

## Section Two:

# The Divine Drama of Spiritual Conflict in the New Testament

## Act 4 in the Divine Drama: Freedom Established on the Cross (Matthew-John)

Overview of Act 4: Freedom Established on the Cross	
Events	Themes
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Jesus' temptation (Matt. 4)</li> <li>2. The declaration of war (Matt. 4:23-24)</li> <li>3. Releasing captives                             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. The Gerasene demoniac (Mk. 5:1-20)</li> <li>b. The epileptic demonized boy (Mk. 9:14-29)</li> </ol> </li> <li>4. The events of the cross                             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Gethsemane (Mark 14:32-42)</li> <li>b. Christ's death (John 19:30)</li> <li>c. The resurrection (Luke 24:36-53)</li> </ol> </li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The Kingdom of God:                             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Power (to defeat Satan)</li> <li>b. Authority exercised and delegated</li> <li>c. Ethics (fighting evil with good)</li> </ol> </li> <li>2. God's plan and Satan's anti-plan</li> </ol>

### Events

1. Jesus' temptation (Matt. 4:1-11; see also Mark 1:12-13 and Luke 4:1-13)

<p style="text-align: center;">Discussion on Matthew 4:1-11 in Moreau, <u>The World of the Spirits</u>, pp. 27-28:</p> <p>Satan tempts Christ to carry out His mission in an unfaithful manner (Hill, <u>Matthew</u>, p. 99) by using the powers that He had voluntarily shed in becoming a man (Carson, "Matthew", p. 113). The temptation sequence was probably physically real (contra Godet, <u>Luke</u>, pp. 142-3), as we have no hints that it is only visionary. It takes place immediately (Mark 1:12) after Jesus' baptism and the declaration that He is God's Son (Matt. 3:17)--Satan wants Jesus to test (or prove) that declaration (Toussaint, <u>Behold</u>, pp. 74-5).</p> <p>The first temptation is for Jesus to trust Himself rather than God to meet His physical needs, the second for Jesus to "force" God to save Him, and the third is for Jesus to avoid the cross (repeated by Peter, Matt. 16:22-3). To every temptation, Jesus responded not by performing a counter miracle or showing a counter sign, but simply by quoting a relevant passage from Deuteronomy (Morris, <u>Luke</u>, p. 104). It is obvious that He had enough of God's word memorized and understood to refute and protect Himself against Satan's best temptations. In the third temptation, Satan essentially claims the world as his dominion (Luke 4:6), which Jesus does not affirm or deny (Liefeld, "Luke", p. 864), possibly because it is not worth commenting on (Hendriksen, <u>Luke</u>, p. 236). In tempting Christ, Satan shows Him (in a vision?) the kingdoms of the world in their splendor, but, as a liar, hides their sin. Satan's power and abilities are evident in that no earthly mountain would have been high enough for him to have shown Jesus the whole world "in an instant" (NIV, Luke 4:5; <i>ibid.</i>, pp. 234-5).</p>
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Having failed, Satan leaves Jesus, waiting for an opportune time (Luke 4:13). This does not mean that he is completely inactive until much later (e.g., Luke 22:3; contra Conzelmann, Theology, p. 38; see Morris, Luke, p. 104). It simply means that he does not give up for good and that he is always looking for the right time to try again. After the temptations, angels come and "minister" (a continuous work; Robertson, Grammar, p. 883) to Jesus with food and/or comfort (Cranfield, Mark, p. 60). Note the sequence: Jesus is hungry (v. 2), Satan's fulfillment is offered and refused (vv. 3-10), and, finally, God provides Jesus' needs through angels (v. 11). Jesus' victory over Satan at this time gives the foundation for His authority over demons in the rest of His ministry (see Grassmick, "Mark", pp. 106-7).

We must be careful to avoid the trap of thinking that Satan's strategies do not change over the course of time and from culture to culture. With that warning in mind, the parallels in the two temptations are worth pointing out:

Garden of Eden	Jesus' Temptation
Question the content of God's command Reject the command itself Get her to believe that Satan is the one who is really concerned for her	Trust Himself rather than God to meet His needs To "force" God to save Him To avoid the necessity of the cross
Common to both:	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Appeal to physical senses before spiritual ones</li> <li>2. Twisting God's words</li> <li>3. Questioning the character of God (testing Him)</li> <li>4. Offering a shortcut</li> <li>5. Goal: to break relationships</li> <li>6. Theater: the mind!</li> </ol>	

2. The declaration of war (Matt. 4:23-24).

Discussion on Matthew 4:23-24 from Moreau, The World of the Spirits, p. 28:

Jesus was "going forth to war" (Hendriksen, Matthew, p. 251) through preaching, teaching, and healing all who were ill. Matthew distinguishes demonization from epilepsy (lit. "moon-struck"; Hill, Matthew, p. 107) and paralysis, though all suffer severe pains (NIV, "torments"; see Bruce, "Synoptic", p. 94). Distinctions between demonization and other ills are maintained throughout the Gospel accounts (Aune, "Demon", ISBE Revised); demonization "describes a condition in which a distinct and evil personality, foreign to the person possessed, has taken control of an individual" (Hendriksen, Matthew, p. 437).

