

The Powers In Heaven

Sometimes the most famous verses in the Bible are the very verses that we have the most trouble understanding. We have become so familiar with them that we overlook what they actually have to say – and that is unfortunate.

Take this verse, for example:

Ephesians 6:12: “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.**”

What does this verse say that we wrestle against? Spiritual wickedness in high places. If that doesn't seem to mean anything in particular then what if we were to render the phrase as “spiritual wickedness in Heavenly places”?

The Bible has more to say about spiritual wickedness in Heavenly places than we think. Do you remember the story of Job?

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

7 And the Lord said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the Lord, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it.

8 And the Lord said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?

9 Then Satan answered the Lord, and said, Doth Job fear God for nought?

10 Hast not thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land.

11 But **put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath**, and he will curse thee to thy face.

12 And the Lord said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand. So Satan went forth from the presence of the Lord.”

What destroyed Job’s life and took away everything that he had, including his health? Spiritual wickedness in high places. What brought about the biggest trial Job ever faced in his life? Spiritual wickedness in high places. What caused Job to say that he wished he had never been born (Job 3:11)? Spiritual wickedness in high places.

When we read the book of Job the message that we usually get out of it is “Sometimes God allows things to happen to us to try our faith”. Somehow we overlook the other key message from the book: “Satan accuses us before God, and sometimes God gives Satan permission to test us”. The book of Job graphically demonstrates that *we have an adversary* and that adversary *can actually go to Heaven and accuse us before God Himself*.

How much suffering and pain is caused by this? The apostle Paul is pretty blunt: he says that our real problem is not flesh and blood but *spiritual wickedness in high places*. That is the real challenge that we face in life – just as it was the real challenge that Job faced.

The point is that we have a very powerful enemy who has access to Heaven and who uses that access against us. The word “Satan” actually means adversary, and Satan is called that *be-*

cause he is our adversary. The real battle that we face in life is the battle against the devil and his army of fallen angels.

The worst part about this is that many modern Christians think that demonic activity is something that is limited to Bible stories. This idea that demons are a threat to us and actually cause us real problems doesn't even cross their minds. Not only are they not fighting this battle, but they're not even aware of it – but it is very real. The New Testament warns us about it repeatedly:

Ephesians 2:2: “Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, **the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:**”

There is a spirit who works in the children of disobedience. The lost are not “free moral agents”; they are slaves to darkness. They are under the control of the forces of evil, and only the power of God can set them free. Notice how clearly Paul says that *there is a spirit who works in them* – and it is not the Holy Spirit! The prince of the power of the air is not there to help them. He is actively attacking the gospel and snatching it away from people:

Matthew 13:19: “When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, **then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away** that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side.”

The Bible has a lot to say about fighting these forces, but that is a topic for another time (although Ephesians 6:9-18 is a good place to start). The point I want to make is that we *do* have an opponent. Our adversary is very real, and we need to resist him so that he will flee from us (James 4:7).

One day, however, our adversary will fall. Jesus said that one day something momentous will happen:

Mark 13:25: “And the stars of heaven shall fall, and **the powers that are in heaven shall be shaken.**”

Will God be shaken? No. Will the holy angels be shaken? No. The heavenly powers that will be shaken are *the evil ones*. Right now Satan has access to Heaven (which can be seen in the case of Job), but during the Tribulation that access will be revoked. The holy angels will fight the unholy ones and will cast them out of Heaven once and for all:

Revelation 12:7: “And there was war in heaven: **Michael and his angels fought against the dragon;** and the dragon fought and his angels,
8 And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven.

9 And **the great dragon was cast out**, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: **he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.**

10 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.”

This event is not in the past but is in the future – and we, the Church, will actually be in Heaven when it happens. A day is coming when Satan and his unholy angels will be forcibly removed from Heaven and will forever lose their ability to accuse us before God. Satan will be trapped on Earth – and ultimately doomed. After the Millennial Kingdom the devil will make one last attempt to overthrow God, but he will fail:

Revelation 20:10: “And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.”

We do have an adversary, but his days are numbered. His doom is sure and it is inevitable. It is only a matter of time.

