spirit, a basic knowledge of good and evil is an inherent part of every normal person's mental makeup.

People who are open to being influenced, controlled, and possessed by evil spirits are those who are not defending their house (i.e., the body that they inhabit), or do not have the will or the mental capacity to resist.

The best defense against an evil influence or and evil spirit is to resist and call on God for help and support in your effort to resist evil.

**Biblical Examples**

Just as many people in ancient times were controlled and possessed by evil spirits, many people today are in the same situation. The biblical examples of when to cast out an evil spirit are clear; they are to be cast out when requested by a parent of a possessed child (Mk.9:17-29) and when they are interfering with the work of the church (Acts 16:17-18). Although other circumstances may warrant the casting out of an evil spirit, these circumstance would have to be carefully considered as to their short and long term consequences and whether or not they fall within the Father's plan for the salvation of mankind.

**Mary Magdalene**

Much is left unsaid in the biblical narratives about the removal of evil spirits and the reason for their removal. In the following two accounts, we are told that evil spirits were removed from several women, but we are not told what precipitated their removal:

"And certain women, which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary called Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils, And Joanna the wife of Chuza Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others, which ministered to him of their substance" (Lk.8:2-3 KJV).

"Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils" (Mk.16:9 KJV).
We know that Jesus cast evil spirits out of these women and that they followed him and helped in supplying the needs of his ministry. Other accounts of Jesus casting out evil spirits show he did this out of compassion, as confirmation of his authority from his heavenly Father, and as proof that his message was from the Sovereign God.

Casting out evil spirits is not an action to be performed without carefully considering the consequences. Those who have this ability should be very careful to use this authority and power prudently in order to avoid causing great harm to both the person who is controlled and possessed by an evil spirit and those who are closely associated with the possessed person.

COMMANING EVIL SPIRITS

When it is determined that an evil spirit is to be cast out of a person, it is important to know how to command an evil spirit to relinquish control of a person and leave them.

The biblical examples of the commands to be used in order to make an evil spirit relinquish control of a person are simple and direct. There are no examples of making any hand gestures (e.g., the sign of a cross), uttering of magic words, phrases, use of graphic designs or symbols, sprinkling of water, burning of incense, use of oils or potions, chanting, uttering incantations, or performing rituals of any kind. The following are some biblical examples of commands that were issued to remove evil spirits.

Jesus' Example

"And in the synagogue there was a man, which had a spirit of an unclean devil, and cried out with a loud voice, Saying, Let us alone; what have we to do with you, you Jesus of Nazareth? Are you come to destroy us? I know you, you are the Holy One of God. And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold your peace, and come out of him. And when the devil had thrown him in the midst, he came out of him, and did not hurt him" (Lk.4:33-35 KJV Para.).

Jesus' command to this evil spirit is short and direct without any elaboration. Jesus' command contains the following three instructions: 1) Be quite; 2) Come out; and 3) Do not hurt the man.

"And they were all amazed, and spoke among themselves, saying, What a word is this! for with authority and power he commands the unclean spirits, and they come out" (Lk.4:36 KJV).

The Demon Legion

In Matthew and Mark's accounts of Jesus removing many evil spirits from two men who were possessed by violent evil spirits, Jesus said to one of the spirits, "Come out of the man, you unclean spirit" (Mk.5:6-8). Jesus only needed to issue a short, non-negotiable command and the demons had no choice but to obey. See Matt.8:28-33; Mk.5:1-17.
The Apostle Paul's Example

In the following example of the apostle Paul removing an evil spirit from a young woman, he issued his command in the name of Jesus Christ. By invoking Christ’s name in his command, Paul was informing this spirit of his authority to remove it and that this authority comes from and through Christ:

"The same followed Paul and us, and cried, saying, These men are the servants of the most high God, which show to us the way of salvation. And this did she many days. But Paul, being grieved, turned and said to the spirit, I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And he came out the same hour" (Acts 16:17-18 KJV).

A person with the authority and power to remove evil spirits does not need to make an appeal to an evil spirit to relinquish its control and possession of an individual, because their authority and power to remove an evil spirit is absolute. Their command must be obeyed because it is the same as if Christ gave the command.

A Lack of Faith

The books of Matthew and Mark seem to contain a record of the same event in which the disciples were unable to cast out a demon, but the account in Mark has more details. This event is important from the aspect of the necessity for strong, unwavering faith in casting out certain kinds of evil spirits:

"And when they came to the multitude, there came to him a certain man, kneeling down to him, and saying, Lord, have mercy on my son: for he is lunatic, and sore vexed: for he often falls into the fire, and often into the water. And I brought him to your disciples, and they could not cure him" (Matt.17:14-16 KJV Para.).

The disciples and seventy others whom Jesus had chosen were all authorized by him to cast out evil spirits and to heal the sick as they went about proclaiming the Kingdom of God, so why were they not able to remove this particular evil spirit? Jesus gives the answer in verse 17:

"Then Jesus answered and said, O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I put up with you? bring him here to me. And Jesus rebuked the devil; and he departed out of him: and the child was cured from that very hour" (Matt.17: 17-18 KJV Para.).

Faith in the biblical sense is the trust or the confidence that whatever is requested through prayer will be received, and whenever one exercisers their spiritual authority and power, whatever action is commanded to happen will be happen.
Although Jesus had given the disciples the authority and power to cast out evil spirits, they did not have the required faith in exercising their commands to remove this particularly evil and powerful spirit.

"Then the disciples came to Jesus privately, and said, Why could not we cast him out? And Jesus said to them, Because of your unbelief: for truly I say to you, If you have faith as a grain of mustard seed, you shall say to this mountain, Remove from here and go there; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible to you"  (Matt.17: 19-20 KJV Para.).

The kind of faith that Jesus speaks of is the absolute faith in one's authorization and ability to use spiritual power; in that, when one commands something to happen, it will happen.

Mark's account of this same event fills in some important details which are missing from Matthew's account:

"And one of the multitude said, Master, I have brought my son to you, which has a mute spirit; And wherever he takes him, he tears him: and he foams, and gnashes with his teeth, and pines away [to desiccate; to shrivel; to become rigid]: and I asked your disciples to cast him out; and they could not"  (Mk.9:17-18 Para.).

"He [Christ] answered him, and said, O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him to me. And they brought him to him: and when he saw him, immediately the spirit tore him; and he fell on the ground, and wallowed foaming. And he asked his father, How long ago did this come on him? And he said, Of a child. And often it has cast him into the fire, and into the waters, to destroy him: but if you cannot do anything, have compassion on us, and help us"  (Mk.9:19-22 Para.).

Mark's account shows when some evil spirits recognize a person's authority over them and know that they have been recognized for what they are, they will act out in rage.

"Jesus said to him [the boy's father], If you can believe, all things are possible to him that believes. And immediately the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help my lack of faith"  (Mk.9:23-24 Para.).

Jesus had the authority and the power to remove the demon, but required the father to believe that the spirit would be removed. The belief required was not just a belief in the power of Jesus to remove demons. The father already believed that Jesus could cast out demons based on what he had come to know about Jesus casting out many demons, but he did not have a belief beyond doubt that Jesus could cast out this particular demon. Because the father knew he lacked this kind of faith, he asked Jesus to help him to believe.
"When Jesus saw that the people came running together, he rebuked the foul spirit, saying, You dumb and deaf spirit, I order you, come out of him, and do not enter him again" (Mk.9:25 Para.).

Jesus simply ordered this evil spirit to leave the body and not return. This order is especially important for very young children and people who, for whatever reason, do not have a strong will or the mental capacity to resist evil influence. See Matt.12:43-45.

"Then the demon screamed terribly and convulsed the boy again and left him; and the boy lay there limp and motionless, to all appearance dead. A murmur ran through the crowd, "He is dead." But Jesus took him by the hand and helped him to his feet and he stood up and was all right! Afterwards, when Jesus was alone in the house with his disciples, they asked him, "Why couldn't we cast that demon out? Jesus replied, "Cases like this require prayer" (Mk.9:26-29 TLB).

Both Matthew and Mark record the reason Jesus gave for the disciples not being able to cast out this kind of demon was that prayer was required. But, why would a person who is authorised to cast out evil spirits need to pray in order to perform this task? Prayer is only needed when there is a lack of faith; a person would not need to ask their heavenly Father for help if their faith was unwavering and their confidence was absolute in their authorization and ability to use the power of the holy spirit.

The reason for prayer seems to be for the purpose of beseeching the Father for the kind of unwavering faith and wisdom necessary to deal with extremely powerful evil spirits and extremely difficult situations.

**IN THE NAME OF JESUS CHRIST**

The apostle Paul introduces his first letter to the church at Corinth by acknowledging them as the Father's elect children who have the right to call upon the name of Jesus Christ. He also acknowledges that they are the recipients of spiritual gifts from the Father through Jesus Christ:

"To the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints along with all who call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ in every place. Grace be to you, and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. I give thanks always to my God [God the Father] concerning the gift of the grace of God [God the Father] that is given to you in Christ Jesus; That in everything you were enriched in him, in all discourse and knowledge; Even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you: So as for you to be lacking in no gift, awaiting the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1.Cor.1:2-7 Para.).

Many places in the New Testament tell us how the Father's elect children are able to access and communicate with him and how certain of the elect are able to perform supernatural works and miracles through God's spirit-power.
In order to properly use the authority to deal with evil spirits, it is necessary to clearly understand the meaning of the phrase, *in the name of Jesus Christ* and how it applies to the authority to use spirit-power and to give commands and instructions to evil spirits which they must obey.

**In the Name of Jesus**

What does the phrase *in the name of Jesus Christ* really mean to those who are called to salvation and to perform a work for God the Father and Jesus Christ? Why is it necessary to use a name when making requests of the Father, performing physical or spiritual acts, and giving commands and instructions to evil spirits? Is there some knowledge about the Messiah's name that must be acquired in order to use the power of the holy spirit to perform a physical or spiritual work?

The answers to all these questions are very important to anyone who has been called to salvation during this gospel age, because the answers have a direct impact on our ability to secure immortal life in the Family and Kingdom of God, as well as our ability to perform the various physical and spiritual responsibilities which God may give us during this lifetime.

The word *name* in both the Hebrew and the Greek languages, in the strictest sense, denotes a mark or identification of a person or thing. There are many examples in the biblical text in which a person's name is not only used to identify that person but also their authority, character, or reputation. It is also well known in biblical and rabbinical teachings that the phrase *in the name of* is used to connect the one with the authority to the one from whom the authority comes, and to connect a teacher with the authority and respect of the teacher who taught him.

Just uttering the words *in the name of* or *on behalf of* the Father or Jesus Christ has no power or meaning in and of itself. Moreover, these words have no power over anything, and they do not have the power to cause anything to occur in the physical or spirit realms of existence, unless the person who uses these words is authorized to use the authority and power which resides with God the Father and Jesus Christ.

To speak in the name of the Father or Jesus Christ is to use one's authorization as their representative to speak in their stead and on their behalf. It is one thing to just say the words *in the name of* or *on behalf of* the Father or Jesus Christ without understanding what these words are intended to mean and invoke, but it is another thing to understand the concept and power behind these words when they are spoken by someone who has been authorized by God the Father and Jesus Christ to perform a certain function or responsibility.
The various names of God the Father who is the Supreme Sovereign of all things and Jesus Christ who sits at his right hand as his Son and the high priest of all humanity are very powerful. This is not because the names themselves contain power or the various languages in which people may choose to speak these names are somehow holy. Their names have power because the authority and power comes from the two immortal beings whom the names describe and represent.

The expressions *in the name of*, *by the name of*, *through the authority of*, and *on the behalf of*, which are spoken before the Father's or Jesus' names, have the same conceptual meaning when used to invoke our delegated authority and power as a son of God. These expressions can be used for the following purposes by the elect of God:

- To communicate with the Father in order to fellowship with him
- To share our thoughts with the Father or request something from him
- To use spirit-power in order to influence the physical or spiritual dimensions of existence
- To represent ourselves as a servant of the Father, Jesus Christ, and the Family of God
- To show by whose supernatural, physical, or spiritual authority works are being performed
- As evidence of our authority to command obedience when dealing with an evil spirit

**Making the Distinction**

When God's people or other people spoke of the true God in biblical record, the true God was always differentiated from other gods by being referred to as the God of Abraham, the God of the Hebrews, the God of Israel, the God of the Jews, or the God of gods. This was done so there would be no doubt that the God-being spoken of was a different God from false gods. See Gen.24:12; 28:13; Ex.3:18; 5:1; Deut.10:17.

There are many gods in this world, but only one who claims to be the Sovereign God of all things, and there is only one who claims to be this Sovereign's firstborn Son and Savior of humanity. Therefore, the use of the official titles or name(s) of the Father and his Son when speaking of them or on their behalf or using an authorization which comes from them is what qualifies, defines, separates, and makes a distinction between God the Father and Jesus Christ and the false gods of this world.

When Jesus spoke of God or was asked whom he represented, by whose authority he taught the truth of God, or by whose authority he did supernatural works, he made sure the people knew he was speaking of the Sovereign God of all things and that he was authorized to represent and speak for him and perform supernatural works by his power. Jesus spoke of his God as the Father, the true God, my God, and your God (Jn.20:17), which left no doubt that he represented a God who was superior to and different from the gods of this world.
When the apostles and others of the early congregations of God spoke of God, they defined of whom they were speaking and by whose authority they were preaching and performing supernatural works. Therefore, when the elect of God speak of God, they should also make a clear distinction between God the Father and Jesus Christ and the gods of this world. This basic truth must be emphasized when representing God the Father and Jesus Christ or when preaching the gospel message, performing any supernatural works on their behalf, or using one's discretionary spiritual authority and power.

THE SOVEREIGN GOD'S NAME

One of the primary reasons our Redeemer was sent to earth was to reveal the Sovereign God as the Father, as well as what his name is to his chosen people. It is extremely important to understand that the Sovereign God of all things is not the Creator God whom the Israelites worshiped under the Mount Sinai covenant. The Sovereign God of all things is the Father of Jesus Christ who was the Creator God whom the Israelites worshiped. Moreover, the Father is the Sovereign God whom Jesus said is to be worshiped by all beings—physical or spirit. In order to truly understand who the Father is, one must first understand that the Father and the Son are two separate and distinct individuals in the Family of God and that Jesus Christ is the Creator God who became the Father's physical son and the first son of his new creation.

God is a Family

"For this cause I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named" (Eph.3:14-15 KJV).

Until a person comes to understand that there are two individual and separate God-beings who comprise the God Family in heaven at this time, and that the relationship between the Sovereign God (God the Father) and the Creator God (Jesus Christ) is a father-son relationship, almost none of the Bible, including the phrase in the name of Jesus Christ, can be clearly understood.

In reference to the Father's name, Jesus says the following:

"I have manifested your name to the men which you gave me out of the world: yours they were, and you gave them me; and they have kept your word" (Jn.17:6 KJV).

"O righteous Father, the world has not known you: but I have known you, and these have known that you have sent me. And I have declared to them your name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith you have loved me may be in them, and I in them" (Jn.17:25-26 KJV).

Jesus says that he revealed the Father's name to his disciples; therefore, it must be possible to discover what the Father's name is and what he wants to be called by those whom he has called to be his sons.
The Sovereign Father

"And he [Jesus] went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as you will . . . He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, your will be done” (Matt.26:39-42 KJV Para.).

"And it came to pass, that, as he [Jesus] was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said to him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples. And he said to them, When you pray, say, Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done, as in heaven, so in the earth” (Lk.11:1-2 KJV Para.). See also Matt.6:9-10.

From these examples in Matthew and Luke, it is clear that the Sovereign God of all that exists wants to be called Father by those whom he considers to be his sons. Moreover, he is our Father, which is what his firstborn Son who is the Savior and Redeemer of humanity said to call him. The English word Father, which is used in these two texts is translated from the Greek word Pater and is from a root word that means nourisher, protector, and upholder. It connotes fatherly care and someone who has absolute authority as a father.

OUR SAVIOR’S NAME

"Therefore the Lord [the Creator God] himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son and shall call his name Immanuel [God is with us]” (Isa.7:14 KJV).

The prophet Isaiah said that the Savior would be named Immanuel. In a later prophecy he was inspired to reveal many other names for the Savior and Redeemer of humanity (Isa.9:6). Both Joseph and Mary were told to name the Messiah Jesus, and that he would be the Immanuel spoken of by the prophets (Matt.1:21-23; Lk.1:28-35).

Who Did Our Savior Say He Was?

"When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am? And they said, Some say that you are John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets. He said to them, But whom do you say that I am? Simon Peter said, You are the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus said to him, You are blessed, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood have not revealed this to you, but my Father that is in heaven has revealed this to you” (Matt.16:13-17 Para.).

In the Book of Revelation, Jesus calls himself the Alpha and Omega, and he is also called The Lamb, The King of kings and The Lord of lords.
The scriptures clearly show that our Savior and Redeemer who is the Christ and God the Father's son has many names by which he is known.

**God the Father and Jesus Christ Have Many Names**

Below are some of the many names and titles of the Sovereign God (God the Father) and the Creator God (Jesus Christ) and the meanings of these names, which show the true character of these two immortal beings. It is important to understand that the scriptural context determines the God being described.

**Hebrew Names**

- Elohim ..........Mighty Ones
- EL ................A Mighty One
- El-Elyon ..........Exalted One; Most High
- El-Shaddai ......Almighty God
- El-Olam ..........God the Everlasting One
- El-Roi ............God Who Sees Me
- El-Berith ..........God of the Covenant
- El-Elohe Israel ..God of Israel
- Emmanuel ..........God With Us

**Greek Names**

- Kuros .............Supremacy
- Theos .............Lord, God, Deity
- Logos .............The Word

It is important to understand that the name of a person has no significance, meaning, or power in and of itself. A name serves only to identify a person or a thing. However, names and titles which are applied to God the Father and Jesus Christ help describe their individual attributes, character, and authority. When studying the attributes and character of God the Father and his son, it becomes clear that it is impossible for any one name or number of names to fully describe the Father and his Son.

Not all of the Father's or his son's names are made known in the biblical or historical record (Rev.19:11-12) and it is not necessary at this time in history to have this information. If it were important, all of their names would have been documented and presented for us to discover. It is important, however, for us to follow the spirit of the instructions which have been revealed to us whenever we communicate with God the Father and use the various delegations of authority and power given to us through the name of Jesus Christ.
Phonetic Sounds of Names

Many people today believe that some words have mystical powers, just as many of the ancients believed. They believe the utterance of mystical sounds or the speaking of certain words in an ancient language, such as Egyptian, Greek, Hebrew, or Latin, have power to alter or influence things and beings in the physical and spirit realms of existence.