The main point is the reflection that Jesus, in preaching the good news of the kingdom, is declaring bad news for the enemy of the kingdom. This preaching, as with all evangelistic endeavors, is part of spiritual engagement.

3. Releasing captives: Throughout Jesus' ministry he set captives of Satan free from bondage. There are numerous instances to choose from, but the two touched on here are the most extended discussion and provide the greatest informational detail.
  - a. The Gerasene demoniac (Mark 5:1-20; see also Matt. 8:28-34 and Luke 8:26-37)

Discussion of Mark 5:1-20 from Moreau, The World of the Spirits, pp. 33-35:

The story of the Gerasene demoniac clearly shows the desire of demons to distort and destroy (if possible) the image of God in man (Foerster, "*Daimon*", TDNT Abridged; Lane, Mark, p. 180), seen in several ways. First, the demoniac (one or two?; see Matt. 8:28) was living among the tombs, an unclean area (Osborne, "*Matthew*", p. 35). Second, for a long time he had not lived in a house, and had worn no clothes (Luke 8:27). Third, no chains (may refer to metal, wood, or leather; Bruce, "*Synoptic*", p. 371) could hold him and no one was strong enough to subdue him (literally, "**not even** with a chain **no longer** could **no one** bind him"; Hiebert, Mark, p. 118; emphasis mine; comp. Acts 19:11-20). The verb tenses indicate repetitive attempts at binding and escaping (Turner, Syntax, p. 67). Fourth, he was constantly crying out and gashing himself with stones, though there had to have been times when he was quiet enough for people to chain him. Was he engaging in pagan demon worship or trying to kill himself to be rid of his torment? (Lane, Mark, p. 182). Fifth, and finally, he was "driven" by the demons to solitary places (Luke 8:29). The fact that there were many demons (a "legion" consists of some 6,000 men) in him shows that he is completely under their control.

The demoniac sees Jesus from a distance, and the demons drive him to confront Jesus just as He leaves the boat and steps on shore (Hendriksen, Mark, p. 189). They know Jesus' name and identity, and, in accordance with magical practices, use it in an unsuccessful attempt to gain control over Him (Lane, Mark, pp. 183-4). The "bowing down" in v. 6 indicated respect for His power (Wessell, "*Mark*", p. 657), but the shouting (at the top of the man's voice; *Ibid.*) shows their real attitude. Though knowing Him, the demons do not worship Him--clearly a demonic act.

They do not want Him to torment them (parallel to "destroy" in 1:24) by sending them to the abyss "before their time". The **tormentors** wish to avoid **torment!** In the intertestamental literature it was taught that demons had freedom, but only until the judgement day (Hill, Matthew, p. 168). It is ironic that they implore Him by God--they have no claim to God's name! They do not want to be sent to the abyss, "here used of the place of imprisonment for evil powers; it figures in Hebrew cosmology as the 'watery deep' below the earth to which the seas are connected" (Marshall, Luke, p. 339). Thus, though we cannot be certain (Liefeld, "*Luke*", pp. 913-4), the demonic drowning of the pigs in the water may indicate that they did not escape the "abyss".

Jesus (continuously) commands them to come out, but they do not do it at once (Cranfield, Mark, p. 178). Rather, they beg to be sent into the herd of pigs, and Jesus consents (sending unclean spirits into unclean animals). Apparently they desire some host to destroy. Frustrated in their attempts to destroy the demoniac, they choose the pigs. Even though pigs are good at swimming, they drown (literally, "one after the other they drowned themselves"; Grassmick, "*Mark*", p. 123). Four important questions arise. First, why does Jesus ask for the name of the demon(s)? Least likely is the possibility that He needed to know the name to control the demon. It is more possible that He wants the disciples to see that there are many demons. Alternatively, He may be using this to remind the demoniac of who he is (a person infested with demons), which will prepare him for delivery (Hendriksen, Mark, p. 192).

Second, what is the significance of the name "Legion"? It may not indicate a literal 6,000, but the fact that there were many is seen in their ability to destroy 2,000 pigs. To the people of Palestine, "Legion" would imply a Roman army host, and signify "vast numbers, complex organization, invincible strength, and relentless opposition" (Hiebert, Mark, p. 120). The word may have been chosen to frighten or discourage Jesus, but to no avail. That "Legion" is given as *my* name may indicate the rank of the demon speaking to Jesus through the man--he is the demonic "commander" of the many demons inhabiting the man.

Third, is there any significance to the demons wanting to remain in the same geographic location? In accordance with the beliefs of the pagan nations, do demons ("gods") have more power in certain areas, or are they simply more 'attached' to certain places than others (Hendriksen, Mark, pp. 193-4)?

Fourth, why does Jesus allow them to go into the pigs? He may have wanted everyone (especially the demoniac; Cranfield, Mark, p. 180) to see that the victim was genuinely relieved and that the true mission of demons is to destroy their host (Wessel, "Mark", p. 658). The local populace, unable to understand and being afraid of Jesus' power, ask Him to leave the area (possibly valuing the pigs more than the person); the people of the world may not respond kindly to proof of God's power over demons. In any event, the demoniac is cured. He is now sitting, clothed, and in his right mind. Before he had been restless, naked, and crazy. Out of gratitude, He asks to accompany Jesus, but is told to return to his home and tell others his story. He obeys, becoming a powerful witness of the victory Christ has given him (v. 20).

