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THE FIGHT IS ON, O CHRISTIAN SOLDIERS!

A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF EPHESIANS
NUMBER 71
EPHESIANS 6:13

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EPHESIANS 6:13 "Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand."

There are millions of Christians in the world today who have no conception of the magnitude of the conflict in which we are engaged. This conflict is in the individual life of the believer, it is in the church, it is in the home, it is in the school, and it is in the nation and in the whole world. In order to put on the whole armour of God, we have to know our enemy. We have already studied the strategy the devil uses in waging the conflict, and this was verse 11. In verse 12 we studied about the unseen opposition. We saw the devil's whole organizational system.

THE DOCTRINE OF THE ANGELIC CONFLICT

1. Our objective in this study.

The objective of this study is to make you aware of the fact that the angelic conflict exists. The Bible reveals the existence of a higher creation. Throughout all the scriptures we hear again and again the word angels, angels, angels. Remember that there are two kinds of angels, saved and unsaved angels. The saved angels are called "Holy."

MARK 8:38 "Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels."

Angels are also called elect.

1 TIMOTHY 5:21 "I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality."

The unsaved angels are called demons or devils.

1 TIMOTHY 4:1 "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;"

1 CORINTHIANS 10:20-21 "But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils. Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils."

We also have imprisoned angels.

2 PETER 2:4 "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;"

JUDE 6 "And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day."

These imprisoned angels were involved in that great rebellion back in Genesis 6 when the angelic world infiltrated the human race and tried to destroy man and thereby keep Christ from ever being born. Long before man existed, angels existed. We do not know how long ago angels were created nor how long they were here before man was created. The Bible does not say. At one time all angels existed in innocence. Through negative volition Satan fell and he took a large section of angels with him. So when man appeared on the scene, we found two groups of angels here, saved and unsaved angels, elect and fallen angels.

2. The Sentence That Fell On Sinful Angels.

Before man was created, to us, eternity past, the fallen disobedient angels were sentenced to spend eternity in the lake of fire. MATTHEW 25:41 "Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:"

Sometime before man was created a great heavenly court was held and sinful angels were sentenced to spend eternity in hell. In the fallen angel group, you have Satan himself, all demons who are operating today under Satan's command, and all the fallen angels who are locked up in Tartarus. Now all of these are sentenced to spend eternity in hell, but the sentence has not been carried out yet. The sentence will not be put into effect until the end of the Millennium. At that time, all unbelieving humans and all unbelieving angels will be put in the lake of fire. Hell was created for the devil and his angels and all unbelievers. The lake of fire is not occupied at this time. Unbelievers and imprisoned angels are in a temporary torment place called Tartarus. The lake of fire will not be occupied until the end of human history. This, therefore, leads us to a principle.

3. Satan's Objection To The Sentence.

The principle is this--When God sentenced Satan and fallen angels to the Lake of Fire, Satan appealed the sentence and violently objected to it. The objection to God's sentence can be reproduced very simply. This comes by knowing Matthew 25:41 and Revelation 20. From the idea that such a long time has elapsed from the time the sentence was passed and the carrying out of the sentence, we see Satan come up with an objection and he claimed that God was not fair in handing down such a stiff penalty. Satan appealed the case and said, "How can a loving God cast his own creatures into a lake of fire?" The answer to this question is found in the very character of God. God is a loving and long suffering God, but he is also a righteous and a just God. God loved the innocent angels, but when Satan fell and took millions of angels with him, then God had to deal with him in keeping with his righteousness and justice and God's answer was the lake of fire. God can't be unfair and never will be unfair. He wasn't unfair with angels and he won't be unfair with human beings. He dealt with the angels in righteousness and justice and he will deal with all human beings the same way. To prove to the angels that he was fair in dealing with them, he created the human race and brought man on the scene so he could conclusively prove to Satan and all mankind that he was fair in the sentence he had passed. God can only express his love through grace and God cannot change his character just to accommodate the whims and desires of Satan and fallen angels.

4. The pattern followed in this angelic fall.

The pattern of this fall was based on free will, and Satan went on negative volition and rebelled against God. He was set on replacing God and was set on taking the universe into his own hands. He has never given up on this desire.

Satan's original sin of negative volition is clearly stated in Isaiah 14:12-14 where Satan said five times, "I will" go directly against God and his plan.

We also have the angelic rejection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

HEBREWS 2:2 "For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward;"

This scripture related man's salvation to angelic salvation. The principle is the same in the angelic world as in the human world. Every angel had the chance to be saved. We do not know the mechanics of this plan of salvation for angels, for the Bible does not tell us. But the Bible tells us about the kind of a God we have and he deals fairly with all. Every angel had his chance to be saved, and then some. God is always a God of grace and compassion. At the time of man's creation, man found in the world the angelic hosts already divided into two groups, the saved and the unsaved, the holy and the fallen. These fallen angels had been sentenced to the lake of fire which was prepared for them.