Many people today believe they must correctly pronounce one or more of the many Hebrew names of the Creator God, God the Father, and the Savior in order to have access to God or his power. The problem with this belief is not with pronunciation, but with the basic concept of this belief. Nowhere in the Bible is there any support for the use of phonetic sounds in this manner. A specific pronunciation of any of the names of the Creator God, God the Father, or the Savior is of no benefit alone.

What we see in the New Testament is the delegation of authority and power to the elect in order for them to communicate with the Father, perform certain supernatural works, and proclaim the Father's good news message to the world. It does not matter how one pronounces the name(s) of the Father and Jesus, as long as it is done with the proper respect and honor for them. What does matter is having the authorization to communicate with the Father and his Son and to use the Father's spirit-power.

Jesus Came in His Father's Name

"But I have a greater witness than John's, for the works that the Father has given me, that I should finish these works which I do, they bare witness concerning me. And the Father who sent me has himself born witness concerning me . . . I have come in the name of my Father, and you do not receive me . . ." (Jn.5:36-37, 43 Para.). See also Matt.21:9; 23:39; Mk.11:9-19; Lk.19:37-38.

"And Jesus was in the temple area walking in Solomon's Colonnade. The Jews gathered around him, saying, How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Christ tell us plainly. Jesus answered, I did tell you, but you do not believe. The miracles I do in my Father's name speak for me, but you do not believe because you are not my sheep" (Jn.10:23-25 NIV).

Matthew 8:5-10, 13 Paraphrased

The Jews were constantly questioning and challenging Jesus' authority to teach the word of God and to perform the great works that he did; however, there were a few individuals who understood his authority to do these things:
"When Jesus had entered Capernaum, a centurion came beseeching him, and said to him, Lord, my servant lies at home sick of palsy, and is greatly tormented. And Jesus said I will come and heal him. But the centurion said to him, Lord, I am not worthy that you should come under my roof. But only say the word and my servant shall be healed. For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and I say to this man Go, and he goes; and to another, Come, and he comes; and to my servant Do this, and he does it" (vs.5-9).

The centurion understood that the power Jesus had did not come from him, but that Jesus was under the authority of a higher power and had been delegated the authority and power to heal and perform supernatural acts at his discretion.

"When Jesus heard this, he marveled, and said to them that followed him, Truly I say to you, in Israel I have not found such great faith as this . . .. And Jesus said to the centurion, Go your way; and as you have believed, so shall it be done for you. And his servant was healed in the same hour" (vs.10,13).

Jesus Christ did not come to earth representing himself and his own authority. He came by and with the authority of God the Father to represent the Father and his kingdom to the world:

"I can of my own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not my own will, but the will of the Father who has sent me" (Jn.5:30 KJV). See also verses 36-38.

The Kingdom of God is extremely organized and functions within a hierarchical structure. The Father who is the Supreme Sovereign over all that exists has delegated all authority to his son to perform his will throughout his kingdom, and his son has delegated some of his authority to his Father's elect children.

Just uttering the words in the name of Jesus Christ, in Jesus' name, or by the authority of Jesus Christ alone provide no authority or power, because these are not magical words. These words are only representations of the office and authority of Jesus Christ through which a person has been granted an authorization.

In order to command evil spirits to obey your instructions, you must be authorized to do so. This authorization is given by the Father to the sons of his new creation through his first son, Jesus Christ, who is the Redeemer and Savior of humanity. Through the authority represented by the name of our Savior, the elect are allowed to command evil spirits to obey their instructions. This authority and power is greater than that of evil spirits, they must obey when given a legitimate command and instruction by one of the elect who is authorized to do so.
DEALING WITH EVIL SPIRITS

Although intelligent and powerful adversaries, evil spirits are no match for those who truly believe in the Sovereign Father and Christ their Savior, because the elect have been given powerful authorizations to remove and control evil spirits. See Rev.12:10-11.

When it is discovered that there is an evil spirit or evil presence within or associated with a person, or that there is an evil spirit or evil presence manifesting itself in your surroundings, carefully and thoughtfully assess the situation and decide what action is necessary. The action you take depends entirely upon the circumstances. Sometimes no action is required because the circumstances are temporary and will not affect you, your loved ones, or others of the elect of God during or after the encounter. However, if it is determined that action should be taken, the following questions must be answered regarding the level of action to take and your level of authority in dealing with evil spirits:

If the situation calls for resisting evil spirits and their influence (See chapter 20, "Resist Evil"), then that approach and level of authority in dealing with evil spirits is appropriate.

If the situation calls for the removal of an evil spirit(s), then you must either have the authority to remove evil spirit(s) or seek the help of an individual who does have this authority.

In either case, the proper level of authority must be exercised in order to accomplish the desired result. Moreover, the command given must be directed to the spirit(s), either orally or through the projection of your thoughts directly to the evil spirit(s). This will reveal to the spirit(s) that you are aware of their presence and that you know that you have authority over them from the Sovereign Father and Jesus Christ.

The following are some of the authorizations that the Father's elect children have a right to exercise over evil spirits:

• Command the spirit(s) to remove itself or its influence from a person, an animal, a building, a home, property, or other surroundings.
• Command the spirit(s) to never come into your presence again.
• Command the spirit(s) to keep silent and not bother you.
• Ask the Father to take care of the situation.

The Command

A command directed to evil spirit(s) does not need to be lengthy; it just needs to contain what you want done and your authority to issue the command. However, you must be very clear as to what is being commanded, because evil spirits go by the letter of the law in their response to a command. Therefore, you must say exactly what you want to be done or not to be done, and leave nothing to be interpreted by the evil spirit(s).
The Statement

The statement in which you deliver your command to the evil spirit(s) must contain your authority to issue the command and what you want done. For example:

- I command you to (whatever is to be done) in the name and by the authority of Jesus Christ.
- By the authority of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, I command you to (whatever is to be done).
- In the name of Jesus Christ, I command you to (whatever is to be done).

Fear of Punishment

When Jesus went to the country of the Gergesenes, he was met by two men who were possessed with evil spirits. When the spirits recognized Jesus, they asked him if he had come to punish them before their appointed time:

"And when he came to the other side into the country of the Gergesenes, two possessed with devils met him, coming out of the tombs, exceeding fierce, so no man could pass by that way. And they cried out, saying, What have we to do with you, Jesus, you Son of God? Are you come here to torment us before the time? And there was a good way off from them a herd of many swine feeding. So the devils besought him, saying, If you cast us out, allow us to go into the herd of swine. And he said to them, Go. And when they came out, they went into the herd of swine: and the whole herd of swine ran violently down a steep place into the sea, and perished in the water. And they that kept them fled, and went their ways into the city, and told every thing, and what was happened to those possessed of devils" (Matt.8:28-33KJV Para.).

There are many punishments that are reserved for the spirits who rebel against God, and some punishments are worse than others, which is why these spirits said what they did about being tormented.

Evil spirits know that they are going to be punished for their rebellion against God, but they do not want to receive this punishment before it is due. Therefore, when appropriate, the Sovereign Father's elect can reinforce their command by telling the spirit(s) to obey what is commanded, because the Sovereign Father will be asked to punish them before their time if they deviate from the intent of the command (See Chapter 6, "Angels Are Not Immortal", for an explanation of the various punishments reserved for evil spirits). As soon as possible after giving this type of command, you must follow through by telling the Father what you have done and asking him to honor your threat of punishment to the evil spirit(s).
Being Proactive

As the end of this present age approaches and demonic activity increases, it is important to be alert for evil influence and take a proactive approach to dealing with evil spirits. For example, you may need to forbid evil spirits from entering your home, a congregational meeting, or forbid the projection of an evil influence through a person into your home or a congregational meeting. There are many other circumstances where it would be prudent and necessary to be proactive in asking the Sovereign Father's protection against evil spirits or issuing a command against their influence.

SUMMARY

The Bible leaves no doubt that there are hundreds of millions and perhaps billions of spirit-beings who have the ability to exist in both the physical and spirit dimensions of existence, and that at least a third of these are evil spirits. Moreover, the Bible leaves no doubt that the elect are given certain authorizations to control the influence that an evil spirit has upon people and the physical dimension of existence.

It is the responsibility of each of the Sovereign Father's earthly children to be aware of the authority and power they have been given through God the Father and Jesus Christ over these evil spirits and their influence. It is paramount that we understand the dangers involved in communication and interaction with evil spirits, as well as the responsibility to oppose their threat to our salvation and eternal destiny.

It is important to remember that being delegated authority to use the power of the Father's holy spirit is not only a great blessing and privilege, but also an awesome responsibility which should be taken very seriously. Therefore, it is wise to spend much time in study, prayer, and meditation in order to understand the purpose and use of spiritual gifts and specialized authorizations of power that come from the Sovereign Father through Jesus Christ.

Study God's Word

We are not given perfect knowledge and understanding of all the mysteries of God's plan or his laws the instant we receive the holy spirit. A short review of the apostles' letters to the churches shows that the acquisition of spiritual knowledge and understanding requires much time, effort, study, and prayer:

"The heart of the righteous studies how to answer: but the mouth of the wicked pours out evil things" (Pro.15:28 KJV).

"Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. But shun profane and idle babblings, for they will increase to more ungodliness" (2.Tim.2:15-16 NKJV). See also 1.Thes.4:10-12; 2.Pet.3:13-18.
All who have accepted the Sovereign Father's call to salvation are admonished to "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good" (1 Thes. 5:21). See also Rom. 12:2.

Although the spirit of God imparts knowledge, understanding, discernment, and wisdom a person must ask the Father for these things, and then follow through with diligent study into God's word and meditation on what you find there:

"Blessed is the man that walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law does he meditate day and night" (Psa. 1:1-2 KJV). See also Psa. 119:15-148; 1 Tim. 4:12-16.

**Be Christ Minded**

In order to use spiritual gifts and authorizations wisely, you must know and understand what the will of the Father and Jesus Christ is in each situation in which you find yourself. Because Jesus Christ knows the will of the Father and is actively carrying out his will in heaven and on the earth. If we know the mind of Christ in a given situation, we also know the will of the Father.

"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 2:5 KJV).

One of the primary ways to have the mind of Christ and understand the Father and his will for us is to study what he has caused to be written for our encouragement and edification:

"See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Wherefore be you not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is" (Eph. 5:15-17 KJV). See Col. 1:7-10.

**The Bible**

The Bible was written primarily for those whom the Father has called to salvation during this age. Through the things written in this book, we can learn from the experience and teaching of others and gain valuable knowledge, understanding, and inspiration to help us in our daily walk with our heavenly Father and our Savior. Moreover, we can learn how to use spiritual gifts and authorizations of spirit-power:

"Every scripture is God-breathed and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; So that the man of God may be perfect, fully finished for every good work" (2 Tim. 3:16-17 KJV Para.). See also Eph. 6:10-17; Heb. 4:12.

"Now all these things happened to them for examples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come" (1 Cor. 10:11 KJV). See also Psa. 19:7; Pro. 1:1-7; Dan. 12:9-12; Col. 1:7-10.
Listen And Obey God's Instructions

Because God speaks to us through his written word, we should study it in order to build a strong foundation of knowledge, which will help us grow spiritually and be successful in dealing with evil spirits:

"All who listen to my [Jesus'] instructions and follow them are wise, like a man who builds his house on solid rock. Though the rain comes in torrents, and the floods rise and the storm winds beat against his house, it won't collapse, for it is built on a rock. But those who hear my instructions and ignore them are foolish, like a man who builds his house on the sand. For when the rains and floods come, and storm winds beat against his house, it will fall with a mighty crash" (Matt.7:24-27 LBP). See also 1.Tim.6:17-19.

By B.L. Cocherell
CHAPTER

TWENTY-FOUR

COMMUNICATION AND INTERACTION WITH THE
SPIRIT REALM

The Bible contains much information about the physical and spirit realms, including communications and interactions between them. Much of this information is extremely important to the Father's elect children who will live during the last few years before Christ returns. At this time, there will be an increase in both the number and activity of evil spirits who intend to destroy the elect. Therefore, it is vitally important for the elect to know and understand something about the communications and interactions between these two dimensions of existence in order to discern when they are taking place and who or what is causing them.

In today's world, just as in ages past, there are many people who have the ability to communicate and interact with the spirit-realm. This communication and interaction falls into two categories:

1. Communication and interaction with God the Father, Jesus Christ, and their servants and powers
2. Communication and interaction with Satan and his servants and powers

Communication and Interaction with God

Normally when people think of communicating with the God of the Bible, they think of prayer. Although prayer is a way to communicate with God, prayer is a one-way communication and sometimes you must wait a considerable length of time to determine the outcome of your prayer. The Bible also documents two-way communication with God in which he provides an immediate response. There are also many methods by which God initiates communication with people in order to give them knowledge, insight, understanding, or instructions.

The following are some of the ways in which the Creator God communicated with people in the past:

- The Creator walked and talked with Adam and Eve.
- The Creator spoke face-to-face with Abraham and ate a meal with him.
- The Creator spoke to Moses out of a burning bush on Mount Sinai, out of the fire and wind, and from the top of the mercy seat.
- The Creator communicated with the people of Israel through the ephod, breastplate, urim, thummin, and teraphim in order to answer questions that were put to him and to give knowledge, insight, understanding, and instructions to his people.

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• The Creator communicated with people through dreams, visions, and the casting or drawing of lots.
• The Creator sent spirit-beings to communicate his thoughts and instructions to them.

Other than through prayer, the following are some of the ways God communicated with people after the advent of the Messiah:

• Jesus personally appeared and spoke to many people after his death and resurrection.
• Jesus spoke out of a bright light to Paul.
• The spirit of God gave knowledge, insight, understanding, and instructions to people.
• God communicated with people through dreams, visions, and the casting or drawing of lots.
• God sent spirit-beings to communicate his thoughts and instructions to people.

Communication with the Sovereign God

The following are important foundational things about communication with the Sovereign God which you should have firmly in mind before continuing this study into communication with the spirit world:

• Neither in the past nor today has the Sovereign God (God the Father) communicated with his children in the same way that the Creator God (Jesus Christ) did. See Jn.1:18; 5:37; 14:13-14.
• God the Father has delegated all power and authority in heaven and earth to Jesus Christ (1.Pet.3:22), including the care, protection, communication, and direction of his elect children.
• From the creation of humanity until the gospel age, the Creator God who became Jesus Christ either personally communicated knowledge, insight, or the will of the Sovereign God (God the Father) and himself to people or he directed the method by which these communications were made.
• Today, Jesus Christ either personally communicates knowledge, insight or the will of God the Father to people or he directs the method by which these communications are made.
• Today, the Father's elect children who have his holy spirit are allowed to communicate with him through the authority of Jesus Christ.
• Today, as in the past, God reveals and communicates his knowledge and will to his people through both physical and spiritual methods.
THE EPHOD, BREASTPLATE, URIM, THUMMIN, AND THE TERAPHIM

In the instructions the Creator gave Moses about the construction of the tabernacle and everything to be used in it were instructions regarding the ephod, breastplate, urim, and thummin which the high priest was to use as he performed his priestly duties. This section will focus the ephod, breastplate, urim, thummin, and the teraphim which are all mentioned as being used to communicate with the Creator.

In the Book of Hosea, there is an extremely curious prophecy pointing to the betrayal of Jesus and an interim period of time before his return and the establishment of the Kingdom of God in which the tribes of Israel will be without a king and a prince and without images, an ephod, or a teraphim:

"And the Lord said to me, Go again. Love a woman loved by a friend, yet an adulteress, according to the love of the Lord toward the sons of Israel, who turn to other gods, and love raisin cakes of grapes. So I bought her for myself with fifteen pieces of silver, and for a homer of barley, and a half barley. And I said to her, You shall stay with me many days. You shall not be a harlot, nor be to a man; and I also will be for you" (Hos.3:1-3 Para.).

This shows the spiritual adultery of national Israel (raisin cakes represent the desirability of sin and idolatrous worship) and the price which was paid to Judas for the betrayal of Jesus. An homer of barley was divided into ten parts, and each part was worth one shekel of silver at that time; hence, the price of Jesus' life was 30 shekels of silver (15 shekels of silver and 1.5 homers of barley equal 30 shekels of silver).

Because of what is said in verse 3 about Israel being restored as a wife to the Creator God (Jesus Christ), it is clear that this prophecy continues on into verses 4 and 5, which speak of the removal of the sacred objects through which the high priest and others communicated with the Creator God:

"For the sons of Israel shall be many days without a king [civil ruler], and prince [spiritual leader], and without a sacrifice, or images, or ephod and teraphim. Afterward the sons of Israel shall return and seek the Lord their God, and David their king. And they shall fear the Lord God and his goodness in the end of the days" (Hos.3:4-5 Para.).

Clearly, the time when David will reign over national Israel again (Ezk.37:24-25) is after the return of Christ when Israel will have been restored to its national sovereignty under the Kingdom of God. Everything noted after the civil ruler is mentioned (i.e., sacrifice, images, ephod, teraphim) pertains to the worship of God and the method through which he communicated with the high priest and others of Israel.
It is important to note that the things mentioned have no tie to any pagan religion; they are all things the Creator God sanctioned as a part of the first agreement with national Israel and were only removed from national Israel because of its rebellion against the Creator God.

There is little doubt that the removal of these things took place over many hundreds of years and culminated in the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem in 70 A.D. After this, the priesthood and the sacrifices were discontinued because of the lack of a proper place in which to worship.

There are many opinions as to exactly how each of the items worn by the high priest were made, what they looked like, and what their actual and symbolic purpose was. Although it would be interesting to understand these things in exact detail, it is not necessary in order to understand the benefits that came from wearing and using these items. Therefore, this section provides only brief comments as to how each sacred item relates to Hosea's prophecy and the elect of God who will live during the time just before Christ returns.

The High Priests Garments

"And take Aaron your brother, and his sons, Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar from among the children of Israel, so that he and his sons may minister to me in the priest's office. And you shall make holy garments for Aaron your brother for glory and for beauty. And you shall speak to all that are wise hearted, whom I have filled with the spirit of wisdom, that they may make Aaron's garments to consecrate him, that he may minister to me in the priest's office" (Ex.28:1-3 Para).

The sacred garments represent the glory and beauty of the high priest's office as he represents the people to God and God to the people. Moreover, God had given special wisdom to certain people in order for them to make these sacred garments which consecrated Aaron to his office.