Above all we see Jesus' authority in dealing with the demons. We also see the satanic attempts to cause people to act as directly against the image of God as they can.

- b. The epileptic demonized boy (Mark 9:14-29; see also Matt. 17:14-21 and Luke 9:37-43).

#### Discussion of Mark 9:14-29 from Moreau, The World of the Spirits, pp. 35-37:

As with the Gerasene demoniac, we see the demonic desire to attack their victim's humanity. The attacks had been happening since childhood (v. 21), a grim notice that children are not immune to demonic activity. The boy is described variously as having an evil spirit (or a spirit of dumbness, v. 17), having a spirit seize him (Luke 9:39), being a lunatic (or epileptic, Matt. 17:15; see Matt. 4:24), and being very ill (Matt. 17:15, "suffers terribly", RSV). The symptoms include muteness (v. 17; his normal state, as opposed to his convulsions, when he screams?) and deafness (v. 25), falling ("being dashed") to the ground (v. 18), foaming at the mouth (v. 18, Luke 9:39), grinding his teeth (v. 18), stiffening out (or "withering away", see marginal note of the NASB; v. 18), sudden screaming (Luke 9:39), and being mauled (v. 20: "shatters", RSV; "destroys", NIV; the word means "to tear, pull to and fro, convulse"; see also Mark 1:26). The demon scarcely leaves him, so that he gets very little rest from the attacks (Luke 9:39), the goal of which appears to be the death of the boy (Mark 9:22). . . .

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While the symptoms are epileptic in nature, the condition goes beyond epilepsy. It could either be that the demon took advantage of an existing case of epilepsy, or else it brought those symptoms with it.

The disciples' command is refused by the demon: claiming Jesus' authority does not guarantee instant deliverance. They had previously been given authority over demons (6:7), and had already been casting them out (6:13). Possibly they were relying on their own resources rather than Christ (see Jesus' exasperated remark, v. 19). Whatever the reason, they are defeated and frustrated. Even the father sees this, and doubts Jesus' ability (v. 22).

When the boy sees Jesus, he is thrown to the ground in a series of convulsions (Moule, *Idiom*, p. 35). Jesus, not immediately rebuking the spirit, asks the father how long this has been happening, and the father expresses his doubt. Jesus reminds him that He is fully able, but the *father* has to appropriate Jesus' ability by faith. The responsibility for failure belongs to the father, not Jesus. In some way, the faith of the father (or the parents?) may be important in delivering (and protecting?) children. Fortunately, Jesus is not looking for perfected faith, only genuine faith. The man expresses his honest faith; it exists, but he needs help. Jesus not only wants the boy relieved, he wants the father saved. Thus the brief delay. With the father's confession, Jesus "rebukes" the spirit, just as He rebuked a fever (Luke 4:39) and a storm, (Luke 8:24). He uses two commands: 1) come out, and 2) do not re-enter. There is no need to use the demon's name--He identifies it by the symptoms ("You deaf and dumb spirit"). The boy has a final convulsion, the departing demon's last attempt to harm him, and lays "as one dead". Jesus, however, picks him up to show that he is alive.

Afterward, the disciples question Jesus on their failure. His answer possibly indicates that there is a certain class or type of demon which can only be controlled by prayer (Hiebert, *Mark*, p. 224), and He rebukes the disciples for the *quality* (poverty) of their faith, not the quantity (Matt. 17:20; Carson, "Matthew", p. 391). His teaching of reliance on prayer (fasting is probably not in the original; see Metzger, *Textual Commentary*, p. 101) indicates both that the disciples had relied on themselves and that full control of the demonic realm belongs to God alone. The prayer He refers to is not a particular form or ritual of prayer, but a life characterized by prayer (Carson, "Matthew", p. 392) and, possibly, persistent prayer in the face of the demon's refusal to leave (Hendriksen, *Matthew*, p. 675).

Here we see Jesus' exasperation with the disciples, which coincides with Mark's theme of discipleship failure. The whole theme can be traced throughout Mark's gospel, and is encouraging to us today because the same disciples who failed Jesus on a regular basis were used of Him to turn the world upside down. That means that there is hope for me!

#### 4. The events of the cross

- a. Gethsemane (Mark 14:32-42): This is the heartbeat of spiritual conflict! Jesus faces the cross--not just the physical torture, but the fact of the laying of our sin on Him and His separation from God on our behalf. He disciplines Himself to do God's will, no matter what the cost.
- b. Christ's death (John 19:30): It is finished!
  - i. He gave up His spirit--a voluntary act. This is probably the loud cry mentioned by the synoptics (Matt. 27:50 and parallels). It is not the moan of the defeated--it is the cry of the victor, the "triumphant recognition that He has now fully accomplished the work that He came to do" (Morris, *John*, p. 815).