5. The Plan God Chose To Resolve This Conflict.

To resolve this angelic conflict, an inferior creature to angels was created and placed on this planet. Angels have the ability to travel through the whole universe and they live in the second heaven. Apparently Satan liked the earth and he made it his headquarters. He sinned and ruined God's beautiful universe. So God cut Satan off from ruling this planet and God refurbished this planet so man could live here. The earth had been in existence for a long time, but now, God moved in and set up the earth so man could comfortably exist here. The angels got a kick out of the fact that God, so to speak, clipped the wings off man, his new human creature, and made him live on this planet and held him here with gravity. Angels could fly anywhere in the universe but man couldn't. The one thing that angels and man had in common was free will, volition. The Holy Spirit led in refurbishing this planet and set the stage for man to live here. After six days of getting the world ready and then creating man, God sat down and rested on the seventh day. He didn't rest because he was tired but because he had done everything necessary for man's existence and man's salvation. God, in his grace, provided everything man would ever need.

PSALM 8:3-5 "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him? For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour."

HEBREWS 2:7 "Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of thy hands:"

6. The Test Of Volition.

Human volition and angelic volition were tested in exactly the same way.

- a. Both angels and man began in innocence. Man had perfect environment in the Garden of Eden and then blew it. Angels also blew themselves out of innocence with negative volition toward God. Both man and angels operated on negative volition. This is recorded in Isaiah 14 and Genesis 3.
- b. Because of this fall in angels and humans, God provided salvation. Angelic salvation is unknown to us because the Bible doesn't reveal that plan. But salvation for man is explained, and that is the plan of the cross.
- c. Therefore, angels are divided into categories.
Hebrews 2:2
And man is divided into categories.
John 3:36.

7. The Two Tests Of Man's Volition.

Man was tested in the period of innocence and in the period of his guilt. In innocence man was tested at a tree in the Garden of Eden. In guilt and sinfulness, man was tested at another tree, namely, the cross. As long as man was on positive volition in the Garden of Eden, he stayed away from that tempting tree. But once man went negative he took the fruit of that forbidden tree and ate of it and thereby became a sinner with an old sin nature. His innocence was gone. But once he was over on the negative side, he decided to go positive when Christ explained the issue of the cross to him, and Adam and Eve believed in Christ and became the first two Christians of the human race.

Back in Genesis 2:17 God had told man that if he went negative and sinned, he would die twice--he would die spiritually and then eventually he would die physically. The wages of sin is not physical death, but spiritual death, separation from God forever. So Christ died twice on the cross, he died spiritually to pay for our sins, then he died physically so he could be resurrected and ascend and sit down at God's right hand in his hypostatic union. When Christ said, "finished" he meant salvation was finished forever and it was.

Friend, we are in the angelic conflict in this world, and Bible doctrine is the only weapon we can use to successfully win in this great struggle. The battle is on and we are in the intensified stage of the conflict.

8. How God Is Carrying Out The Solving Of This Conflict.

Man's faith in Christ, which is a non-meritorious system of man's positive volition toward the cross, resolves the angelic conflict. When one accepts Christ, the fallen angels groan and the saved angels rejoice. This is why the Bible tells us that angels observe our life down here.

LUKE 15:7 "I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance."

LUKE 15:10 "Likewise, I say unto you there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth."

Will man, who is inferior to angels, equipped with the same free will the angels possess, choose for or against the plan of God? In other words, will man respond to grace or reject it? The answer to this question is so very important for your answer "yes" or "no" seals your destiny. In this stage of the intensified conflict, God had made ample and sufficient provision for every human being even in the flaming conflagration. We have one answer to everything and that answer is Bible doctrine.

Some Deductions

Take these four scriptures in this order--

COLOSSIANS 2:15 "And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it."

REVELATION 19:6-8 "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 reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints."

ZECHARIAH 13:2 "And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord of hosts, that I will cut off the names of the idols out of the land, and they shall no more be remembered: and also I will cause the prophets and the unclean spirit to pass out of the land."

1 THESSALONIANS 3:13 "To the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints."

Now you put those four verses together and you know how the conflict is going to come out. At the second advent of Christ, we are going to return to this earth with him. Now you can't return with him unless you went away, and that's what we call the rapture of the church. The divine norm or standard for this equation is this. When the exact number have come into the Kingdom according to the will of God, then God himself will end the Church Age and the demons will continue to operate during the Tribulation. But the Body of Christ will be taken out of this world so the body can become the bride of Christ. Every born again believer of the Church Age will be a part of that bride and human good will all be discarded and burned. At that moment back to the earth with Christ we will come, and at that moment, Satan will be cast out and every believer will help bump demons off the earth. That's the beginning of the Millennium.

During the Millennium both Satan and fallen angels are incarcerated. Then for a period, they will be released for the last great conflict, then they and all unbelievers will be flung into the lake of fire forever.

The Intensified Stage

So please remember you are in the intensified stage of this conflict. This material is being taped tonight and before it is finally over many thousands will hear this truth. The fight is on! If you are up to it, stay with me and slug it out day by day and week by week. God has provided us one great remedy for the conflict--THE WORD OF GOD. The Holy Spirit within you is adequate for every battle you will ever face. You need no other resources. Right at this moment this message is being presented to you, Christ is seated at God's right hand and at this moment he looks down and sees you. He is with you for the long ride!