"And these are the garments which they shall make: a breastplate, and an ephod, and a robe, and a brodered coat, a mitre, and a girdle: and they shall make holy garments for Aaron your brother, and his sons, that he may minister to me in the priest's office" (Ex.28:4 Para).

Verse four lists the items the high priest had to wear while performing the various duties of his office.

The Ephod

"And they shall take gold, and blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen, and make the ephod with cunning work. It shall have the two shoulder pieces joined at two edges, and will have a girdle on it, which will be of the same material as the ephod. And you shall take two onyx stones, and engrave the names of six of the tribes of Israel on one stone and six on the other, according to the order of their
patriarch's birth, and place the stones in golden holders upon the shoulders of the ephod to be a memorial to the children of Israel before the Lord upon Aaron's shoulders" (Ex.28:5-12 Para).

**The Breastplate**

"And you will make the breastplate of judgment of similar material and work as the ephod. It will be square and doubled; and a span in length and width. And you shall set in it four rows of stones in golden holders: in the first row a sardius, a topaz, and a carbuncle, in the second row an emerald, a sapphire, and a diamond, in the third row a ligure, an agate, and an amethyst, and the fourth row a beryl, and an onyx, and a jasper. And on each stone will be the name of one of the twelve tribes of Israel" (Ex.28:15-21 Para).

"And you will make chains and rings of pure gold and place them on the breastplate in order to attach it to the fittings that hold the shoulder pieces of the ephod, and to attach the breastplate to the sides of the ephod. And Aaron will bear the names of the children of Israel in the breastplate of judgment upon his heart, when he goes in to the holy place, for a memorial before the Lord continually" (Ex.28:24-29 Para).

In addition to being symbolic of the tribes of Israel, the breastplate of judgment which covered the ephod was used in actual communication with God. The Septuagint renders the Hebrew word *hoshen* (i.e., breastplate) as *oracle*, which indicates that the breastplate was an object through which the high priest could gain insight from or contact with God (i.e., oracle of judgement). Although the Septuagint may or may not be correct concerning the exact meaning of the Hebrew word *hoshen*, it is correct as to its conceptual meaning. The breastplate of judgement was clearly a necessary part of all the objects required in order for the high priest to communicate with God.

**The Urim and Thummin**

"And in the breastplate of judgment you shall put the Urim and the Thummin; and these shall be upon Aaron's heart, when he goes in before the Lord: and Aaron will bear the judgment of the children of Israel upon his heart before the Lord continually" (Ex.28:30).

The Hebrew word *urim* means *light(s)* and the Hebrew word *thummin* means *integrity of perfection*. These two objects were to be placed over Aaron's heart and were to be used to determine God's will in certain matters pertaining to the people of Israel.

The scriptures clearly show that the symbolism of light as knowledge and perfect integrity is one of the attributes of God. Moreover, the breastplate of judgment, along with the ephod, urim and the thummin were devices through which God conveyed his will and instructions to his people.
The following are some of the many events recorded in the Bible in which the ephod, breastplate, urim, thummin, and teraphim were used to gain insight and knowledge from God or to determine his will in certain matters.

**Moses, Joshua, and the Urin**

When Moses asked God to appoint someone to replace him as Israel's leader, God told Moses that Joshua would replace him and he must take him to Eleazar whose responsibility it was to use the urim to ask for God's will and counsel (Num.27:15-23). This account shows the importance of the urim and thummin in gaining insight and knowledge into the will of God.

**King Saul**

After the death of Samuel, Saul found himself and Israel confronted with the prospect of being conquered by the Philistines:

"And the Philistines gathered themselves together, and came and pitched in Shunem: and Saul gathered all Israel together, and they pitched in Gilboa. And when Saul saw the host of the Philistines, he was afraid, and his heart greatly trembled" (1 Sam.28:4-5 KJV).

Knowing that the armies of Israel were no match for the Philistines, Saul sought counsel and help from God:

"And when Saul inquired of the Lord, the Lord answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by the Urim, nor by prophets" (1 Sam.28:6 KJV).

Although Saul sought God's counsel through authorized methods, he did not answer him, which caused Saul to become so discouraged and frightened that he decided to seek insight and guidance through a source which was not authorized by God:

"Then said Saul to his servants, Seek me a woman that has a familiar spirit, that I may go to her, and inquire of her. And his servants said to him, Behold, there is a woman that has a familiar spirit at Endor. And Saul disguised himself, and put on other clothing, and he went, and two men with him, and they came to the woman by night: and he said, I pray you, divine to me by the familiar spirit, and bring me him up, whom I shall name to you" (1 Sam.28:7-8 KJV).

It is important to understand that Saul violated God's law in regard to witchcraft through his attempt to communicate with the spirit of Samuel. God condemns all such practices and imposes the death penalty upon those who practice them. See Lev.19:31; 20:6; 2 Chron.33:1-25; Isa.8: 19-20.
Another important thing to learn from this account is that no human has the ability to force God to give them insight or knowledge or to reveal his will to them. It is God's prerogative whether or not he will communicate with an individual.

**David**

On two different occasions, when David was in great distress, he called for the priest Abiathar to come to him and bring the ephod so that he could ask God for insight and guidance. On both occasions, God honored David's request and answered him. See 1.Sam.23:6-12; 30:1-8.

**The Return From Captivity**

Both Ezra and Nehemiah record that, after the people returned to Jerusalem from their captivity in Babylon, there were a number of men who wanted to serve in the temple as priests, but could not prove they were descended from Aaron. These men would not be allowed to serve until a priest consulted with God through the urim and thummim to determine the men's genealogy (Ezr.2:61-63; Nehe.7:63-65).

This account shows that at least 300 years after Hosea's prophecy about the removal of the sacred objects of counsel from Israel, these objects were still being used by the priesthood to gain insight and knowledge from God.

**Gideon**

Gideon was a man who followed God's instructions and knew how to worship him through the sacrificial system. After Gideon had performed all the things God asked him to do in order to remove pagan worship and the enemies of Israel, the Israelites asked Gideon to rule over them (Jdg.8:22-23).

Up to the time of Gideon's rule, the biblical record shows that the ephod was only used by the priesthood; however, Gideon who was not a priest told the Israelites to give him the materials to make an ephod. Although there is nothing said about Gideon using the ephod, the fact that he had it made probably means he used it to gain insight and knowledge from God while ruling the people.

It is important to note that nothing negative is recorded about Gideon or his use of the ephod, other than the fact that he and his sons had much trouble, because the people began to worship the ephod instead of the Creator God who gave insight and knowledge through it (Jdg.8:27).

The Jewish historian Josephus tells us that, because of the sins of the people, the lights that radiated from the two stones on the shoulders of the high priest's ephod and the stones of the breastplate ceased to shine 200 years before he wrote his history (circa150 B.C.). This seems to be the beginning point of the fulfillment of Hosea's prophecy (Hos.3:4-5), which spoke of the cessation of God's communication through the sacred items associated with the priesthood.
The Teraphim

The Hebrew word teraphim means idolatry, idols, or images. There is no doubt that Israelites, as well as other people used idols, images, and other objects in order to gain insight and knowledge which they could not have gained through natural means.

The teraphim is neither mentioned in the list of items that God had instructed to be made for the tabernacle nor included in the list of items which comprised the high priest's sacred garments; however, it is very possible that the teraphim is referred to by another name.

The teraphim is noted as something associated with the high priest, which was removed because of Israel's rebellion, but will be a part of the things restored when national Israel is again established as a nation after Christ returns (Hos.3:4-5). Therefore, we should be able to solve at least some of the mystery surrounding the teraphim and its use.

The Ephod and the Teraphim

The death of Samson was accompanied by the end of the judges of Israel as national leaders. At this point in history, it is unclear what had happened to the tabernacle, the priesthood, and the system of worship over which they officiated. What is clear is that the northern tribes again began to practice worship systems which were in opposition to God. During this time, there was a loose confederation of the tribes of Israel. This is the time when the scriptures say there was no ruler in Israel and every man did what was right in their own eyes (Jdg.17:6).

Chapter 17 and 18 of the Book of Judges tell the story of Micah, a man from the tribe of Ephraim, who had an ephod, a teraphim, and both carved and cast images made. Eventually Micah hired a Levite from Bethlehem to be a priest to him and his household and to use the ephod, images, and teraphim. One day, a group of men from the tribe of Dan asked the Levite to consult God for them to see if they would be successful in their conquest of a nearby land. The Levite consulted God through the ephod and the other objects that belonged to Micah and gave these men a positive answer from God.

This account reveals the following things about the ephod and the teraphim:

- Although Micah's ephod, images, and teraphim did not come from the tabernacle, God still honored their use in seeking guidance from him.
- Although the Levite was not the high priest from the tabernacle, God granted his request for knowledge and guidance and told him what his will was in this matter.
- God honored the Levite's request because he used objects which were designed to be used in seeking his guidance.
Because the word "teraphim" is a plural word, there has been some speculation that "teraphim" was another word used to describe the urim and thummin, which may have been small replicas of the tabernacle and the mercy seat. This may have some validity, because God told Aaron that, when he went into the Holy of Holies, he would appear to him in a cloud above the mercy seat (Lev.16:1-2). Moreover, when Moses went into the tabernacle of the congregation, God would speak to him from between the cherubim which were above the mercy seat. See Num.7:89; 1Chron.13:6.

Whether or not the ephod, the urim, and the thummin will exist again and be used by the high priest at the temple in Jerusalem before Christ returns is unclear from Hosea's prophecy (Hos.3:4-5). However, it is clear that these objects will exist after Christ returns.

For the elect of God today, knowing what the ephod, teraphim, urim, and thummin were made of or what they looked like is not important. What is important is to understand that God used these physical objects to give insight and knowledge and to communicate his will to his people.

THE DRAWING AND CASTING OF LOTS

Throughout history, people have used objects which are either drawn out of a container or cast upon a surface in order to seek advice from the spirit world, make decisions, predict future events, or gain insight and knowledge about things and events which they could not gain through natural means. The Bible has much to say about the use of such methods for seeking advice, insight, and knowledge from the spirit-realm of existence, so it is important to explore what it has to say. This section focuses on the drawing and casting of lots.

The Day of Atonement

The drawing of lots over the two goats on the Day of Atonement was an extremely important part of the festival's rituals and it was the method through which the Creator God chose to show his will as to which goat was to be sacrificed and which was to be set free:

"And Aaron shall take from the Israelite's, two male goats for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering... And he shall take the two goats, and present them before the Lord at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. And he shall draw lots over the two goats; one lot for the Lord, and the other lot for the scapegoat" (Lev.16:5, 7-8 Para.).

On each Day of Atonement, two goats were presented to God at the door of the tabernacle. The high priest was instructed to draw lots to determine the purpose for each goat. Through this method, God chose which goat would die and which one would live. Although all animals that were sacrificed had to be physically perfect, God needed to make the choice on this occasion, because this sacrificial goat is prophetic of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ for the atonement of all humanity.
"And Aaron shall bring the goat upon which the Lord's lot fell, and offer him for a sin offering" (Lev.16:9 KJV).

No single explanation seems to be able to satisfy everyone as to exactly what the lots were made of or what they looked like. However, if we combine the information given in Tractate Yoma in both the Babylonian Talmud and the Mishnah, it seems the lots were two stones—one white and one black. According to the Talmud and the Mishnah, the white stone displayed the words "For the Lord", and the black stone displayed the words "For Azazel".

These two stones were placed into a container and shaken. Then, without looking into the container, the high priest would put his right hand into the container and draw out one of the lots.

**Simon the Righteous**

In the third century B.C., there was a high priest named Simon who served at the temple in Jerusalem. Simon was considered to be very honorable and continued in the office of high priest for 40 years. In each of the forty years that Simon drew the lots to determine which of the goats would be slain and which would be set free, the white lot for the slain goat would appear in his right hand.

One of the four major signs listed in the Babylonian Talmud which foretold the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem in 70 A.D. pertained to the drawing of lots for the two goats on the Day of Atonement.

The Babylonian Talmud states that, for 200 years before 30 A.D., the first stone to appear in the right hand randomly alternated between the white and black stone, because God selected the more perfect goat to be slain for the sins of the people. But, beginning with the Day of Atonement in 30 A.D. (the year of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ), the pattern changed. The black stone appeared in the right hand of the high priest and would do so for the next 39 years.

The chances of either the black or white stone appearing 40 consecutive times in the right hand of the high priest is over a trillion to one according to Pascal’s table of numerical odds.

Since the color black is symbolic of spiritual darkness and is a harbinger of bad things to come upon the enemies of God, it seems that the continual appearance of the black stone in the right hand of the high priest was surely a sign of God's displeasure with the Jews, as well as a warning for them to repent. After forty years of continuous warning, Jerusalem and the temple were destroyed by the Roman Empire in 70 A.D.

The choosing of lots to determine the fate of the two goats on the Day of Atonement and the events surrounding the two forty years cycles of white and black lots clearly show that lots were used to reveal the will of God for the present and the future to those who served as his priests.
The Dividing of the Promised Land

The Creator gave Moses specific instructions to use lots to divide the land he would give national Israel among the various tribes (Num.26:55-56). Moses subsequently gave instructions to the Israelites about the general areas which they were to inhabit after conquering the nations which occupied the land, and he told them Eleazar the high priest and Joshua would use lots to determine the exact division of land among them:

"And Moses commanded the Israelites saying, This is the land that you shall inherit by lot . . .. And the Lord spoke to Moses saying, These are the names of the men who shall divide the land to you: Eleazar the priest, and Joshua the son of Nun" (Num.34:13,16-17 Para.).

The use of lots to determine which tribe would inherit which piece of land was not done to ensure the impartiality of Eleazar and Joshua. Lots were cast so the Israelites would know that the Creator God had chosen where they would live.

Decisions Concerning Life and Death

There are two accounts showing the use of lots in discovering the identity of someone for the purpose of punishment or removing a threat. The first account shows the use of lots to determine who had violated God's instructions concerning taking spoils of war. When the responsible person was discovered, he was put to death (Jos.7:1-26). The second account is about Jonah and his attempt to escape from a responsibility that God had given him. When the sailors (through the casting of lots) found it was Jonah who was responsible for their life threatening situation, he was cast into the sea to die (Jonah 1:1-15). In both of these accounts, it was the Creator God who revealed truth through the casting of lots.

The Proverbs and Lots

"One casts the lot into the lap; but all its decision comes from the Lord" (Pro.16:33 Para.).

This proverb clearly shows the casting of lots to seek a decision from God in matters which could not be determined from the use of the facts at hand. Although it is not stated in this proverb, it can be assumed that the person casting the lots must be in conformity to God's ways, authorized by God to access him through this method, seeking to gain insight, knowledge, and his will, and will abide by the decision he gives through the lots.

The casting of lots was not only used by the spiritual and national leaders of Israel to determine a matter but also in the private lives of individuals:
"The lot causes arguments to cease, and divides between the mighty" (Pro.18:18 Para.).

For those who brought a matter before the Lord seeking insight, knowledge, or his decision in a matter and then abided by what was revealed, the matter was settled and ceased to be a problem between them. Again, those involved in the matter were most likely righteous in their intention to discover truth and a righteous judgement.

King David and the Priesthood

In the first book of the Chronicles of the kings of Israel, there are several accounts of king David and others seeking to understand the will of God in the division of the priesthood into their various functions. These accounts show the method used to determine God's will in these matters was the casting of lots, and that it was considered prudent to seek the will of God by this method in regards to the people and things which would impact how people would serve and worship God. See 1.Chron. 24:1-31; 25:1-8; 26:1-14.

Choosing a Replacement for Judas

Shortly before the Festival of Pentecost in 30 A.D. and the bestowing of the holy spirit upon those who were worthy of receiving it, the apostles selected a replacement for the traitor Judas who had killed himself:

"And they [the eleven apostles] selected Joseph who was called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias. And when they had prayed, and said, You Lord, who knows the hearts of all men, show which of these two men you have chosen, that he may take part of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas through transgression fell... And they gave forth their lots; and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles" (Acts 1:23-26 Para).

The apostles selected two men who they thought qualified to fulfill the responsibilities of an apostle and they asked God the Father to make the choice between these two men. The method they used to have God's will revealed to them was the casting or drawing of lots. It makes sense for them to have used this method, because this method had been used for centuries by the authorized civil and spiritual leaders of Israel to gain certain kinds of knowledge from God and to determine his will in certain matters.

Simon the Sorcerer

Simon saw that, through the laying on of hands people received the holy spirit. He also saw that through the hands of the apostles this spirit-power was given to others. In his desire to have the same power as the apostles, Simon offered money for it:
"Give me this authority, so that I may do the same thing by laying my hands on people. But Peter said to him, Your money perish with you into perdition, because you think that God's gift can be purchased with money. You have no part or lot in this matter, because your heart is not right in the sight of God" (Acts 8:19-21 Para.).

In order to use the casting of lots in the framework of the Body of Christ, a man must be one of the elect, have a righteous attitude, and be authorized to participate in the work of the church.

A Great Danger

The Bible and historical records show that God has revealed certain insights and knowledge about people, things, events, and his will concerning them through the use lots. Additionally, these records show that this method was in common use by those whom God had authorized as the civil and spiritual leaders of his people.

There is no indication in the scriptures that the practice of drawing or casting lots is condemned when it is used to gain insight and knowledge about people, things, and events for the right purpose. However, there is a dark side to the use of lots which deserves a detailed explanation.

Although there is no doubt that God authorized the use of objects which are either drawn out of a container or cast upon a surface in order to seek his advice, ask him to make a choice, or to gain insight and knowledge about things and events, there is great danger in the use of lots for those who use them for the wrong purpose or are not authorized by God to use them.

Today, as in the past, there are many things which must be considered before attempting to access God through an object:

- Will God honor your attempt to use an object to access physical or spiritual knowledge?
- Have you been authorized to use an object to access physical or spiritual knowledge?
- How can you be absolutely certain that an answer you receive is from the spirit of God?
- How can you be certain that an answer you receive is not from an evil spirit or your own mind?

These are very serious questions which must be answered before anyone attempts to use an object to access the will of God. Without the correct answers to these questions, it seems foolish to use any physical object to guide our physical or spiritual life. This is not to say that God the Father and Jesus Christ will not authorize such a method to be used during the end of the age; however, extreme caution must be exercised. The apostle Peter warned, "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, walks about as a roaring lion, seeking those whom he may devour" (1.Pet.5:8).
Because the only example of the use of lots by the elect of the early church concerns the affairs of the church, we can safely assume it was not wrong to use this method to gain insight and knowledge and to discover the will of God in spiritual matters.

When we consider the two examples in the Book of Acts which speak of lots, the implication seems to be that the apostles were the custodians of this method of seeking insight from God.