- ii. If Morris is right, this is simultaneously (and paradoxically) the darkest and brightest moment of human history. It is here that atonement is accomplished. All agree that "Jesus saves." He atones for our sins, but how does this happen? There are at least four major "schools of thought" concerning the answer (see Erickson, Christian Theology, pp. 783-99). The two that are seen most often in spiritual conflict approaches are the dramatic and the penal substitutionary.
  - (1) *The Dramatic Theory* (Gustav Aulen; the motif underlying Wink's approach): Aulen felt that the focus of the atonement is on the effect of Christ's work on the enemies that attack men. Atonement is Christ's dramatic victory and our subsequent freeing from sin, law, death, wrath, and Satan (the mechanics are not as important as the victory).
  - (2) *The Penal Substitution Theory* (the Reformers): Central to this view is the righteous character of God. Christ's sacrifice was therefore a penal sacrifice offered as a substitution to satisfy God's divine justice which should fall on us. It is penal because we deserve to die as a punishment for our sins. It is sacrifice because the punishment is death. It is a substitution because Christ voluntarily took our punishment upon Himself in our place. This is the view of most conservative evangelicals (see Erickson, Christian Theology, pp. 802-23 for extended discussion).

My own understanding is that the foundational character of the atonement is penal substitutionary without excluding the dramatic framework of Christ's victory. Our penalty has been paid, and we are privilege to participate in Christ's payment and victory when we become His followers.

- c. The resurrection (Luke 24:36-53) is God's stamp of approval on the work of Christ. It sealed Christ's victory over death and demonstrates to the world God's power to save.

### Themes

1. The kingdom of God is the most significant metaphor of spiritual conflict in the Bible. We will discuss other metaphors in a later lesson, but here will focus on the kingdom as the root out of which the other metaphors arise. There are several facets of the kingdom as presented in the NT:
  - a. Kingdom legitimacy: Satan's claims to lordship of the universe are illegitimate--he is the liar (John 8:44), the thief (John 10:10), and the deceiver (Rev. 20:3, 8, 10) whose domain is darkness (Acts 26:18; Col. 1:13). His

- followers are like the wicked tenants (Matt. 21:33-44) whose actions show their true nature (Matt. 7:15-23).
- b. An assured victory: The prince of this world has been overcome (Luke 10:18; John 12:31; 1 John 3:8; Rev. 12:7-9), seen in the resurrection (1 Cor. 15). We share in Christ's resurrection victory (Rom. 8:11; 1 Cor. 15:57; 1 John 5:4) as overcomers (Rev. 2:7, 11, 17, 26, 3:5, 12, 21, 21:7).
  - c. Kingdom conflict: On earth, two kingdoms are in conflict (Eph. 6:10-12), though the heavenly issue is settled (Rev. 12:7-9) with the final destruction of Satan and his hosts assured (Matt. 25:41; Rev. 20:9-15). Jesus is the stronger man who has bound Satan the strong man (Luke 11:14-22), and because of His victory, our standing against the enemy is possible. This is accomplished through prayerfully putting on spiritual armor (Eph. 6:13-19) and using divine weapons to tear down strongholds (2 Cor. 10:3-5).
  - d. A kingdom way to fight: We are to overcome evil with good (Rom. 12:21) as Jesus did on the cross (Col. 2:15); we can return curses with blessings (1 Pet. 3:9) because we are to consider those curses as blessings (Matt. 5:3-10). True freedom is not doing whatever we want, but being able to fully obey Christ (John 8:31-37).
  - e. A metamorphosis into kingdom people: We are new creatures having new natures (2 Cor. 5:17) who are enjoined to put on new clothing (Eph. 4:22-32; Col. 3:12-17) and set our thoughts on new things (Col. 3:1-11). We have freedom in Christ (John 8:31-37) to be pure in our obedience to Him (Phil. 2:15) rather than live in slavery to sin (Rom. 6:1-14). We are also corporately a new people who are aliens in this world (1 Pet. 2:9-12).
  - f. A kingdom family: We are adopted (Rom. 8:14) children of God (John 1:12; 1 John 3:1, 5:19) who can call Him "Daddy" (Rom. 8:15) and who share in the inheritance of His Son (Heb. 1:2; Rom. 8:17; Gal. 3:26-4:7).
  - g. Truth taught through kingdom parables
    - i. *The growth of the kingdom:* People can reject the kingdom of God; Satan can snatch kingdom truths away from unprepared hearts (the sower; Matt. 13:1-9, 18-23; Mark 4:3-8; Luke 8:5-8); God is the one who brings kingdom growth (secret growth; Mark 4:26-29); do not despise the day of small things (the mustard seed; Matt. 13:31-33; Mark 4:30-32; Luke 13:18-19); the kingdom will permeate all (yeast; Matt. 13:34; Luke 13:20-21).
    - ii. *The value of the kingdom:* The kingdom is worth all we are (the hidden

treasure; Matt. 13:44; the pearl of great price; Matt. 13:45).