By B.L. Cocherell
CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

THE STATE OF THE DEAD?

One of the most misunderstood subjects in the Bible is the state of the dead. The main barrier to gaining a clear understanding of this subject is the teaching that assumes humans have an immortal soul which goes to heaven, hell, paradise, or someplace in-between after death.

Because the belief in the immortality of the soul is extremely comforting, most people avoid thinking about the validity of these teachings about heaven and hell. Instead, they avoid the clear scriptures which show that the dead are not alive in some form and in some other place, because these scriptures threaten the very foundation of the teaching of an immortal soul.

Although the beliefs of Catholics and Protestants differ radically in many respects, both believe in the immortality of the soul. They also believe that humans only die physically, but the spirit (i.e., the soul—the sentient being) remains alive in heaven, hell, or some transitory state in-between.

However, the Protestant theology of going to heaven or hell immediately upon death cannot be proven from the Bible. Moreover, the Catholic concept of purgatory as a place or condition of spiritual cleansing is also a non-biblical teaching. Neither of these teachings are valid biblical concepts; they are simply figments of theological imagination, which were conceived to explain the state of the dead in the context of humans having an immortal soul.

What really happens to humans at death? Are they alive in another dimension, or do they cease to exist? If you study the Bible and believe what it actually says, these questions can be answered truthfully.

TWO DIMENSIONS OF HUMAN EXISTENCE

In order to understand the state of the dead, it is important to understand what a human being is. Many theologians and others believe humans have a soul which is non-physical. The Bible does say that humans have a spirit, but is this spirit a physical creation or is it from another dimension of existence?

The scriptures show two distinct dimensions of existence, and that humans are composed of elements from both dimensions. There is both a physical and a spiritual dimension of existence and each is separate from the other in function and creation. However, both work together to enable humans to exist on a higher plane of consciousness than the rest of the physical creation:
"And I say to you my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I [Jesus] will forewarn you whom you shall fear: Fear him [God the Father], who after he has killed has power to cast into hell; yes, I say to you, Fear him" (Lk.12:4-5 KJV).

"And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him [God the Father] which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" (Matt.10:28 KJV).

The English word body in these two verses is a translation of the Greek word soma, which means a human/animal body or a corpse. The Greek word used in these two scriptures for soul is psyche, which can be translated as life or mind. These two scriptures mention two distinct elements of human life: physical and non-physical, both of which can be completely destroyed by God.

The English word destroy in the above verses is a translation of the Greek word apollumi, which means to destroy fully, to kill, to perish, to completely do away with. There is no doubt that the words used in Matthew 10:28 mean that God has the power to completely destroy all aspects of human life.

Jesus says that there are two elements of the human existence and we must fear God who can terminate both the physical and non-physical elements.

Paul also refers to the two elements of human existence in his letter to the Thessalonians:

"And may the God of peace Himself fully sanctify you, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1.Thes.5:23 Para.).

In verse 23, the English words spirit, soul, and body are translated from the Greek words pneuma, psyche, and soma, which respectively mean physical breath or the soul, the spirit or the mind, and the physical body.

THE PHYSICAL ELEMENT OF HUMANS

In order to determine what the physical element of human life is, the creation of mankind should be reviewed:

"And the Lord God formed the man out of the dust of the ground, and blew into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul" (Gen.2:7 Para.). See also vs.8; Deut.32:18.

"In the sweat of your face shall you eat bread, till you return to the ground; for out of it you were taken: for dust you are, and to dust shall you return" (Gen.3:19 KJV).
"You hide your face and they are troubled; you gather your breath, and they expire and return to their dust" (Psa.104:29 Para.; Job 34:13-15).

In Genesis 2:7, the English word soul is translated from the Hebrew word nephesh, which means a breathing creature or animal, vitality, beast, body, or breath. There is absolutely nothing in the word nephesh which indicates anything other than physical life—human or animal. The Hebrew word nephesh means a state of being alive. God created a lifeless body in the form of man and made it a living soul (nephesh) by blowing air into its lungs; thus, he gave it life.

"The spirit of God has made me, and the breath of the Almighty has given me life" (Job 33:4 KJV).

**PHYSICAL LIFE IS IN THE BLOOD**

"And whatsoever man there be of the house of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn among you, that eats any manner of blood; I will even set my face against that soul [nephesh] that eats blood, and will cut him off from among his people," (Lev.17:10 KJV).

"For the life of the flesh is in the blood; ... Therefore I said to the children of Israel, No soul of you shall eat blood... For it is the life of all flesh; the blood of it is for the life thereof;..." (Lev.17:11-14 KJV).

In this modern age, we can understand the biological implications of this scripture. The heart circulates the blood throughout the body, which in turn performs its life sustaining functions.

If God had not activated Adam's life functions by inserting air into his lungs, Adam would not have lived. But, is human life no more than a chemical-electric reaction of a well designed structure of gas, fluid, and solid matter reacting to internal and external stimuli? Is this the sum of what God created as physical man? If so, humans would be no different from any other animal.

But humans are different from animals and the rest of creation in many obvious ways. Humans are on a higher plane of life existence than the rest of creation. But, what is it that makes mankind different? The unseen physical and spirit elements of the human creation makes it different from the rest of creation.

**THE SPIRITUAL ELEMENT OF HUMANS**

There is another element to human life besides the physical. This element is the spirit in man that separates mankind from the rest of creation:

"But there is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty gives them understanding" (Job 32:8 KJV).
Here, the English word *spirit* is a translation of the Hebrew word *ruwach*, which means *wind* or *mind*. It does not mean a physical being or even a being at all. Rather, it denotes something which is not physical.

"The burden of the word of the Lord for Israel, says the Lord, which stretched forth the heavens, and laid the foundation of the earth, and forms the spirit of man within him" (Zeck.12:1 KJV). See also Ecc.12:5-7.

The human spirit is a non-physical element of the human body that truly separates humans from the rest of the physical creation. God calls this non-physical element the spirit in man and he has designed it to be a part of the human body. It is this spirit that gives mankind the ability to be on a higher thought-plane than all other physical creatures on earth.

The spirit in man is only one of the two elements of human life that the scientific community neither understands nor ascribes to the human life function. Nevertheless, the spirit in man is of major importance to human life after death.

**THE GOD OF SPIRITS**

The scriptures show that God formed the spirit which lives within the human body:

"And they fell on their faces, and said, O God, the God of the spirits of all flesh, shall one man sin, and will you be angry with all the congregation?" (Num.16:22 Para.).

"Let the Lord God, the God of the spirits of all flesh, set a man over the congregation" (Num.27:16 Para.).

The spirit in man is neither an undefinable essence nor mysteriously apart from man. The spirit of man is man. The physical body is the habitation of the spirit, which is the sentient and conscious element of the human creation.

**THE HUMAN LIFE FORM**

Human life is unique in all of creation. A human being is the only life-form on earth which is both physical and spiritual and has the opportunity to be elevated to the highest of all life-forms—a spirit-being in the Family of God.

Animals do not have the potential for immortality and they do not relate to God in the same way as humans. Furthermore, they do not have the ability to worship or interact with God like humans do. See Rom. 8:14-16.
WHAT HAPPENS WHEN HUMANS DIE?

The Bible describes two major events which take place at the death of a human being. These events are of extreme importance to the final destiny of each individual, because each event decides whether or not each individual will have a future existence.

What the Bible says about the physical and spirit record and the events that happen to humans after death is very different from what is taught by the religions of this world. According to the Bible, after a human dies, there are two records of their existence: one which is kept in heaven and one which is kept on earth.

NO MENTAL ACTIVITY AFTER DEATH

At death, the cerebral functions cease; there is no more thought process, no reward, no memory, no knowledge, and no access to this world. Death terminates an individual's interaction with this physical dimension of existence.

The Psalmist Wrote:

"Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help. His breath goes forth, he returns to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish" (Psa.146:3-4 KJV).

Solomon Wrote:

"For the living know that they will die; but the dead know nothing; they have no further reward, and even the memory of them is forgotten. Their love, their hate and their jealousy have long since vanished; never again will they have a part in anything that happens under the sun" (Ecc.9:5-6 NIV).

"Whatsoever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, where you go" (Ecc.9:10 KJV).

"The dead praise not the Lord, neither any that go down into silence" (Psa.115:17 KJV).

The reason the dead cannot praise God is because they are no longer alive; their life has been silenced. In death, there is no thought process.

"Return, O Lord, deliver my soul: oh save me for your mercies' sake. For in death there is no remembrance of you: in the grave who shall give you thanks?" (Psa.6:4-5 KJV).

"Behold, for peace I had great bitterness: but you have in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption: for you have cast all my sins behind your back. For the grave cannot praise you, death cannot celebrate you: they that go down into the pit cannot hope for your truth. The living, he shall praise you, as I do this day: . . ." (Isa.38:17-19 KJV).
It is obvious by the abundant scriptural proof that all conscious thought and life-functions cease at death. The scriptures which speak of human speech, desires, and admonitions after death are either poetic metaphors or analogies, and in some cases, they are describing demonic impersonations of dead people.

There is nothing throughout the entire Bible which indicates the human life function continues in one state or another after death. The Bible says just the opposite; it clearly shows that the physical life of a human is a temporary condition, which can be terminated forever.

THE SLEEP OF DEATH

Many scriptures speak of the state of the dead as analogous to sleep. Because the dead do not have a conscious thought process (Psa.146:4; Ecc.9:5-6), sleep is an excellent description of the condition of death. Below are a few references that show how God views the condition of death:

"And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt" (Dan.12:2 KJV).

"He said these things. And after this He said to them, Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I am going that I may awaken him. Then His disciples said, Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will recover. But Jesus had spoken about his death, but they thought that He spoke of the sleep of slumber. Then Jesus said to them plainly, Lazarus is dead" (Jn.11:11-14 Para.).

"While they were stoning him, Stephen prayed, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." Then he fell on his knees and cried out, Lord, do not hold this sin against them. When he had said this, he fell asleep" (Acts 7:59-60 NIV).

"But man dies and is cut off, and man expires; and where is he? As the waters go from the sea, and a river wastes away and dries up, so man lies down and does not rise. Until the heavens are no more, they shall not awake, nor be roused out of their sleep. Who will grant that You would hide me in Sheol; You would hide me until Your anger turns back; that You would set a limit for me and remember me? If a man dies, will he revive? All the days of my warfare I will wait, until my change comes" (Job 14:10-14 Para.). See also 1.Kg.2:10; 1.Thes.4:13-17.

The billions of humans who have lived and died over the centuries are completely unaware of the passage of time. The interim period between the moment of death, when their conscious thoughts ceased, and the instant when they awake to life again at the resurrection does not exist for them. It will be as if they had gone to sleep and awakened without dreaming; the passage of time is meaningless to them.
The Righteous Dead

In his first major evangelistic sermon after Jesus' death and resurrection, the Apostle Peter says, "Men and brethren, let me freely speak to you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulcher is with us to this day. . . . For David is not ascended into the heavens" (Acts 2:29, 34 KJV).

Peter made these statements about the dead fifty days after Jesus had been resurrected. At this point in history, King David was still dead and buried; he had not been resurrected to life.

The Writer to the Hebrews

In Hebrews, chapter 11, there is a long list of righteous individuals who died without receiving God's promises:

"Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of aliens. Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection:" (Heb.11:33-35 KJV).

If any are worthy to receive the promises of God, it would surely be these champions of faith: Abel, Enoch, Abraham, and Moses whom God called his friends, Rahab who had faith that God would protect her for her kindness to the Israelite spies, and King David who loved God with great zeal. All of these are among the great men and women of faith. However, about thirty years after Jesus' death and resurrection when the letter to the Hebrews was written, these righteous individuals were still dead.

"And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect" (Heb.11:39-40 KJV) See also verse 13.

Twice in this eleventh chapter these righteous individuals are mentioned as having died without receiving the promises that God made to them.

The simple truth is that the righteous of all ages, are not alive; they are dead awaiting the return of Jesus to resurrect them and give them their reward. See Matt.24:29-31; 1.Cor.15:50-54; 1.Thes.4:16-17; 2.Thes.2:1-8.
WHERE DOES THE BODY GO AT DEATH?

Science defines death as the cessation of the life function (i.e., all systems cease to operate—the heart stops circulating blood, the brain stops sending orders to the organs, all thought process cease, the body becomes immobile, all regeneration processes stop, and the body starts to decay). The Bible defines physical death in the same way:

"By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread until you return to the ground. For you have been taken out of it; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return" (Gen.3:19 Para.).

God says our bodies were made from the elements of the earth and they will return to these same elements after death.

"All flesh shall perish together, and man shall turn again to dust" (Job 34:15 KJV).

Solomon Wrote:

"For that which happens to the sons of men, and that which happens to beasts; even one event is to them. As this one dies, so that one dies; yea, one breath is to all; so that there is to the man no advantage over the beast; for all is vanity. All go to one place; all are of the dust, and return to the dust" (Ecc.3:19-20 Para.).

Solomon says that both man and beast have the same death process; they both die and return to the elements from which they were made. There is no quarrel with the scientific definition here. At death the physical body in which God placed the spirit of man ceases to function. However, there is more to the physical body than the visible elements from which it is made.

WHERE DOES THE SPIRIT GO AT DEATH?

"Who knows the spirit of the sons of man, whether it goes upward, and the spirit of the beast whether it goes downward to the earth?"

(Ecc.3:21 Para.).

Solomon asked the same question many have asked over the centuries about the destination of the spirit in man. However, the great difference between Solomon and most others who ask this question is that Solomon knew the answer:

"Then the dust shall return to the earth as it was, and the spirit shall return to God who gave it" (Ecc.12:7 Para.).

The spirit of man returns to God who gave it. King David and Jesus also understood that God was the custodian of the human spirit.

"Into your hands I commit my spirit: you have redeemed me, O Lord God of truth" (Psa.31:5 KJV).
"And crying with a loud voice, he said, Father into your hands I commit my spirit. And saying this, He breathed out the spirit" (Lk.23:46 Para.).

At death, this spirit, which is composed of material from the spirit dimension of existence, returns to God the Father who inhabits the spirit-realm.

The Spirits Cry Out

The Book of Revelation has an allegorical reference to the spirits of the righteous dead crying out for God to avenge their death:

"And when he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those having been slain for the word of God, and the witness which they had. And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, do you not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?" (Rev.6:9-10 KJV). See also Gen.4:10; Heb.11:4.

Although the spirits under the altar are unconscious and unaware of anything happening on earth or anywhere else, they symbolically cry out for justice. This scripture confirms that these human spirits have been returned to the Father from their earthly habitation.

IS THE BODY MORE THAN FLESH AND BLOOD?

The scriptures show that the human body is just a chemical-electric reaction of a well designed structure of gas, fluids, and solid matter reacting to internal and external stimuli with the spirit of man inhabiting it. And at death, the body becomes lifeless and useless:

"Then shall the dust [physical body] return to the earth as it was; and the spirit shall return to God who gave it" (Ecc.12:7 KJV). See also Gen.2:7; Deut.32:18.

"For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also" (Jms.2:26 KJV).

THE INVISIBLE ELEMENT OF THE BODY

The scriptures clearly show two separate elements that are combined to form the creation called a human being. It is also extremely clear that at death the body returns to the earth and the spirit returns to God. However, how do we answer the clear scriptures which indicate a dead person is both in heaven and on the earth?

A brief study into physical and spiritual law will show that an object cannot occupy two different dimensions of time and space simultaneously. This knowledge helps solve the mystery surrounding the scriptures which seem to indicate that the dead are in two places at the same time. See Ecc.12:7; Psa.31:5; 49:14-15; Lk.23:46; Acts 2: 27-29, 34; Heb. chp.11.
There is an invisible physical element to the body which is preserved on earth after the body dies. This invisible element of the human creation is extremely important to the destiny of each individual. Without an understanding of what this essential element is, much of the Bible does not seem to make sense when it comes to the state of the dead and the various resurrections.

THE MYSTERIOUS REPHAIM

Who or what are the Rephaim? Bible Scholars have had great difficulty discovering the intended meaning of this Hebrew word, because its usage indicates that all dead humans remain on earth, instead of going to heaven or hell, which is a common belief.

The Hebrew word rephaim is often used as an allegory which describes the dead and gives vital insight into an extremely important unseen element of the human body.

The Hebrew word rephaim has three basic meanings: giant men, ghost of the dead, or shades (i.e., shadows). There are many references which refer to the dead as rephaim. These references also indicate that the rephaim occupy sheol, which is located within the confines of earth's environment. The following scriptures reveal the allegorical use of the word rephaim to describe dead humans:

"Sheol below is excited for you, to greet your coming, waiting for you rephaim, all the rulers of the earth. Rising them from their thrones, all the kings of the earth" (Isa.14:9 Literal Translation).

"The dead will not live, rephaim will not rise, therefore you have punished and eliminated them, and caused their memory to perish" (Isa.26:14 Literal Translation).

"The dead will live, their corpses will rise. Awake and shout for joy, dwellers in the dust! For dew of lights [morning] is your dew, and earth will give birth to rephaim" (Isa.26:19 Literal Translation).

In verse 14, Isaiah laments the state of the dead. But, in verse 19, he speaks of the hope of the resurrection. He says the rephaim (the dead) which are dead in the dust of the earth will be resurrected:

Psalm 88 speaks of those who are dead in the depths of the earth being devoid of life or conscious thought.

"For the dead will you do a wonder? Will the rephaim rise and praise you? Selah! (Psa.88:10 Literal Translation).

The following verses in Proverbs show that the foolish will occupy sheol where the rephaim are:

"The woman Folly is loud; she is undisciplined and without knowledge. She sits at the door of her house, on a seat at the highest point of the city, calling out to those who pass by, who go straight on their way. "Let all who are simple come in here!" she says to those
who lack judgment. "Stolen water is sweet; food eaten in secret is delicious!" But little do they know that the dead [the Rephaim] are there, that her guests are in the depths of the grave" (Pro.9:13-18 NIV).

"And he does not know that the rephaim are there. In the depths of sheol are her invited guests" (Pro.9:18 Literal Translation).

There is no doubt that the rephaim are a part of the human creation. The question is what part? The scriptures show that the rephaim are in sheol, have no conscious thought, are lifeless, and will be resurrected. See also Psa.6:5, 31:17, Pro.9:18,21:16, Isa.26:14-19.

The rephaim cannot be any part of the spirit of man, because the spirit of man returns to God at death, but the rephaim are in a state of preservation on earth. A rephaim is the invisible yet permanent part of a physical human body, which continues to exist on earth after the human body decomposes and returns to the elements from which it came. The rephaim is the record of the human body which will be used when the body is resurrected to a physical existence.