- iii. *Kingdom purity:* The world is a mixture of kingdoms; the King plants openly for good, his opponent in secret for evil (tares and wheat; Matt. 13:24-30, 38-43); in the end the pure will be sorted from the impure (the fishing net; Matt. 13:47-50); the kingdom belongs to those who walk in the will of the King (the sheep and the goats; Matt. 25:31-46).
  - iv. *Kingdom responsibilities:* We are to share with others what treasures we have concerning the kingdom of God (new and old treasures; Matt. 13:52); the one who does God's will is justified, not the one who pays lip service; (the two sons; Matt. 21:28-32); the kingdom belongs to those who produce its fruit (the tenants; Matt. 21:33-46); the kingdom belongs to those who respond to the invitation of the King (the wedding banquet; Matt. 22:1-14); the kingdom belongs to those who keep watch (the ten virgins; Matt. 25:1-13); the kingdom belongs to those who use the resources that God gives them (the talents; Matt. 25:14-30).
  - v. *The heart of the King:* God actively and successfully seeks out people who belong to Him; He rejoices when they are found (the lost sheep; Luke 15:3-7; the lost coin; Luke 15:8-10); God anxiously (and with the light on) awaits our return to Him--He initiates reconciliation before we admit our wrong. His grace is offered to even the most wicked person (the prodigal son or the waiting father; Luke 15:11-32).
  - vi. *Kingdom values:* Kingdom priorities are not arranged on an earthly scale (the workers in the vineyard; Matt. 20:1-16); kingdom people act wisely in light of kingdom values (the shrewd manager; Luke 16:31-46).
- h. Throughout the gospels we see three intersecting kingdom themes: power, authority, and ethics (Diagram 1):

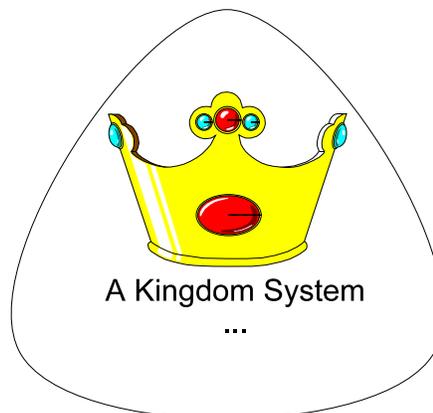


Diagram 1: A Kingdom Dynamic

- i. Kingdom **power** (to defeat Satan): Jesus not only taught about binding the strong man, He did it! Satan was not ultimately defeated through face to face combat, but by Jesus' total surrender to the will of God. This power is not limited just to supernatural displays--it is the power to live lives that are pleasing to God no matter what our circumstances.
  - ii. Kingdom **authority** exercised and delegated: He exercised authority, and also delegated it to His disciples. Paul notes to the Ephesians that we are seated with Christ at the right hand of God, far above all authorities or powers or any name that can be named (Eph. 1:15-26). Thus, we too are privileged to exercise Christ's authority.
  - iii. Kingdom **ethics** (fighting evil with good) as taught in the Sermon on the Mount and in the epistles: One of the dangers in spiritual conflict is that of becoming like the enemy. We are constantly tempted to use Satan's weapons and tactics (lying, exaggerating, bitterness, angry attacks, violence, etc.) against him. Jesus calls us not only to the winning side, but to use tactics worthy of our calling as children of the King of Kings.
2. God's plan and Satan's anti-plan: As mentioned in the notes on Act 2 in the divine drama, Satan is not as much creative as he is discreative. He takes the good things God has given and twists them towards his rebellious ends. The following chart gives some examples of what this involves:

<b>God's Plan</b>	<b>Satan's Anti-Plan</b>
Enable people to show that they are made in the image of God by living according to His design for the creation.	Cause people to live out of harmony of the image of God by perverting ourselves through rebellion.
We acknowledge that we are owned and seek to live controlled by the Holy Spirit.	We are demonized (controlled) by evil spirits (either in great fear or in ignorance).
Live in line with God's kingdom ethics: harmony, love, forgiveness, salt and light, etc.	Live out of harmony with God's kingdom ethics, whether by bending them or outright denial of them, resulting in strife, enmity, and bitterness.
Trust God for all our needs and live above our circumstances.	Trust anyone (or anything) but God to meet our needs and/or surrender to our circumstances.
Recognize that we are children of God and live in a way that shows the truth.	Be ignorant of our heritage, consider ourselves spiritual orphans (or as Satan's children).
Freely choose to live so as to please God.	Live in bondage to Satan and his hosts and think of it as "freedom."

## Spiritual Conflict Themes from Jesus' Life and Teachings

*The Characters of Spiritual Conflict*

1. **God** the Father is in complete control of the heavens (Matt. 6:10) and the earth (Luke 10:21; including the wicked and the righteous; Matt. 5:45). He knows every event--past, present, and future (Matt. 24:36). He is able to meet our every need (Matt. 6:25-34), including our eternal destiny (John 6:37, 39), because nothing is impossible for Him (Matt. 19:25-26). He is our Father (Matt. 6:9), the giver of good gifts (Matt. 7:11), the One who watches over even the little ones of this world (Matt. 18:14).
2. God the Son, **Jesus**, is the embodiment of God's paradigm--He shows us what it means to be truly human--sinless and totally dependent on God (John 5:19-23; 8:46). He best manifests the life of a spiritual warrior--He does not focus on the glory of winning battles with demons as much as He does the eternal realities of winning the war by living in a relationship with God (Luke 10:20). He teaches that the Kingdom of God is now spilling over into the world (Matt. 4:17). Through the use of parables, He teaches many things about God's kingdom. One primary focus seems to be that the Kingdom does not belong to this world (John 18:36-37), and its rules are not the same as the rules of the world. For example, things the world considers to be a curse are seen as blessings in light of the kingdom of God (Matt. 5:3-10).
3. God the **Holy Spirit** is the Power (Luke 1:35) who directed and empowered Jesus' earthly ministry (Matt. 4:1; 12:28; Luke 4:1, 14-19). He points us to Jesus (John 16:12-15).
4. **Angels** are God's messengers, sent by Him to perform their duties (Luke 1:11-13). They may appear to humans physically (Luke 2:8-15) or in dreams (Matt. 1:20-21). They have great powers (Matt. 28:2-7) which they employ in serving God. They will participate with Christ in the final harvest (Matt. 24:31), and have great interest and delight in the conversion of sinners (Luke 15:10). They do not marry and cannot die (Matthew 22:30; Mark 12:25; Luke 20:34-36).
5. **Satan**, the tempter (Matt. 4:1-11, Mark 1:12-13; Luke 4:1-11), has a murderous and lying nature (John 8:44). He leads a **demonic hierarchy** (Mark 3:22) whose destiny, together with him, is Hell (Matt. 25:41). Demons can bind people physically, emotionally, and spiritually (e.g., see Mark 1:23-27; Luke 4:31-36). Just because they leave once is not proof that they will not seek to reenter, and they are able to cooperate in their work (Matt. 12:43-45; Luke 11:24-26).
6. **People** continue in their rebellion against God by choosing to walk in darkness (John 3:19). In spite of the fact that we have rejected God, each person is of

infinite worth (Mark 8:36-37), and has the hope of resurrection to a new life (Luke 20:34-38). In some sense, we are fragmented beings, seen in the fact that even though the flesh is weak, our spirit may still be willing to do as God wants (Matt. 26:41). Finally, Jesus teaches that outward cleanliness is not proof of true inward spirituality (Mark 7:14-23).

*The Interrelationships among God, People, and Spirit Beings*

1. The Spirit convicts the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment (John 16:7-11). He is the one responsible for our spiritual birth (John 3:5-10); the gift of God given to people who ask (Matt. 7:11; Luke 11:13), whose role in our lives is to speak the words of Christ and thereby guide us into the truth (John 16:12-15).
2. The central thrust is the reality of the kingdom conflict between Jesus and Satan (Matt 4:23-24). This is manifested in Jesus' life through
  - a. His **resisting** of Satan's temptations (Matt. 4:1-11; Luke 4:1-13; Matt. 16:21-23).
  - b. His **action** in driving out demons (Matt. 4:23-24; Mark 1:39; Luke 6:18-19),
  - c. His **teaching** that the kingdom of God is among us (Matt. 12:22-29; Mark 3:22-27; Luke 11:14-22),
  - d. His **proclamation** of the purpose for which He came to earth--to set the captives free (Luke 4:17-21).
3. Jesus exercises God's authority over demons through the power of the Spirit (Luke 11:20). That authority is exercised 'with a word' (Matt. 8:16; Mark 1:32-34; Luke 4:40-41; Mark 1:27). After commanding His disciples to pray for God to send out laborers into the harvest (Matt. 9:32-38), Jesus sent them out, having given them His authority over demons (Mark 3:14-15; Matt. 10:1, 5-10; Luke 9:1-6).
4. Satan has been given authority over the kingdoms of the world (Matt. 4:8-9), and can snatch God's word away from those who refuse to believe it (Matt. 13:19; Mark 4:15; Luke 8:12). However, he must ask permission to 'take hold' of believers (Luke 22:31-32). It appears that his fundamental desire is to manifest a perverted anti-kingdom through establishing anti-parallels to God's plan for people (seen, for example, in the demoniac in Mark 5:1-20 and parallels).
5. The 'invisible' realities of Satan's activities are more fully exposed than in the OT, though there remain multiple layers of hiddenness. Examples of how his activities may be seen as either more overt or more covert include:

Overt Activity	Parallel Covert Activity
Tempting Christ face-to-face in the wilderness (Matt. 4:1-11)	Tempting Christ through His closest associates (Matt. 16:21-23)
Visible demonization of individuals (Mark 5:1-20)	Demonic oppression through sickness (Luke 13:10-17)
Keeping the masses in bondage through worldly kingdoms (Matt. 4:8-9)	Keeping the masses in bondage through "righteously" oppressive religious structures (Matt. 23; John 8:42-47)

6. Whoever believes in Jesus has crossed from death to life (John 3:36; 5:24) and become a child of God (John 1:12). Those who do not believe are children of the devil (John 8:42-47).
7. It appears that the disciples did not always exercise (or access?) Jesus' authority to the fullest extent (e.g., Mark 9:14-29 and parallels). This delegated authority is given to all believers, as the gates of Satan's kingdom shall not overcome the church (Matt. 16:18-19).