SPIRIT AND PHYSICAL DIMENSIONS OF EXISTENCE

The scriptures show that spirit-beings and spirit-substance can exist in this physical dimension (See Gen. chps.18,19; Numb. chap.22; Job 1:6-12; Lk. chap.24; Rev.12:7-9). However, the scriptures also show that physical beings cannot exist in the spirit realm (See Jn.3:3-5; 8:13-23; 13:33-36; 1.Cor.15:50). Therefore, it makes sense that the spirit element of the human creation returns to God at death (Psa.31:5; Ecc.12:7; Lk.23:46), but the physical element of the human creation remains on earth (Gen.3:19; Job 34:15; Ecc.3:19-20).

Because God designed the human life-form with both spirit and physical elements, both of these elements will be used to reconstruct individuals at the time of their resurrection.

THE DEAD SHALL RISE FIRST

In Paul's writings to the Corinthians and the Thessalonians, he speaks of the first general resurrection of the dead at which time the elect of God will be given immortality at Christ's coming:

"Behold, I show you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed" (1.Cor.15:51-52 KJV).

"But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which sleep [are dead], that you sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep [are dead] in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain to the coming of the Lord shall not
prevent [precede] them which are asleep [are dead]. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead shall rise first" (1.Thes.4:13-16 KJV).

These scriptures are very important, because Paul says the dead shall be raised and it is obvious that Paul understood the dead remained on earth awaiting their resurrection. See 1.Sam.2:6; Psa.49:14-15; Jn.3:13; Acts 2:29-34; Heb.11.

Because the spirit record of the elect returns to the Father, when Paul speaks of the dead rising from the earth, he must be referring to a physical record, that will rise from the earth where it resides in sheol awaiting the resurrection.

THE RESURRECTION OF ISRAEL

Another key to understanding the rephaim is found in Ezekiel, chapter 37. This chapter speaks of the resurrection of the Israelites to physical life sometime after the return of Christ.

"The hand of the Lord was upon me, and carried me out in the spirit of the Lord, and set me down in the midst of the valley which was full of bones. And caused me to pass by them round about: and behold, there were very many in the open valley; and, lo, they were very dry" (Ezk.37:1-2 KJV).

This event transpires on earth, and these bones represent people who will be brought back to life.

"And he said to me, Son of man, can these bones live? And I answered, O Lord God, you know. Again he said to me, Prophecy upon these bones, and say to them, O you dry bones, hear the word of the Lord. Thus says the Lord God to these bones; Behold I will cause breath to enter into you, and you shall live: And I will lay sinews upon you, and will bring up flesh upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and you shall know that I am the Lord" (Ezk.37:3-6 KJV).

Here, God promises to resurrect these dead Israelites to physical life (Ezk.37:11). The word for bone in Hebrew can also be used allegorically to mean a dead person.

"And when I beheld, lo, the sinews and the flesh came up upon them, and the skin covered them above: but there was no breath in them. Then said he to me, Prophesy to the wind, prophesy son of man, and say to the wind, Thus says the Lord God; Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live. So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived and stood upon their feet, an exceeding great army" (Ezk.37:8-10 KJV).
There are similarities between this resurrection and the creation of Adam and Eve. God made Adam's body from the elements of the earth; then, he took a bone from Adam's body and made Eve. In this resurrection, God takes the bones (an allegory of the dead Israelites) to use as the foundational substance with which to reconstruct each individual Israelite. Adam, Eve, and these resurrected Israelites are constructed from the elements of the earth. And like Adam, these Israelites have no life force until air is placed into their lungs and they begin to breathe.

"Therefore prophesy and say to them, Thus says the Lord God; Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel. And you will know that I am the Lord, when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel. And shall put my spirit in you, and you shall live, and I shall place you in your own land: then shall you know that I the Lord have spoken and performed it says the Lord" (Ezk.37:12-14 KJV).

In order for these reconstructed bodies to function as sentient beings, the spirit of man must be put back into the body: "The body without the spirit is dead . . ." (Jms.2:26). At death, the body dies and becomes useless to the spirit which inhabited it.

THE RECORDS OF THE DEAD

The Father promised to resurrect not only all of the Israelites who have ever lived and died without an opportunity for salvation but also the rest of humanity who have not had this opportunity. In order to accomplish this task, he has a record of each person's intellect (mind), which is stored in heaven.

The Sovereign God made provisions for a record to be kept of each individual who has ever existed. Humanly, we can understand that everything in the physical universe operates under a system of immutable laws, which control and sustain the physical creation. The physical record of man does not exist in some mysterious magical non-physical dimension of existence; it exists as a physical thing, which was created as a part of the human being and exists under the specific laws which regulate its physical existence.

The rephaim or the record of a dead human body which occupies sheol is neither spirit nor human, does not have conscious thought, and is not animated or alive. However, it is real and made of physical substance which occupies this physical existence.

Because of the abundance of allegorical and factual references about sheol and the rephaim (record of dead bodies) which occupy it, the rephaim must be the physical record and pattern of each human body.
Logic tells us that, because this record or pattern is invisible yet physical, it must be composed of pure energy in one form or another. This invisible yet physical element is the physical record/pattern that God will use to reconstruct each individual's unique physical body at the proper time in his plan for the salvation of humanity.

The physical body decays and returns to its basic elements, while the rephaim, which is the record/pattern of the physical human form, remains on earth because it is a part of this physical existence and cannot enter the spirit-realm.

The Resurrection Process

The spirit record of a human is kept in heaven, the physical record is stored on earth, and each is being held ready for the resurrection process. The scriptures show that there will be two kinds of resurrections: one is to spirit life as a spirit-being, and the other is to physical life as a human being. Therefore, it is important to know the process involved in each.

Resurrection to Immortality at Christ's Return

"The dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the Clouds, to meet the Lord in the air" (1.Thes.4:16-17 KJV).

During the resurrection of the righteous dead, the following will occur:

• Each person's unique physical body will be reconstructed using the pattern that is stored on earth.
• Each person's unique spirit will be returned to earth from wherever it was stored in heaven and placed into the reconstructed body.
• Each person will then be changed to an immortal spirit-being.

Resurrection to Physical Life

The dead will be resurrected to physical life for the purpose of giving them an opportunity for salvation or for destroying them because of incorrigible wickedness. During the resurrection the following will occur:

• Each person's unique physical body will be reconstructed using the pattern that is stored on earth.
• Each person will then have the breath of life placed into their lungs to start the physical life processes.
• Each person's unique spirit will be returned to earth from wherever it was stored in heaven, and then it will be placed into the reconstructed body.
SPIRITS OF THE DEAD

Many people believe in what are commonly called ghosts, which are believed to be the spirits of dead people interacting with this physical existence for various reasons. The interaction with people by some of these supposedly dead individuals may seem to be harmless, but in reality such interactions are far from harmless.

It is well documented that supernatural events do occur. Hazy apparitions of people do appear in houses and other places. Banging, thumping, doors opening and closing seemingly on their own, objects moving about in a room, places which become extremely cold for no apparent reason, and many other types of seemingly unexplainable events occur regularly throughout the world.

These occurrences are not actually the manifestations of dead people, but are caused by evil spirits masquerading as people and causing these events to happen in order to terrorize people or to deceive people into interacting with them.

If one believes the biblical narrative, the answer to this question is simple. The Bible clearly shows that when a person is dead they are dead and have no thoughts or ability to interact with mankind or this physical existence (Ps.146:3-4; Ecc.9:5-6). The only exception noted in the Bible is the account of Saul, Samuel, and the Witch of Endor in which Samuel was awakened by God to pronounce a curse of death on Saul for his violation of the law concerning witches and necromancy.

Events attributed to ghosts of the dead interacting with the living and other such occurrences can easily be explained as natural phenomena or the manifestations of evil spirits.

SUMMARY

The dead are simply dead; they have no life function; they are not alive in heaven or any other place; they are dead without conscious thought awaiting a resurrection. Some of the dead will be resurrected to eternal life and immortality, some will be resurrected to physical life and be given their opportunity for salvation, and some will be resurrected to the punishment of a second death from which there is no return.

By B. L. Cocherell
CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX

THE WITCH OF ENDOR

Many people believe the biblical account of Saul, Samuel, and the Witch of Endor is proof that, after people die a physical death, they continue to live on in heaven or some other dimension of existence. Many people also believe this account proves that certain people have secret knowledge and supernatural power which give them the ability to communicate with the dead.

Did the Witch of Endor possess some supernatural power which enabled her to actually reach across the barrier between this physical universe into the spirit realm and summon Samuel to communicate with Saul or was the being with whom Saul spoke just an evil spirit impersonating Samuel? Do certain people possess the power to communicate with the dead? Are the dead really alive in another dimension of existence?

Today, there is great confusion about the true God, demons, angels, the dead, and the spirit world. However, those who are called to salvation during this gospel age and have the indwelling of the holy spirit do not need be confused about these issues, because the holy spirit teaches and reveals spiritual knowledge to those who are truly serious about their salvation. See Rom.15:4; 1.Cor.2:11-12; 1.Cor.10:11.

Because those who are called to salvation during this gospel age are engaged in a spiritual battle which will decide their eternal destiny, it is extremely important for each person who is serious about their call to have a clear understanding of Saul's experience with Samuel and the Witch of Endor.

The biblical record clearly shows that the Witch of Endor did not summon Samuel through her own power, and the manifestation the witch saw and Saul heard and spoke with was not an evil spirit; it was in fact Samuel whom God awakened from the sleep of the dead in order to reprimand and curse Saul for his disobedience.

"Now Samuel was dead, and all Israel had lamented him, and buried him in Ramah, even in his own city." (1.Sam.28:3 KJV).

God's Law About Witchcraft

The Creator God gave the nation of Israel his law about how to deal with those who practiced forbidden religions and mystical arts, including witchcraft.
"When you enter the land the Lord your God is giving you, do not learn to imitate the detestable ways of the nations there. Let no one be found among you who sacrifices his son or daughter in the fire, who practices divination or sorcery, interprets omens, engages in witchcraft, or casts spells, or who is a medium or necromancer or who consults the dead. Anyone who does these things is detestable to the Lord, and because of these detestable practices the Lord your God will drive out those nations before you. You must be blameless before the Lord your God. The nations you will dispossess listen to those who practice sorcery or divination. But as for you, the Lord your God has not permitted you to do so" (Deut.18:9-14 NIV Para).

“You shall not turn to those having familiar spirits; and you shall not seek after the spiritualist to be defiled by them; I am the Lord your God” (Lev.19:31 Para.). See also 2.Chron.33:1-25; Isa.8:19-20.

In Leviticus 19:31, the English word defiled is translated from the Hebrew word tame; a primitive root, which means to be foul, especially in a ceremonial or moral sense (contaminated). The use of the Hebrew word tame tells us that interaction between the spirit world and humans through the mystical arts causes a humans to become contaminated in such a way as to make them repugnant to God.

Throughout the biblical record, we see God sending spirit-beings to interact with humans for his purposes and evil spirits interacting with humans in order to deceive or harm them. However, there are no accounts in the biblical record showing that humans have the authority to independently interact with spirit-beings other than to control and rebuke evil spirits as authorized in the New Testament.

The following scriptures show beyond doubt that the penalty to be imposed for practicing mystical arts and initiating unauthorized contact with spirit-beings is death:

"You shall not allow a sorceress to live" (Ex.22:18 Para.).

"And the person who turns to those having familiar spirits, and to the spiritualist, to go whoring after them, I shall set my face against that person, and cut him off from the midst of his people" (Lev.20:6 KJV Para.).

"A man or woman who has a familiar spirit, or that is a wizard, shall surely be put to death: they shall stone them with stones: their blood shall be upon them" (Lev.20:27 Para.).

"But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars—their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death" (Rev.21:8 NIV).
Saul Turns to Witchcraft

"And the Philistines gathered themselves together, and came and pitched in Shunem: and Saul gathered all Israel together, and they pitched in Gilboa. And when Saul saw the host of the Philistines, he was afraid, and his heart greatly trembled" (1.Sam.28:4-5 KJV).

Knowing that the armies of Israel were not powerful enough to defeat the Philistines, Saul sought counsel and help from God. But, God did not answer him even though Saul sought this counsel through the methods that God had authorized:

"And when Saul inquired of the Lord, the Lord answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by the Urim, nor by prophets" (1.Sam.28:6 KJV).

Because God would not give him an answer, Saul became increasingly discouraged and finally tuned to witchcraft in an attempt to gain the counsel of the deceased Samuel:

"Then said Saul to his servants, Seek me a woman that has a familiar spirit, that I may go to her, and inquire of her. And his servants said to him, Behold, there is a woman that has a familiar spirit at Endor" (1.Sam.28:7 KJV).

In 1.Samuel 28, verse 3, familiar spirits and wizards are translated from the Hebrew phrase ob yidd oni. Both the words ob and the phrase yidd oni originally referred to the spirit of a deceased person, but they later came to mean one who consults or calls up a spirit. In verse 7, the English term familiar spirit is translated from the Hebrew phrase bel ob, which means the possessor of a spirit.

Saul Ignores God's Law

Endor is about 15 to 20 miles from the area of Gilboa where Saul and the Philistines were camped. This long journey provided Saul ample time to consider his actions and the fact that he was about to commit a capital crime for which the punishment is death.

"And Saul disguised himself, and put on other clothing, and he went, and two men with him, and they came to the woman by night: and he said, I pray you, divine to me by the familiar spirit, and bring me him up, whom I shall name to you" (1.Sam.28:8 KJV).

Seeking to enlist the services of the Witch of Endor in order to attempt to communicate with Samuel who is dead, Saul violates God's law concerning witchcraft.

"And the woman said to him, Behold, you know what Saul has done, how he has cut off those that have familiar spirits, and the wizards, out of the land: wherefore then lay you a snare for my life, to cause me to die?" (1.Sam.28:9 KJV).
The woman reminds Saul that such practices are forbidden in Israel and asked if he is trying to get her killed.

"And Saul swore to her by the Lord, saying, As the Lord lives, there shall no punishment happen to you for this thing. Then said the woman, Whom shall I bring up to you? And he said, Bring me up Samuel" (1.Sam.28:10-11 KJV).

Whether or not this woman was possessed by an evil spirit or if she was just a fraud without supernatural powers does not matter. What does matter is that, as she proceeded to perform her craft, she saw something completely unexpected and terrifying. The visual impression this woman received, whether apparition, vision, or reality, frightened her so much that she screamed in terror.

"And when the woman saw Samuel, she cried with a loud voice: and the woman spoke to Saul, saying, Why have you deceived me? for you are Saul" (1.Sam.28:12 KJV).

The account does not indicate whether or not the woman heard anything at the time she saw the forms she describes as gods (Hebrew: elohim) in the following verse; it only shows that the manifestation frightened her and brought her to the realization that it was king Saul who had requested her services:

"And the king said to her, Be not afraid: for what saw you? And the woman said to Saul, I saw gods ascending out of the earth. And he said to her, What form is he of? And she said, An old man comes up; and he is covered with a mantle. And Saul, perceived that it was Samuel, and he stooped with his face to the ground, and bowed himself" (1.Sam.28:13-14 KJV).

Verses 13 and 14 show that only the woman saw the forms and with the description she provided, Saul was able to deduce that Samuel was among them, so he bowed as act of respect to Samuel.

From what is recorded, there is no evidence that Samuel appeared in a physical form. It seems the witch saw this in her mind or there was a manifestation only she could see.

"And Samuel said to Saul, Why have you disquieted me, to bring me up? And Saul answered, I am sore distressed; for the Philistines make war against me, and God is departed from me, and answers me no more, neither by prophets, nor by dreams: therefore I have called you, that you may make known to me what I shall do" (1.Sam.28:15 KJV).

Although we are told Samuel spoke with Saul, this account does not indicate if anyone else heard Samuel; therefore, it is impossible to know if Samuel's voice was a physical manifestation or if the communication was similar to the experience of young Samuel hearing the voice of God call to him in the night or the apostle Paul's encounter with Jesus. See 1.Sam.3:1-21; Acts 9:1-7.
"Then said Samuel, Wherefore then do you ask me, seeing the Lord is departed from you, and is become your enemy? And the Lord has done to him, as he spoke by me: for the Lord has rent the kingdom out of your hand, and given it to your neighbor, even to David: Because you obeyed not the voice of the Lord, nor executed his fierce wrath upon Amalek, therefore has the Lord done this thing to you this day" (1.Sam.28:16-18 KJV).

In verses 16 through 18, Samuel rebukes Saul for asking the question to which he should have known the answer and he reminds Saul of the punishment that would come upon him because of his prior disobedience. See 1.Sam.15:1-28.

"Moreover the Lord will also deliver Israel with you into the hand of the Philistines: and tomorrow shall you and your sons be with me: the Lord also shall deliver the host of Israel into the hand of the Philistines" (1.Sam.28:19 KJV).

Saul did not get the answers or the help he sought, but instead received notice that he and his sons would die the next day.

"Then Saul fell straightaway all along on the earth, and was sore afraid, because of the words of Samuel: and there was no strength in him; for he had eaten no bread all the day, nor all the night" (1.Sam.28:20 KJV).

The Biblical Perspective

There are several things that must be understood from the biblical perspective in order to determine what actually happened between the spirit world and the physical world in this account of Saul's communication with Samuel who had died and was buried:

- Who controls human life?
- Where does the human spirit go after the body dies?
- What are spirit manifestations?

Who Controls Life?

There is absolutely no dispute about who is in control of the life and death of human beings from the biblical perspective. God the Father and Jesus Christ are in total control of human life and death:

"See now that I, I am he, and there is no other God with me. I kill, and I keep alive. I wound and I heal, and there is no deliverer from my hand" (Deut.32:39 Para.).

"The Lord kills, and makes alive: He brings down to the grave, and brings up" (1.Sam.2:6 KJV). See also 2.Kg.5:7; Rev.1:18.
Although God the Father and The Creator God who became Jesus Christ have the exclusive power to resurrect the dead and give them life, on occasion humans have been given this authority. However, in every instance where humans have been given this authorization, they have been God's servants who are obedient to his law, as in the following examples:

- Elisha raised the Shunammite woman's son (2.Kgs 4:8-35).
- Christ raised Martha and Mary's brother Lazarus (Jn.11:1-44).
- Peter raised Tabitha the widow (Acts 9:36-41).
- Paul raised the young man who fell out of a window (Acts 20:9-12).