*Levels of Spiritual Conflict*

1. **Personal and corporate:** Though people are oppressed, we have chosen the path that leads to oppression by following the ways of the world rather than the ways of God (John 3:19). In spite of the fact that we chose against God, He still sent His Son to redeem us because of His love for us (John 3:16-21).
  - a. We are called to love God with all our hearts, souls, minds, and strength (Matt. 22:34-40; Mk. 12:28-34). In and of ourselves, we cannot do that, so Jesus sends the Holy Spirit, who is with us forever (John 14:26) as a divine helper (John 14:16-17), telling us what to say (Matt 10:19-20) and guiding us into truth (John 16:12-15).
  - b. We have been set free and are called to participate in the kingdom conflict of setting others free through bondage to Christ (John 8:31-37; Matt. 28:18-20). We are the salt and light of the world (Matt. 5:13-16), and are called to function as preservers who shed God's light wherever we are:
    - i. As light, we are to live lives pleasing to God. We are to display kingdom ethics (i.e., ethics built on God's sovereignty over our lives) by following in the footsteps of Jesus, including taking up our crosses and following Him (Matt. 16:24). We are to live such exemplary lives that others will see us and praise God as a result (Matt. 5:16). We are to expose Satan's

kingdom of darkness by proclaiming the kingdom of God and the light of God's word so that the world may see God living through us.

- ii. As salt, we are to act as preservers of the societies in which we live by manifesting God's sovereignty to the world around us. Of great significance to spiritual conflict in this regard is our need to wage spiritual conflict by God's rules, such as turning the other cheek (Matt. 5:38-42), loving our enemies (Matt. 5:43-48), forgiving others as Christ forgave us (Matt. 6:14; 18:21-35), and teaching others how to forgive as well (Matt. 28:18-20).
  - c. The ultimate issue in spiritual conflict for all people is not power over the spirit realm (Matt. 7:15-23; 24:23-31), but the freedom and eternal destiny of those who belong to Christ (Luke 4:18-19; 10:17-20). We are privileged to participate in Christ's victory, and we do so not by means of redemptive violence but through submission to God and self-denial, taking up the cross in imitation of Christ (Matt. 10:38; 16:24).
2. **Political:** There is no overt attempt to form another theocratic earthly kingdom. Jesus does note that a new kingdom has come (Luke 11:20), though it has not yet been fully manifested (Luke 17:17-21). Though He avoids confronting the political system formally (Matt. 22:15-22), He actively engages the world as a system of domination which controls the lives of people. Though the domination system ("world") rejoices in His death (John 16:20), that death is the means by which Jesus overcomes it (John 16:31-33). This domination system, not knowing God, hates those who follow Christ and persecutes them (John 15:18-21).
3. **Cosmic:** The kingdom conflict is not a "trickle-down" dualistic battle between evenly matched foes or a type of chess game in which the better strategist will prevail. It is the creature vs. the Creator of all, and the creature (Satan) has already lost the war.

The "bottom line" on which we stand is that the Prince of Eternity has already defeated the Prince of this world (John 12:31). Because Jesus withstood Satan at every turn, Satan has no hold on Him (John 14:30) and stands condemned (John 16:11). Jesus is the stronger man who has bound the strong man (Satan), and the strong man's house is now available for plundering (Luke 11:14-22), which is modelled for us by Jesus not just in demonic confrontations but also in proclaiming the Kingdom of God (Matt. 4:23-24).

## Act 5 of the Divine Drama: Freedom Inaugurated in the Church (Acts-Revelation 18)

Overview of Act 5: Freedom Inaugurated in the Church	
Events	Themes
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Acts: many power encounters; few demons               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Peter's great escape (Acts 12:1-19)</li> <li>b. The pagan fortune teller (Acts 16:16-18)</li> <li>c. The sons of Sceva (Acts 19:13-20)</li> </ol> </li> <li>2. Epistles: call to a knowledge and correct application of truthful thinking and acting               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. The immoral Corinthian (1 Cor. 5; 2 Cor. 2)</li> <li>b. Satan's tactics against the Church (2 Cor. 11:2-15; 2 Thess. 2:7-11; 1 Tim. 4:1-4)</li> <li>c. Paul's thorn (2 Cor. 12:1-10)</li> <li>d. Paul thwarted by Satan (1 Thess. 2:17-18)</li> <li>e. The war in heaven (Rev. 12:1-11)</li> </ol> </li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The lack of explicit (ritual) methodology of confronting demons</li> <li>2. Other metaphors of spiritual conflict</li> <li>3. Believer's identity and purpose</li> <li>4. The extent of demonic control</li> <li>5. Weapons and means of engaging in conflict</li> </ol>

### Events

1. In Acts we find many instances where God allows the display of supernatural power to enhance the spread of the Gospel, but relatively few instances of direct demonic confrontation (see Chart on next page). There are several events in Acts which are of significance to spiritual conflict. To maintain limits on this discussion, we will examine only three.
  - a. Peter's great escape (Acts 12:1-21)

#### Discussion on Acts 12:7-11 from Moreau, The World of the Spirits, pp. 44-45

At least in part an answer to prayer (v. 5), an "angel of the Lord" rescues Peter from prison (for a modern parallel to this, see Bruce, Acts, p. 250). He appears suddenly, provides a light, hits Peter in the side to wake him (Alexander, Acts, p. 448), and, "like a parent with a child awakened from sound sleep, carefully instruct[s] the groggy apostle to get dressed" (Longenecker, "Acts", p. 409). Peter's chains fall off as he gets up without disturbing the two soldiers with him, implying that they are supernaturally asleep. He is led past two sets of guards. Are they asleep, blinded, or deceived into thinking that Peter has an official escort? The last set of doors open on their own (lit. "automatically"; Longenecker, "Acts", p. 409), and Peter is escorted outside. Until he is outside and left alone, he thinks he is dreaming. The angel departs as suddenly as he came, leaving Peter on his own.