**The Human Spirit Returns to God**

At death the human spirit, which is the sentient part of the human creation, returns to God and is kept until the time of the resurrection of the dead:

"Then the dust shall return to the earth as it was, and the spirit shall return to God who gave it" (Ecc.12:7 Para.). See also Gen.3:19; Job 34:14-15; Psa.31:5; Ecc.3:19-20; Lk.23:46.

Only God has authority and control over the spirit of man which resides in the heavenly realm after physical death.

**No Consciousness After Death**

"Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help. His breath goes forth, he returns to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish" (Psa.146:3-4 KJV). See also Psa.6:4-5; 115:17; Ecc.9:5-6; 10; Isa.38:17-19.

At death, the cerebral and other life functions cease. There is no more thought process, no reward, no memory, no knowledge, and no access to God or this world; death terminates an individual's conscious interaction with all dimensions of existence.

Many scriptures speak of the state of the dead as analogous to sleep. Because the dead do not have a conscious thought process, sleep is a fitting description of the mental condition of the dead. See Dan.12:2; Jn.11:11-14; Acts 7:59-60.

There is nothing throughout the entire Bible, which indicates that the human life function continues to exist in one state or another after death. The Bible indicates just the opposite; it clearly shows that all mental and physical human activity stops at death.
Spirit Manifestations

There are many scriptures which show God and his angels appeared to people in the flesh; however, there are no scriptures showing that evil spirits have this same ability. It seems that only God and his loyal angels have the power to manifest themselves in flesh; however, disembodied evil spirits can and do manifest themselves through humans, apparitions, other creatures, and physical objects.

Although the biblical record shows that evil spirits do exist and have access to this physical world, the biblical record clearly indicates that humans and evil spirits are limited in their powers and authorizations. Although an evil spirit might impersonate a dead human in form and speech, it is beyond their power to usurp God's authority in order to control the spirits of the dead, which are under God's care and protection.

Nowhere in the biblical record is there the slightest indication that any human or any evil spirit has ever had the authorization or power to communicate with the dead.

Conclusions:

• The account in 1.Samuel, chapter 28 is presented as a report of facts which clearly show it was the prophet Samuel who spoke to Saul and asked why he had been disturbed from the sleep of death (v15).
• It is obvious that the Witch of Endor was not in control of this event, and that whatever she was normally accustomed to seeing and doing did not happen; this was a totally different and frightening experience to her.
• Samuel was not brought back to consciousness by some magical art or supernatural power of the witch, but through the power of God for the purpose of pronouncing the death sentence upon Saul for his disobedience. See 1.Sam.13:8-14; 15:20-23; 1.Chron.10:13-14.
• After Samuel was brought back to consciousness and had delivered God's message to Saul, he returned to the sleep of the dead to await his resurrection and change to immortality at Christ's return and the first resurrection of the dead.

Strictly Forbidden

It is obvious from the biblical record that God considers all forms of magic, mystical arts and witchcraft repugnant and forbids their practice. It is also clear from the biblical record that God views the performance of these practices as an attempt to usurp his authority and power, circumvent the natural order, and deceive people into worshiping false gods.
Modern Day Practices

Although described by many different names and practiced in many different forms, the practice of attempting to communicate with the dead has not changed much since it began thousands of years ago. Necromancy in its various forms is simply the practice of attempting to contact humans who have died in order to communicate with them or gain information from them.

It is interesting that, during most of these events, the spirit or the medium relate only vague references to events, things, or people. It would seem that there is a memory problem with the departed or they have lost their communication skills. None of these types of communications make any sense from a biblical perspective. Whereas, in the biblical account of king Saul, the witch of Endor, and the prophet Samuel, there was a clear communication from the prophet Samuel with factual information conveyed, as well as a curse pronounced on Saul, his sons, and Saul's army of Israelites.

Sometimes, people who are supposedly communicating with the dead will convey factual information, thus giving the impression that contact has actually been made with the dead person. When facts that could not be gained through normal means are given during these events, there must be a demon providing the information, because God's law clearly forbids an attempt to interact with the dead.

Evil spirits have been on earth longer that mankind has existed, they have knowledge about the physical creation which mankind does not, and they have viewed people and historical events since the creation of mankind; therefore, they know many specifics about people and historical events, which they can relate through a medium in order to deceive people.

Make no mistake, the practice of all forms of magic, mystical arts and witchcraft are a clear violation of God's law and will be punished with the second death from which there is no return if there in no repentance from the practitioner.

By B.L. Cocherrl
CHAPTER
TWENTY-SEVEN
TESTING THE SPIRITS

Because almost all opposition to the Father, Jesus Christ, and the Father's earthly children comes from the influence of evil spirits, it is extremely important for the elect to be able to discern the difference between a good and an evil spiritual influence (1.Cor.2:11-16).

In his chapter you will find biblical laws and principles which are absolutely necessary to know and understand in order to test a spiritual influence and accurately determine whether it is good or evil. Moreover, this chapter shows how to use these laws and principles to resist and overcome an evil influence.

Supernatural Experiences

Some people believe a pleasant or benign supernatural experience is a confirmation of their belief system, and that such experiences are from the true God. Moreover, because no physical harm came to them during the experience, they believe that they are in no danger.

Although a religious or supernatural experience may be pleasant and seemingly harmless, it is very dangerous to automatically assume the experience is from the true God or one of his servants. Just because someone feels that he or she has had a supernatural experience, such as a dream, a vision, the appearance of an apparition, the hearing of a disembodied voice, or some other unexplained experience with religious implications, it does not mean that the experience is from the true God or one of his servants. The word of God clearly says to test the spirits to see if they are of God or not (1.Jn.4:1-6).

Gideon Tests the Spirit

Gideon is mentioned in the Book of Hebrews, chapter 11 as one of the faithful who has obtained salvation and will be included in the first resurrection (Heb.11:32-33, 39). Gideon was not a novice in the worship of the Creator God; he understood who God was, how he was to be worshiped, and God's promises to Israel. Gideon was well grounded in his faith relationship with God, yet he questioned the validity of the message sent to him by God through a spirit-being. See Jdg.6:11-40.

The account of Gideon shows that the true God does not condemn those who are suspicious of supernatural experiences and question their source and validity.
A Serious Warning

The apostle John gave an extremely serious warning to the Father's elect about people who claim to be true servants of God, but may not be. John instructs the Father's elect to put these people to the test to see if they are what they say they are. Although John's warning primarily speaks to people who are false prophets, his warning should also be taken to include the testing of other individuals to determine if they, their beliefs, or their teachings are influenced by evil spirits:

"Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, to see whether they are from God: for many false prophets have gone forth into the world" (1.Jn.4:1). See Matt.24:4-5; 2.Cor.11:3-15.

Here, John speaks of an influence from spirit-beings and instructs the Father's children to put them to the test of truth.

Deceptive Spirits

In Jesus' reprimand to the Jewish religious leaders about their false religious beliefs and practices, their sinfulness, and their conspiracy to murder him, he notes that the Devil is the father of lies (Jn.8:44). This is the same evil spirit that mixed truth with error in order to deceive Eve and cause her and Adam to rebel against God. He is also the same spirit-being who (along with other evil spirits) is deceiving the whole world politically, philosophically, and religiously today (Rev.12:9).

The account of a lying spirit going from heaven to deceive Ahab's prophets into telling him lies (1.Kgs.22:19-22) along with the end of the age prophecy of Ezekiel, which says that the spiritual leaders of the Israelitish people will be liars who deceive the gullible (Ezk.13:1-10) clearly show we should be very cautious about who and what we believe in spiritual matters.

That Which is Good

One of the simplest ways to determine if an influence, spirit-being, belief, teaching, or person is good or evil is to see if there is conformity to or a violation of God's law and his instructions to his people. Good conforms to God's law and instructions; but evil violates God's law and instructions.

The apostle Paul instructs the Father's elect at Thessalonica to "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good" (1.Thes.5:21 KJV).

THOSE WHO ARE AGAINST CHRIST

There are many people who teach things which are contrary to the teachings of God, but say they follow his ways. In his letter to the elect, the apostle John repeats a prophecy which was known to those to whom he was writing, and he tells them its fulfillment was in progress at that time. Moreover, he says those who were against Christ at that time were never true sons of God and they had revealed their true nature and purpose by leaving the body of Christ:
"Young ones, it is the last hour and as you heard that the antichrist is coming, even now many anti-christs have risen up; from which you know that it is a last hour. They went out from us, but were not of us. For if they were of us, they would have remained with us; but they left so that it might be revealed that they were not of us" (1.Jn. 2:18-19 Para.).

John confirms that those who have the spirit of God also have the knowledge and ability to discern truth from error in spiritual matters:

"And you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you know all things. I did not write to you because you did not know the truth, but because you know it, and because every lie is not of the truth" (1.Jn 2:20-21 Para.).

John presumes the people to whom he is writing are not novices in the faith, but are experienced in God's truth. Herein is a major key to having discernment between good and evil; in order to know the truth, a person must diligently, sincerely, and prayerfully study God's word. People who lie about spiritual matters will be known by people who have the holy spirit within them, because the holy spirit reveals truth: See Jn.14:16-17; 15:26; 16:12-13; 1.Cor.2:12-16.

Those Who Deny Christ

Those who are against Christ do not teach the truth concerning Jesus as the Creator God and Savior of humanity. They also deny the individuality of the Father and the Son. Evil spirits teach a mixture of truth and error and pervert the knowledge of God and his system of worship in order to deceive the gullible:

"Who is the liar, except the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ? The one who denies the Father and the Son is the antichrist. Anyone who denies the Son does not have the Father" (1.Jn 2:22-23 Para.).

Only those who understand and believe the truth about the Father and the Son have the Father's spirit. John says that all others who claim to be followers of the true God are liars. They are liars because they deny the foundational truth about the individuality of the Father (the Sovereign God) and the Son (the Creator God and Savior of humanity).

"What you heard from the beginning, let it abide in you. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, you will abide both in the Father and in the Son" (1.Jn 2:24 Para.).

The truly converted people of the first age of the church understood exactly what John was saying about the Father, Christ, and the Father's holy spirit, because they were taught the mysteries about the plan of God by the apostles. However, this knowledge was lost when the organized church disappeared shortly after the apostle John's death. Now, in the last age of the church, this knowledge is again necessary and is being revealed to those whom the Father is calling to salvation. See Dan.12:1-10; Matt.13:10-12; 1.Cor.4:1; Rom.16:24-26.
The Sinless

One of the things that John stresses in his writings is that the spirit of God residing within the children of God separates them from the world, makes them sinless before God the Father, and reveals to them those who oppose and reject Christ and the Father. This is an extremely important understanding because each of the elect has been given the ability to discern good from evil; however, it is the responsibility of the elect to strengthen and exercise this ability:

"Everyone who remains in him does not sin. Everyone who continues to sin has not seen him, nor known him" (1.Jn.3:6 Para.).

John speaks of the purity and sinlessness of those who practice righteousness and have the spirit of God. In 1.John 3:6, the English word *seen* is translated from the Greek word *horao*, which means *to stare at, to discern, or to perceive*. John says that the children of God who reside in Christ remain sinless and understand the things pertaining to Christ, whereas sinners cannot understand or know God:

"Little children, let no one lead you astray; the one practicing righteousness, is righteous, even as the One is righteous. The one practicing sin is of the Devil, because the Devil sins from the beginning. For this the Son of God was revealed, that he undo the devil's works" (1.Jn.3:7-8 para.).

The Devil's works refers to the deception of Eve, which resulted in humanity being placed under the death sentence for the violation of God's righteous law. Christ has destroyed the Devil's work through his righteousness, his life, and his perfect sacrifice. Thereby, he removed the death sentence for those who obey God.

The Seed

"Everyone being begotten of God does not sin, because his seed abides in him, and he is not able to sin, because he has been born of God. By this the children of God and the children of the Devil are revealed: Everyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God; neither is the one who does not love his brother" (1.Jn.3:9-10 Para.).

It is impossible to understand what John is saying here, unless one understands that the spirit of God the Father which resides within his children keeps them in a sinless condition before him. As long as a child of God seeks to live a righteous life and does not willfully and habitually practice sin, no sin is imputed to them. This is because the spirit of Christ also lives in the Father's children through the holy spirit. Therefore, his righteous qualifications are also imputed to those who possess the Father's holy spirit. See Rom.8:33-34; 1.Jn.1:1-7; 2:1-2; 5:18.
A child of God who is serious about their calling will be diligently seeking to live their life according to every word of God. This is yet another way to test the spiritual influence behind anyone who professes to follow the true God.

**Jesus Christ has Come in the Flesh**

The apostle John cautions those who are truly the Sovereign Father’s earthly children to test the spirits and not become deceived:

"Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. This is how you can recognize the spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming and even now is already in the world" (1.Jn.4:1-3 NIV).

John says that a child of God can determine that a spirit (i.e., a spirit-being or spiritual influence) is from God if it acknowledges that Christ has come in the flesh. If this acknowledgment is not made, the spirit-being or spiritual influence is evil and against Christ.

On the surface, it seems the formula John gives to determine the character of a spirit-being or spiritual influence is simple and direct; however, the key to understanding John’s instructions is understanding what he means when he says, "Jesus Christ has come in the flesh."

Most people admit that the person Jesus lived and was a religious leader. Some acknowledge that he was a prophet, and some acknowledge him as the prophetic Savior of humanity. However, very few truly understand or will acknowledge him as the Creator God who became the Savior, died, was resurrected, and now lives in the flesh of the children of God through the presents of the holy spirit.

**The Mystery of Christ in You**

In speaking to the Galatians and Colossians, Paul reminds them of the importance of Christ who resides within them.

**To the Galatians**

"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me" (Gal.2:20 KJV).

Paul says that his past life is dead through the application of Christ's sacrifice. The old Paul died at baptism and a new Paul was born with Christ living in him through the presence of the holy spirit:
"My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you, I desire to be present with you now, and to change my voice; for I stand in doubt of you" (Gal.4:19-20 KJV).

In speaking to the Galatians about his concern for their spiritual growth, Paul uses the Greek word morphoo, which means to form, to fashion, and to take on form (especially in the womb).

This is the only place in the New Testament where this Greek word is used in the context of growth. Paul's concern for the Galatian's deteriorating spiritual condition reached the point that he had serious doubts that Christ's spirit was ever within them.

To the Colossians

"Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfill the word of God; Even the mystery which has been hid from ages and from generations, but is now made manifest to the Saints: To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Col.1:25-27 KJV).

The mystery of how Jesus Christ lives in the flesh of every child of God was understood by those of the first age of the church and it can be understood today by those who have the Spirit of God residing within them.

"Little children, you are of God and have overcome them, because he in you is greater than he in the world" (1.Jn.4:4 Para.).

John says the children of God have overcome those who were against Christ through Christ who lives within them.

"They are of the world; therefore they speak of the world, and the world hears them. We are of God; the one knowing God hears us. Whosoever is not of God does not hear us. From this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error" (1.Jn.4:5-6 Para.). See also 1.Jn.2:18-29.

Only those who have the spirit of God dwelling within them are truly able to understand and discern spiritual matters (1.Cor.2:9-16). If a person does not understand the foundational things of God's truth, it is a strong indication that they are neither called of God, nor have the indwelling of the holy spirit.

Those Who Cannot Understand

A very intelligent man with whom I worked many years ago ask me during a lunch break one day to explain a rather simple biblical concept to him. As I remember, I quoted some scriptures and explained their meaning as simply and clearly as possible. After listening intently to what I told him, he told me that he knew what the words meant, but could not understand their meaning.
This person had no trouble understanding the dictionary meaning of the words, but he could not grasp their spiritual intent. Such is the situation with a person who is not being called to salvation during this age and does not have the indwelling of the holy spirit, which gives spiritual knowledge and understanding. See Jn.14:17, 26; 16-12-13: 1.Cor.2:9-16.

For many years I had a close acquaintance who was a fellow minister and married to an intelligent, articulate woman who had been baptized correctly, was a highly principled person, and an excellent wife to her husband and mother to her children. This woman thought that because she was baptized correctly and had an academic knowledge of the scriptures, she had the indwelling of God's spirit.

I had many conversations with her over the years and knew from our conversations that she did not have a depth of spiritual understanding. Not too long before his wife became ill and died, she told her husband that she did not understand the scriptures or other things the same way as others in the congregation understood them. Although this woman had been baptized correctly she never received the indwelling of the holy spirit, so she could not understand scripture beyond an academic understanding. See Matt.13:10-16.

**The Indwelling of the Father**

"No one has seen God at any time. If we love one another, God abides in us, and his love having been perfected in us. By this we know that we abide in him, and he in us, because of his spirit he has given to us" (1.Jn.4:12-13 Para.). See Lk.24:46-49; Acts 5:32.

Here, John speaks of God the Father who no human has seen and presupposes that those to whom he is writing know who God the Father is and that his presence dwells within those whom he has adopted into his earthly family of king-priests.

"And we have beheld and bear witness that the Father has sent the Son as Savior of the world. Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God" (1.Jn.4:15 Para.).

The Father sent the Creator God to earth to become his Son and the Savior of humanity. Only those who truly understand and acknowledge this fact will have the Father residing within them and they will reside within the Father. See Jn.14:23.

"And we have known and have believed the love which God has in us. God is love, and the one abiding in love abides in God, and God in him" (1.Jn.4:16 Para.).

The understanding and the acknowledgment of the indwelling of the Father and Jesus Christ within the elect of God is one of the many ways one can determine whether or not a person, a spirit-being, or a spiritual influence is of God.
Testing False Ministers and False Doctrine

Paul's instructions to Timothy (2.Tim.4:1-3) and Titus (Tit.2:1-8) about the teaching of sound doctrine, as well as his warning about elders who go astray and people who are false ministers are still very important today, because there are many who claim to teach the truth, but actually teach false doctrine, which lead people astray.

In order for us to discern the influence behind a spiritual leader and their doctrine, we must carefully study the leader's life and what is being taught. The warnings to six of the prophetic churches in chapters two and three of the Book of Revelation are examples of spiritual leaders and the people they lead not fulfilling their responsibilities pertaining to true doctrine.

Religious Deception

"For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works" (2.Corr. 11:13-15 KJV). See also Deut.13:1-5; Jer.23:21-22; Rev.2:2.

Satan has many ministers (Rev.2:9; 3:9), and some of them are within the congregations of God's true followers. Some of these individuals are truly deceived themselves, but some are not and they go about actively trying to destroy the unsuspecting, the ill informed, and the gullible. Jesus knew this would happen and warned his followers to be aware of those who were not sent by him to shepherd his people:

"Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many" (Matt.24:4-5 KJV). See also Matt.7:21-23.

Although it is true that not all individuals who teach things in opposition to biblical truth are possessed by an evil spirit, it is a biblical fact that the majority of the world as a whole is being influenced and deceived politically, philosophically, and religiously by Satan and other evil spirits; therefore, it is extremely important to be able to differentiate between what is just a deceived person and one who is being actively influenced or possessed by and evil spirit.

A Prophetic Warning

Isaiah records the following prophetic warning to the House of Israel who are scattered throughout the world during the end of this age, just prior to Christ's return:

"Behold, I and the children whom the Lord has given me are for signs and for wonders in Israel from the Lord of hosts, which dwells in mount Zion. And when they shall say to you, Seek to them that have familiar spirits, and to wizards that peep, and that mutter:
should not a people seek to their God? for the living to the dead? To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them” (Isa.8:18-20 KJV Para.).

After Solomon's death and the break-up of national Israel into two distinct nations (the House of Judah and the House of Israel), the ten tribes of the House of Israel departed from the worship of the true God in pursuit of gods of their own choosing. Throughout the centuries, these Israelites who are scattered throughout the world have had a fascination with spiritualism and occult practices and have incorporated many of these practices and rituals into their various philosophies and religions, which is why Isaiah recorded this prophetic warning.

This prophetic warning reveals the basic method to use in determining if a person is influenced or possessed by an evil spirit: "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." This tells us that, if what a person says or what a religion teaches does not conform to the true God's laws, precepts, and principles, what is said or taught is without God's truth.

This prophetic warning gives us a benchmark from which to evaluate a person in the light of God's truth. If there is no spiritual light in them and they are speaking things which are in opposition to the true God's way of truth, there are only two sources from which this information can come: 1) The person's own thoughts and opinions predicated on their life experience; or 2) An evil influence.

Christ said the following about individuals who are at odds with him and his Heavenly Father:

"A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks! And why do you call me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things that I say?" (Lk.6:45-46 KJV Para.).

Conformity or opposition to God's truth is an indicator of the spirit behind religious words and practice.

**False Doctrine**

No matter how cleverly crafted and eloquently stated a false doctrine is, it is a teaching that is in opposition to the Father's truth. Although a false teaching may have some elements of truth within it, a false teaching will always have some error that will lead a person away from the foundational truth of God, which will result in eternal death for those who believe it. The following are five of the foundational errors of false doctrines:
• The false teaching that Christ has released humanity from the obligation to obey God's law.
• The lie that there are no faith and works involved in obtaining salvation.
• The deception that God the Father and Jesus Christ are the same spirit-being.
• The false teaching that God accepts many different methods of worshiping of him.
• The lie that God's truth is subjective without empirical values.

Discernment of Spirits

The apostle Paul mentions at least twenty-one separate authorizations, gifts, and responsibilities which are given by God the Father and administered to his elect children through Christ for the edification of the church and the performance of its work. One of these authorizations, gifts, and responsibilities is the discernment of spirits:

"To one there is given through the spirit the message of wisdom, to another the message of knowledge by means of the same spirit, to another faith by the same spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one spirit, to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of languages, and to still another the interpretation of languages. All these are the work of one and the same spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines" (1.Cor.12:8-11 NIV Para).

The English word distinguishing in verse 10 is translated from the Greek word diakrisis, which is derived from the Greek word diakrino, which means figuratively, to separate, to discriminate (by implication, decide). Diakrisis, basically means to make a judicial estimation; i.e., to compare what is known against a standard of law and then make a determination based on law. The law concerning God's code of law and standard of righteous behavior is found in the Bible.

Although comparing a person's words, attitude, and behavior against God's code of law and standard of righteousness is certainly one way to determine if a person is influenced or possessed by an evil spirit, the method Paul writes of to the elect at Corinth is very different and involves the dwelling of the holy spirit within a righteous person.

The apostle Paul wrote that the use of an authorized function of the holy spirit within a person provides them with the ability to make correct spiritual evaluations and judgements:

"But as it is written, Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God has revealed them to us by his spirit: for the spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God" (1.Cor.2:9-10 KJV Para.).
It is through the holy spirit that revelation is given and inquiries are made into all things, which include the mysteries of God.

"For what man knows the things of a man, if not the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God no man knows, but the spirit of God" (1.Cor.2:11 KJV Para.).

The spirit in man is man and contains the knowledge of things pertaining to the physical realm of existence. The spirit of God, which is the holy spirit, contains the knowledge of the things pertaining to God and the spirit realm of existence.

"Now we have not received the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teaches, but which the holy spirit teaches; comparing spiritual things with spiritual" (1.Cor.2:12-13 KJV Para.).

Paul reminds the Corinthians they are not like other human beings, because they have been given the Sovereign Father's holy spirit, which gives them access to spiritual knowledge and understanding. This knowledge and understanding includes the Sovereign Father's plan for humanity, what the spirit of God is, who and what God is, and many other things pertaining to the spirit realm.

Verses 12 and 13 are very important because they tell us that the holy spirit which dwells within each of the Father's earthly children is the conduit through which spiritual knowledge and understanding is given. The indwelling of the holy spirit provides a person with the ability to compare spiritual things with spiritual things.

The English word comparing in verse 13 is translated from the Greek word sugkrino, which basically means to determine the difference between one thing and another.

A person with the ability to determine if another person is influenced or possessed by an evil spirit knows with certainty that their judgement is correct. This person is not merely making an educated guess as to whether or not a person is influenced or possessed by an evil spirit based on an observation of a person's words, attitudes, or behaviors; this spiritually gifted individual has a knowing beyond the normal physical senses which provides the ability to recognize an individual who is influenced or possessed by and evil spirit.

"But a natural man does not receive the things of the spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he is not able to know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But truly the spiritual one discerns all things, but he is discerned by no one. For who knew the mind of the Lord? Who will teach Him? But we have the mind of Christ" (1.Cor.2:14-16 KJV Para.).
The knowledge taught by Paul, the other apostles, and elders was not obtained from the spirit of man; it was knowledge conveyed to them through one of the functions of the holy spirit which resided within them.

Humans with only the spirit of man cannot receive or understand the things of God, because they are of the original human creation. However, sons of God are not of the original creation; they are a new and different creature and have different potentials and abilities (2.Cor.5:17; Gal.6:15). One of the abilities given to specific individuals within the Father's earthly family is the ability to know whether or not an individual is influenced or possessed by evil spirit.

A Gift of Discernment

Within a congregation I once attended, there were two men who had a long history of spiritual leadership and were talented speakers in the pulpit; however, there was something about these men that seemed a bit odd and inconsistent with a righteous thought process.

When giving a sermon before the congregation, one of the men would always subtly inject a thought that would question the validity of God and the Bible. The other individual was always subtly promoting controversial subjects, questioning established doctrine, or insinuating things which could cause controversy. Both of these men were very clever in their speech, so it was difficult to detect the deception in their words.

Because of their behavior, several elders suspected they and some other individuals who occasionally associated with the congregation were either highly influenced or possessed by evil spirits, but could not prove this suspicion beyond a shadow of a doubt. Therefore they could not take the appropriate action without causing chaos within the congregation.

During one of the annual festival days, a man visiting the congregation for the first time, came to one of the elders and told him that there were several individuals there who were possessed by evil spirits, and that one individual was highly influenced but not possessed. Hearing this, I asked the elder to have the man write a note documenting his allegations in order to see if his observations matched ours.

Upon inspecting his list along with his comments, we found that what he was able to discern about these individuals matched perfectly with what we had been thinking all along.

His list and comments confirmed two things to the group of elders with whom I was associating: 1) Our suspicions were correct concerning certain individuals; and 2) The man who presented us with the list and comments had the gift of discernment of spirits, which is one of the spiritual gifts noted by the apostle Paul (1.Cor.12:10).
SUMMARY

As individuals in this present age become more influenced and deceived by evil spirits and subsequently become more corrupt, deviant, and evil, it becomes extremely important for anyone who is serious about their salvation to clearly understand how to differentiate between good and evil individuals and between good and evil spirit-beings.

Whether your area of concern is with spiritual leaders, religious teachings, the manifestation of spirits, spirit influence, or anything else concerning the spirit realm and its interaction with the physical realm, it is your responsibility to diligently and prayerfully study the Bible, meditate on what you find there, and diligently apply the instructions and wisdom revealed to you through the holy spirit.

The writer to the Hebrews wrote the following about spiritual maturity and the importance of diligently studying the Bible in order to become skilled in the practice of a righteous lifestyle and to be able to judge between good and evil:

"For every one that uses milk is unskillful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongs to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil" (Heb.5:13-14 KJV).

Try the Spirits

"Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world" (1.Jn.4:1 KJV).

There are important things you can learn from what John says which will help you determine what is and is not truth.

Do not believe a new teaching without doing your due diligence to find out if it is true or not, because there are many people who teach many things which are in opposition to God’s truth. Therefore, the person who is promoting a new teaching may be being influenced by a lying spirit or have some other goal which is not compatible with God’s truth.

There are many who teach the Bible who seem to be of the Sovereign Father's earthly family, but do not have his spirit dwelling within them. Additionally, many of these counterfeit Christians are in leadership positions within many of the congregations of God’s elect or are closely aligned with the true elect in some other way. See Acts 20:28-31; 1.Tim.4:1-3; Jude 1-19.

There is a spiritual influence on earth that is against Christ (John calls this influence "the spirit of anti-christ") and this spiritual influence is actively attempting to destroy the Father's earthly children and his worship system.
If you have the indwelling of the Father's spirit of truth, you can know the difference between truth and error if you will put in the time and effort to seek the truth on any teaching regarding your salvation, such as obedience to the Sabbath commandment.

Just because someone says something is true, it does not make it true. The spirit of anti-christ is very clever and deceptive. However, no matter how clever the teaching, the argument, or the logic presented, if it does not conform to the other teachings in the Bible, it is a false teaching which is designed to lead a person away from God's truth and the true path which leads to eternal and immortal life in the Kingdom of God.

By B.L. Cocherell
This chapter contains the following general interest topics, questions, and answers about angels and spirit-beings:

- Angels' Knowledge of God's Plan For Mankind
- Do Angels Work on the Sabbath?
- Do Angels Have A Language?
- Who Are the Elect Angels?
- Are There Female Angels?
- Do Angels Marry in the Heavenly Realm?
- Why Do Angels Praise God?
- Is it Possible for Angels to Sin?

Keep in mind that there are hundreds of topics and questions which could be explored about the spirit-beings who inhabit the heavenly and physical realms, and although many of these questions and their answers are interesting, they are not essential for salvation.
ANGELS’ KNOWLEDGE OF GOD’S PLAN FOR MANKIND

Are all angels and spirit-beings privy to everything about the Sovereign God’s plan for mankind and their ultimate destiny as a part of his ever-expanding kingdom?

The Day and the Hour

The disciples and Jews were anxiously looking for a messiah to come and return Israel to its former national grandeur. After explaining the events which will take place before his return to establish his heavenly Father's worship system and government on earth and to answer his disciples' question about the timing of his return, Jesus said the following:

"Truly I say to you, that this generation shall not pass, till all these things be done. Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away. But concerning the day and the hour, no one knows, not the angels, those in heaven, nor the Son, but the Father knows" (Mk.13:30-32 Para.). See also Matt.24:35-36.

The apostles did not give up in their quest to find out when Jesus would return. After his death and resurrection, they continued to question him about when he would return to restore Israel:

"Then, indeed, these coming together they questioned him, saying, Lord, do you restore the kingdom to Israel at this time? And he said to them, It is not yours to know times or seasons, which the Father placed in his own authority" (Acts 1:6-7 KJV Para.).

Before Christ's death and resurrection no one, including Jesus, the angels, the apostles, or the prophets knew when he would return.

In Acts 1:7, Jesus says that it was not for them to know the timing of these events. But, why were the disciples not told? The primary reason for this knowledge being withheld from them seems to be that it was not necessary for them to know when he would return. Because, they were not living in the end of the age, this knowledge would not benefit them.

Secrets About Salvation

In the introduction of the apostle Peter's letter to the elect scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, he writes of the precious gift of being called to salvation and the reward which is promised to those who overcome the obstacles of this life. Then, he begins to speak of the secret knowledge and understanding of salvation which was hidden before Christ came in the flesh:

"Of that salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come to you: Searching for the time and circumstances that the spirit of Christ which was in them plainly stated, when it foretold the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. It was not revealed to them, these were serving you in the things they recorded, which are now
reported to you by them that have preached the gospel to you by the holy spirit sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into" (1.Pet.1:10-12 Para.).

Although the prophets diligently searched for an understanding into the methodology of salvation that God promised and the sequence of events which would bring about the advent of the Messiah who was to bring this salvation, they were not allowed to know or understand these things. Neither the prophets nor the angels were allowed insight into how and when these things would be accomplished:

A Mystery Kept Secret

In Ephesians 3:1-9, Paul explains that he has been given insight into secrets which the Sovereign God who created all things through Christ had hidden from mankind and about which he had previously written to them. Paul explained that he preached to the general public as a witness and to explain the Sovereign God's plan of salvation:

"To me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world has been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ" (Eph.3:8-9 KJV).

As Paul continues this train of thought in verse 10, he points out that one of the reasons for revealing these mysteries was to give this understanding to the principalities and powers in heaven:

"To the intent that now through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the principalities and powers in the heavenly realms according to his eternal purpose which he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Eph.3:10-11 KJV Para.).

Here, the English word principalities is translated from the Greek word arche, which means chief (in order, time, place, or rank). The English word powers, is translated from the Greek word exousia, which means privilege, i.e., (subjectively) force, capacity, competency, freedom, (objectively) mastery (concretely) magistrate, superhuman, potentate, token of control, or delegated influence.

Because these principalities and powers are in the heavenly realm, we can safely assume that these rulers and authorities serve in some capacity within the governmental system of the Sovereign God's kingdom.

From what is recorded in the New Testament, it is clear that much of the information about the Sovereign God's plan for mankind has been kept secret from many and perhaps all of his angelic messengers and other spirit-beings in his kingdom. Therefore, the logical conclusion is that these spirit-beings are not all knowing and that God has restricted their ability to gain and comprehend certain knowledge. See Chapter 11,
"Powers and Principalities" for an explanation of the reasons for keeping certain information about mankind secret.

DO ANGELS WORK ON THE SABBATH?

Most translators of the Masoretic Text have historically translated the Hebrew word shabath in Genesis 2:2-3 as rested. This translation has resulted in a belief that spirit-beings in the spirit realm observe the seventh day of the week as a day of rest. However, the word shabath does not mean to rest; it basically means to repose, i.e., to desist from exertion, which is not necessarily rest. The following is a more accurate translation of these verses:

"Now at last the heavens and earth were successfully completed, with all that they contained. So on the seventh day, having finished his task, God ceased from this work he had been doing, and God blessed the seventh day and declared it holy, because it was the day when he ceased this work of creation" (Gen.2:1-3 TLB).

The Creator God did not find it necessary to rest on the seventh day. In six days, God finished the work necessary to refurbish the earth and replenish it with the life-forms needed for the plan and purpose for mankind to go forward. Then, he created the seventh day as sacred time, which mankind was to observe for many reasons.

The Sabbath is an identifying sign of those who live in obedience to God's truth (Ex.31:13-17). The Sabbath is a test of an individual's sincerity to live in conformity with God's law (Ex.16:4-36), and proper obedience to God's law concerning the weekly Sabbath brings blessings of which spirit-beings do not partake (Isa.56:1-6; 58:13-14; 66:22-23).

"The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath" (Mk.2:27 NIV).

The Sabbath rule about ceasation from the work which is required to sustain our life does not apply to spirit-beings, because the Sabbath was not made for them. The weekly Sabbath was made for the benefit of physical humans.

Do angels work on the Sabbath? Yes. Angels perform their functions and responsibilities on the Sabbath, because they are not constrained by laws that only pertain to mankind.

The Sovereign Father, Jesus Christ, and their spirit-servants perform work on the Sabbath; however, this work is not in violation of the Sabbath law which prohibits human labor, because the Sabbath law does not apply to them. It only applies to physical beings doing physical work.

DO ANGELS HAVE A LANGUAGE?

Angels do have a language; otherwise, they would not be able to communicate. The scriptures record that angels praise God with words (Lk.2:13-14; Rev.5:11-14).
Logic tells us that all spirit-beings understand and speak the language spoken throughout the Sovereign God's heavenly realm. Additionally, angels must know and understand every human language that has ever existed. The scriptures tell us angels existed before mankind, they are more intelligent than mankind, and a primary function for their existence is to facilitate the Sovereign God's plan and purpose for the creation of mankind; therefore, these spirit-beings would need to understand the languages of mankind in order to know what humans are talking about and to communicate with people when necessary.

The only clear reference to an angelic language (not a human language) in the entire Bible is in the apostle Paul's letter to the elect at Corinth where he speaks about the importance of having a loving attitude and behavior:

"If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but I do not have love, I have become as a sounding brass or a clanging cymbal " (1.Cor.13:1 Para.).

In his second letter to the elect at Corinth, Paul relates a certain man's experience in which he heard things being spoken in the heavenly realm, which some believe refers to a heavenly language:

"I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knows;) such an one caught up to the third heaven. And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knows;) How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter" (2.Cor.12:2-4 KJV).

Here, the English word unspeakable is translated from the Greek word arrhetos, which in this context, means inexpressible.

We should be able to deduce that whatever was heard was understood by the hearer; otherwise, there would have been no purpose for him to hear it.

The Greek language of verse 4 simply expresses the thought that what this man heard in the heavenly realm was not permitted to be repeated outside of the heavenly realm. Verse 4 is not referring to a heavenly language; it refers to the content of what was heard and understood.

Understanding or speaking the language spoken in the heavenly realm it is not necessary for mankind; because, if a spirit-being wants to converse with someone, it can do so in that person's language.

WHO ARE THE ELECT ANGELS?

After giving Timothy many instructions, the apostle Paul mentions the elect angels:
"I charge you before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that you observe these things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality." (1.Tim.5:21 KJV).

The English word elect in verse 21 is translated from the Greek word eklektos, which means select; by implication, favorite. The English word angels is translated from the Greek word angелos, which means to bring tidings; a messenger; especially an angel by implication, a pastor.

The specific things in which Paul instructs Timothy regarding the congregational membership are more than suggestions; these instructions are to be considered laws, which are witnessed to by God the Father, Jesus Christ, and their spirit-servants. See Matt.16:17-19; 18:15-19.

The elect angels seem to be those spirit-beings who have been selected to interact with mankind in order to facilitate the Sovereign God's plan for mankind. These angels would need to know what Paul has instructed Timothy in order for them to make informed decisions about their interaction with the Father's earthly family of king-priests.

ARE THERE FEMALE ANGELS?

Although the biblical record only describes spirit-beings with a male form and gender, some people believe that they have either seen or communicated with spirit-beings who have a female form and gender. But, do female angels really exist?

The only biblical record that could remotely be misconstrued to support this belief is found in the Book of Zechariah which references women with the wings of a stork as a part of a series of prophecies dealing with the end of the age, just before and after Christ returns.

After being shown things about the prophetic Zerubbabel, the two individuals prophesied to come on the world scene just before Christ returns, and a flying roll containing a curse to be placed on those who are thieves and swear falsely using God's name, Zechariah is shown the following prophetic vision:

"Then the angel that talked with me went forth, and said to me, Now lift up your eyes, and see what this is that goes forth. And I said, What is it? And he said, This is an ephah that goes forth. He said moreover, This is their resemblance through all the earth" (Zech.5:5-6 KJV Para.).

An ephah is a measure of grain and can be used as a measure in general. In verse 6, the English word resemblance is translated from the Hebrew word ayin, which means an eye (literally or figuratively); by analogy, a fountain (as the eye of the landscape).
From the two words ephah and ayin, the superficial meaning seems to be that something has been measured out and should be easily recognized as it goes throughout the earth. But, what has been measured and who are they that can easily recognize it?

Almost all of the references to an ephah in the Bible deal with the performance of the sacrificial system given to ancient Israel, but only a small number of references deal with crops. It is highly likely this ephah is symbolic of a religious system which has obtained a following throughout the world and has been weighted in God's balances and found to be lacking righteousness. If this is the symbolic meaning of the ephah, then a truly righteous person should be able to recognize this religious system for what it is.

"And, behold, there was lifted up a talent of lead: and this is a woman that sits in the midst of the ephah" (Zech.5:7 KJV).

Lead is a heavy poisonous metal and a woman in negative biblical symbolism is any religious system, which is in direct opposition to the Sovereign God's truth. Notice that the woman is sitting in the midst of the ephah.

"And he said, This is wickedness. And he threw it into the midst of the ephah; and he threw the weight of lead on it" (Zech.5:8 KJV Para.).

God's messenger further explains the meaning of the ephah and the woman by symbolically throwing wickedness into the ephah where the woman sits and then placing the lead on it to cover and contain it. The symbolism seems to indicate a religious system that is not only exceptionally evil but also extremely burdensome.

"Then I lifted up my eyes, and looked, and, behold, there came two women, and the wind was in their wings; for they had wings like the wings of a stork: and they lifted up the ephah between the earth and the heaven" (Zech.5:9 KJV Para.).

Here, the English word wind is translated from the Hebrew word ruwach, which is often used in the scriptures to describe the spirit essence of something.

The two women are pictured with wings of a stork, which is an unclean bird (i.e., not fit for human consumption as noted in the dietary laws given to national Israel). These two women with wings like a stork seem to be symbolic of two false religions carrying the ephah with the woman and the wickedness contained in it.

"Then I said to the angel that spoke with me, Where are these taking the ephah? And he said to me, To build it an house in the land of Shinar: and it shall be established, and set there on its base" (Zech.5:10-11 KJV Para.).
If the two winged women are symbolic religions, it follows that what they firmly establish in the land of Shinar is a religious system symbolized by the woman sitting in the midst of the ephah, which is the end product of two false religious systems.

The land of Shinar seems to have been located in Babylon, which is in the nation of Iraq today. According to the biblical record, all of the world's religions that exist in the end of the age have their roots in the Babylonian mystery religions.

An important thing to understand about this prophecy is that it is a vision, not reality. Moreover, nothing in the symbolism of this prophecy indicates that these women represent God's messengers, but everything points to their symbolism being connected with an exceptionally evil and extremely burdensome religion which will proliferate throughout the world from its Babylonian roots. See Rev.17:1-16, 19:1-2.

No female angels or other female spirit-beings are ever mentioned in the Biblical record. The Bible always describes angelic messengers as having a male form, appearance, and gender.

**DO ANGELS MARRY IN THE HEAVENLY REALM?**

To get the answer to the question of whether or not angels marry in the heavenly realm, we only need to review Luke and Mark's records of Christ's answer to the theoretical question posed to him by the Sadducees about the heavenly marital status of a woman who has had many husbands:

"There were seven brothers: and the first took a wife, and died without children. And the second took her to wife, and he died childless. And the third took her; and in like manner the seven also: and they left no children, and died. Last of all the woman died also. Because seven had her as a wife, whose wife is she in the resurrection?" (Lk.20:29-33 KJV Para.).

"And Jesus said to them, The children of this world marry, and are given in marriage: But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, do not marry, nor are given in marriage: Nor can they die any more: for they are like the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection" (Lk.20:34-36 Para.).

Notice how Mark relates Jesus' answer to the Sadducees:

"Jesus replied, "Are you not in error because you do not know the scriptures or the power of God? When the dead rise, they will neither marry nor be given in marriage; they will be like the angels in heaven" " (Mk.12:24-25 NIV).
Jesus' answer to the Sadducees, clearly documents that marriage is only for humans who inhabit the physical realm and it does not occur in the heavenly realm. Moreover, no female angels or other female spirit-beings are ever mentioned as inhabitants of the heavenly realm.

Angels are created beings who do not marry or procreate in the heavenly realm and are always shown as male in form and gender. Likewise, when the Sovereign Father's earthly children are transformed into spirit-beings, they will neither marry nor procreate in the heavenly realm. Moreover, these individuals are always described as sons, not daughters.

WHY DO ANGELS PRAISE GOD?

Throughout the Bible, there are examples of angels and other spirit-beings who are loyal to the Sovereign God praising and worshiping him and the Creator God who became our Savior. But, what have they done to deserve the type of continual adoration, gratitude, service, praise, and worship by these spirit-beings, and why would an angel or any other spirit-being want to voluntarily praise and worship the Sovereign God and his firstborn son, the Savior of mankind?

Before answering these questions, it is important to review some of the biblical texts which show loyal angels and other spirit-beings paying homage to the Sovereign God and his Son.

Angels Acknowledge and Praise God

All of the spirit-beings who are loyal and obedient servants of the Sovereign God acknowledge his greatness, praise him, and give gratitude to him:

"The Lord has prepared his throne in the heavens; and his kingdom rules over all. Bless the Lord, you his angels, that excel in strength, that do his commandments, hearkening to the voice of his word. Bless you the Lord, all you his hosts; you ministers of his, that do his pleasure. Bless the Lord, all his works in all places of his dominion: bless the Lord, O my soul!" (Psa.103:19-22 KJV Para).

Here, the English word bless is translated from the Hebrew word barak, which means to kneel; by implication, to bless God (as an act of adoration).

King David shows that acknowledging God's great attributes and works should be done by all which he has caused to come into existence. David also says that even the creation itself acknowledges and declares God's magnificence:
"Praise you the Lord. Praise you the Lord from the heavens: praise him in the heights. Praise you him, all his angels: praise you him, all his hosts. Praise you him, sun and moon: praise him, all you stars of light. Praise him, you heavens of heavens, and you waters that be above the heavens. Let them praise the name of the Lord: for he commanded, and they were created" (Psa.148:1-5 KJV Para.).

The English word *Praise* in Psalm 148 is translated from the Hebrew word *halal*, which means, in this text, *to make a show, to boast*; The English word *angels*, is translated from the Hebrew word *malak*, which means *despatch as a deputy or a messenger*. The English word *hosts* is translated from the Hebrew word *tsaba*, which mean *a mass of persons* (or figuratively, things), especially as organized for war (*an army*). This shows that all the spirit-beings who are loyal to God acknowledge his greatness and worship him and everything that exists shows his awesome greatness.

In a vision, the apostle John was at the Sovereign God's throne where Christ sits on a throne at his right hand and hundreds of millions of spirit-beings are in attendance:

"And before the throne there was a sea of glass like to crystal: and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four beasts full of eyes before and behind. And the first beast was like a lion, and the second beast like a calf, and the third beast had a face as a man, and the fourth beast was like a flying eagle" And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come. And when those beasts give glory and honor and thanks to him that sat on the throne, who lives for ever and ever" (Rev.4:6-9 KJV). See also Rev.5:11-12; 19:5-6; Isa.6: 1-4.

These four spirit-beings are continually acknowledging the holiness of the Lord God Almighty who is the Sovereign of all that is or ever will be.

In Revelation 4:10-11, there are twenty-four elders shown praising and worshiping the Almighty. These elders are described elsewhere in the Book of Revelation as being of his royal family of kings and priests who will reign on the earth with Christ:

"The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that lives for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for you have created all things, and for your pleasure [i.e., purpose] they are and were created" (Rev.4:10-11 KJV). See also Rev.5:11-12; 7:9-17.

The English word *worship* in verse 10 is translated from the Greek word *proskuneo*, which means *to fawn or crouch to*, i.e., (literally or figuratively) *prostrate oneself in homage (do reverence to, adore)*.
In another event before the throne of the Sovereign God and the Savior of mankind, the apostle John sees the four beasts, the twenty-four elders, and an innumerable number of angels and spirit-beings acknowledging them with worship and praise:

"And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto him that sits upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever. And the four beasts said, Amen. And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshiped him that lives for ever and ever” (Rev.5:11-14 KJV).

There are dozens of scriptures showing spirit-beings acknowledging God's greatness, praising him, and giving gratitude to him. However, nowhere in the biblical record do we see that spirit-beings are forced to serve, praise, and worship the Sovereign God and the Creator God who became Christ. Each is free to choose whether or not to serve them and show their gratitude for the opportunity to live a productive, abundant, and joyful life forever.

Spirit-beings who inhabit the Sovereign God's realm did not come into existence through some evolutionary or independent spontaneous process. Each individual spirit-being within the Sovereign God's kingdom was created through his power and each has various attributes, intelligence, and a quality of life far superior to that of humans. Therefore, the Sovereign God and the Creator God who became the Savior of mankind are worthy of continual adoration, praise, worship, service, and gratitude from these spirit-beings.

Spirit-beings who truly understand the awesome gift of their existence and that all they are, have, and are allowed to enjoy is because the Sovereign God had them created are truly grateful and desire to show their gratitude through service, praise, and worship.

Does the willing service, praise, and worship from spirit-beings in the heavenly realm give the Sovereign God and the Creator God pleasure? Absolutely it does. It gives them pleasure in the same sense as a parent gets pleasure from the love, honor, and respect shown to them by obedient children who acknowledge their parents for all that they have done and continue to do for them.

IS IT POSSIBLE FOR ANGELS TO SIN?

In order to determine if it is possible for angels to sin, you must first understand the biblical definition of sin.
"Whosoever commits sin transgresses also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law" (1.Jn.3:4 KJV).

"All unrighteousness is sin" (1.Jn.5:17 Para.). See also Rom.14:22-23; Jms.2:10; 4:17.

Sin is the violation of the physical, spiritual, and moral law of God; sin is lawlessness. Sin is any deviation from God's righteous laws, precepts, and principles which define how to conduct one's life in order to have a harmonious relationship with God. Therefore, sin is any deviation from God's physical or spiritual law.

Q. Is it possible for an angel who is loyal to the Sovereign God to rebel against him and violate his law?

A. Yes. Spirit-beings have the freedom to chose the path that their life will take. They have the choice to remain loyal or rebel. Satan who was an extremely high ranking spirit-being in the Kingdom of God rebelled against the Sovereign God and his rule of law, along with hundreds of millions and perhaps billions of other spirit-beings.

"He that commits sin is of the devil; for the devil sinned from the beginning. . ." (1.Jn.3:8 KJV Para.).

"For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment. . ." (2.Pet.2:4 KJV). See also Isa.14:12; Jn.8:44.

Q. Is it possible for an evil spirit to repent and avoid being punished for their rebellion?

A. No. It is not possible for the following reasons:

God's law only sets forth the law to be obeyed and the punishment for its violation. When the law is violated, the violator is automatically guilty and punishment is automatically assigned to the violator of the law. The penalty for a human who violates God's law is death (Rom.6:23).

Humans can be forgiven for their violation of God's law because the Creator God, in the person of Christ, paid the penalty for their violation of God's law by sacrificing his perfect life in place of the violator's life. However, a spirit-being who rebels against God and violates his law must pay the penalty for their violation because no savior exists for spirit-beings.

What will happen to angels who rebel against God? See chapter 6, "Angels are Not Immortal" for details about the various punishments for angels who sin.

By B.L. Cocherell
MISSION STATEMENT

We sincerely hope that you have found these topical studies into the Bible intellectually challenging, spiritually enlightening, and beneficial.

For those wondering who authored this study, what the study's purpose is, or how to participate in this educational program, the following brief summary will give some insight into who we are and what we are trying to accomplish.

This Work

This work is a non-profit volunteer effort, there are no salaried writers, employees, or staff. The volunteers are engaged in an ongoing effort to discover, research, understand, and publish foundational truths that have been hidden in the Bible for centuries. We believe that, when these foundational truths are correctly understood and practiced, they will bring people happy, abundant, and productive lives with the promise of eternal life after physical death.

Our Goals

Our primary goal is to share our knowledge and understanding of the Sovereign God's plan and purpose for humanity with those who are interested in living according to his law, and not by the dictates and traditions of men. Our secondary goal is to proclaim the coming Kingdom of God as a warning and a witness to humanity before the Messiah returns to rule the earth.

If You Want To Know More

If you want to know more about us, the work we are doing, or how you can participate in our biblically based educational and research projects, contact us at: www.BibleResearch.org or www.Bible-Prophecy.net

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WHO IS GOD?  
WHAT IS THE BIBLE AND ITS MESSAGE?

The identity of God is one of the greatest mysteries of the entire Bible. Without understanding who God is, it is impossible to understand the biblical record, the reason humans exist on earth, and the message that Jesus brought about how to enter the Kingdom of God as an immortal spirit-being.

People all over the world are searching for a way to live longer, healthier, and happier lives. The biblical record reveals that the purpose for your existence is to give you an opportunity to live forever in a place where no evil exists and where you will have a wonderful life filled with all that is good and enjoyable. This is the good news message that Jesus Christ brought from the Sovereign God.

This book reveals the true identity of the Sovereign God, the Creator God, and Jesus Christ. Additionally, this book unlocks many of the Bible's mysteries and secrets which explain God's awesome and wonderful plan for humanity.

BIBLICAL PROPHECIES PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

The Bible is full of prophecies which speak of unimaginable pain and suffering which Jesus Christ says he is going to pour out on humanity and many of the Father's elect children before he returns to establish the government of God on earth. But, why would the loving God who gave his life for humanity as the Messiah want to inflict the kind of pain, agony, and terror spoken of throughout the Bible as 'The Wrath of God'?

If the wrath of God is inevitable, when will it come and what does God hope to accomplish through it? These and many other questions are answered in this in-depth study about the major events which will precede and be a part of the return of Christ and the establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth.

This book also identifies several political alliances, people, and spirit-beings and their involvement before and during the fulfillment of the prophetic events at the end of this age.
THE GIFT OF IMMORTALITY

The magnitude of the opportunities and rewards that the Sovereign God offers to those he calls to salvation through repentance, baptism, and conversion is almost beyond comprehension; nevertheless, what is offered can be obtained by those who are willing to become obedient to his way of life.

This book answers many questions about how to enter the Sovereign God's family and kingdom as an immortal spirit-being and what he expects of his children while they live in human form.

HUMAN LIFE
DEATH AND BEYOND

Is death the end of human existence? According to the Bible, the answer is No! There are several major resurrections of the dead to physical life noted in the Bible in which an individual's eternal destiny is determined.

This book explains the four major resurrections mentioned in the Bible, who will be in each resurrection, and when each one will occur. This book answers many questions about heaven, hell, the state of the dead, immortality, predestination, reincarnation, and much more.

THE COMMANDED OBSERVANCES AND HOLY CONVOCATIONS
PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

Throughout human history, anyone who wanted to worship the true God had to do so within the boundaries of strict rules that were set forth by God. The foundational elements of this worship system are shown through the sacrificial system and the commanded observances and holy convocations.

This two volume study answers many questions about the Sovereign God's plan for humanity, explains many of the literal and prophetic meanings of the various observances and convocations, and reveals a new dimension of understanding into God's plan for the salvation of humanity—past, present, and future—that has been hidden for many centuries.
SURVIVE AND THRIVE
AS A FOLLOWER OF CHRIST

During the centuries that followed the demise of the early church, those who clung to the basic truths of God also accepted much error and made many departures from the truth once delivered. Along with this departure from truth, much knowledge and understanding about spiritual leadership, congregational organization and government, and problem solving within the body of believers was lost.

This book contains studies that should give any serious student of the Bible enough knowledge to understand who the spiritual leaders of the church are and are not, the organizational and governmental structure of the early church, and what one's attitude, behavior, and responsibility should be pertaining to the organizational and governmental structure of the church and those who govern and serve the elect of God through it.

BIBLICAL LAW PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

Throughout much of Christian history, there has been much confusion and misunderstanding as to what constitutes God's law and whether or not any or all of it applies to Christians today. This study gives some unique insights into the Sovereign God's purpose for humanity and shows how the first humans came under the authority of God's law, how the law applies to Christians today, how it will apply to humans after Christ returns, and how to have a harmonious relationship with the Sovereign God and Jesus Christ through the practice of God's law.

This book gives logical, concise, and meaningful answers to many questions about God's law and its application today.

SYNAGOGUE OF SATAN AND DOCTRINES OF DEMONS

In the Book of Revelation, there is a cryptic reference to individuals Christ identifies as being of the synagogue of Satan. Additionally the apostle Paul warned the evangelist Timothy to beware of those who would depart from the faith and pay attention to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons. Is it possible that much of what is taught as biblical truth today is not truth, but a clever deception?

This book identifies the Synagogue of Satan and its members and documents a number of popular beliefs held by many professing Christians that are, in reality, teachings of evil spirits meant to prevent an understanding of true biblical precepts, principles, and laws that lead to everlasting life when practiced.
BOOK ORDERS AND DONATION INFORMATION

5½" x 8½" soft cover copies of each book noted in the above list may be ordered from www.BibleResearch.org or www.Bible-Prophecy.net. Copies of each book and the topical studies contained in each book may be downloaded free of charge from the websites noted. This book or the ones noted in the above list can be ordered from the printer for mass distribution at cost plus shipping and handling.

Donations are gladly accepted to help defray the cost of our publishing, shipping, and the maintenance of our websites