Displays of Power in Acts	Demonic Confrontation in Acts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Peter and John with the lame beggar (3:1-4:22)</li> <li>* Peter with Ananias and Sapphira (5:1-11)</li> <li>* The apostles heal the sick (5:12-16)</li> <li>* Peter with Simon the sorcerer (8:9-24)</li> <li>* Peter with Aeneas (the paralytic; 9:32-35)</li> <li>* Peter with Dorcas (the girl who died; 9:36-42)</li> <li>* Peter's escape from prison (12:1-24)</li> <li>* Paul with Elymas the sorcerer (13:6-12)</li> <li>* Paul in Pisidian Antioch (13:46-52)</li> <li>* Paul in Iconium (14:1-7)</li> <li>* Paul and the lame man in Lystra (14:8-18)</li> <li>* Paul in Lystra (13:19-20)</li> <li>* Paul's miraculous jail escape (16:22-40)</li> <li>* Paul and illnesses (while in Ephesus; 19:11-12)</li> <li>* Paul's raising of Eutychus from the dead (20:7-12)</li> <li>* Paul and the snake bite on Malta (28:1-6)</li> <li>* Paul and the father of Publius (28:7-10)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* The healing of those sick and afflicted by demons (5:15-16)</li> <li>* Philip casting out demons (8:6-7)</li> <li>* The pagan fortune teller (Acts 16: 16-18)</li> <li>* Demons being cast out by handkerchiefs and aprons that touched Paul (19:11-12)</li> <li>* The sons of Sceva (Acts 19:13-17)</li> </ul>

Chart: Power Displays and Demonic Confrontations in Acts

While no demonic agencies are mentioned in this account, it does provide a wonderful picture of God's control and loving response to the prayer of the church--even when the church has a hard time believing! Some conclusions may be drawn from the whole chapter:

- i. Once Peter is delivered, he is not willing to unnecessarily test God by staying on the street where Herod can find him. God can and will deliver us when He sees fit, but that does not mean we capriciously look for trouble just to test Him.
- ii. God's plans will not be thwarted! He is sovereign, and will exercise His sovereignty whatever we may do against Him. Why did James die and not Peter? Most commentators agree that Luke is not trying to show that the church prayed for Peter after not praying for James. The most simple answer to the whole question is that we do not know, but that God's sovereignty is not challenged by the circumstances.
- iii. The faith of the early church is more like our faith than we realize. God responds to us where we are, and sometimes He answers our prayers *in spite of* our faith. The size of our faith is not as important as the object of our faith. We do not need big faith as much as we need faith in a BIG God!
- iv. We see evidence of a folk religious belief in the disciples' response to Rhoda's claim that Peter (the answer to their prayers) was at the gate.



Discussion on Acts 19:13-17 from Moreau, The World of the Spirits, pp. 45-46:

Seeing Paul's successful use of Jesus' name in expelling demons, seven sons of Sceva, all non-believing Jews, imitate his practice. However, they use Jesus' name only as an incantation or formula, and have no authority. The demon knows both Paul and Jesus, but not the purported exorcists. Their "experiment" backfires, and the demon drives its victim to severely beat them (v. 16, probably all seven [NIV], rather than only two [NASB]; *Ibid.*, p. 498) and sends them running into the streets naked. The rest of Ephesus hears of this and fears. As a result, magic practitioners confess and denounce their practices and burn their secret scrolls (which contain spells, incantations, names of magical power, etc.) in public, demonstrating their complete renunciation.

- i. Demonic confrontation is not to be taken lightly. Even so, the contrast between Paul's encounter (Acts 16) and this one is striking. The authority of the believer is clearly seen in contrast to the peril for those who do not believe and yet use Christ's name as a formula of power.
  - ii. Many in the church had been mixing magic practices with their faith (see in the value of the destroyed occult objects). Especially in light of the rise of new age thinking, we cannot assume that similar practices are absent in our churches.
  - iii. The burning of the fetishes was not the result of a witch-hunt; it was God's merciful and sovereign doing from beginning to end!
2. In the epistles: we see a general call to a knowledge and correct application of truthful thinking/acting. Some of the events related to spiritual conflict in the epistles include:
- a. The immoral Corinthian (1 Cor. 5:1-5; 2 Cor. 2:5-11)

Discussion on 1 Cor. 5:1-5 and 2 Cor. 2: 5-11 from Moreau, The World of the Spirits, pp. 48 and 50:

Paul commands that a brother involved in flagrant sexual sin be delivered to Satan so that his spirit might be saved. "Deliver him to Satan" is excommunication, which puts him into Satan's arena, outside the protection of the church (Calvin, Corinthians, p. 108). This judgment does not come lightly; it is made *in the name* and *with the power* of the Lord Jesus (v. 4; Mare, "Corinthians", 10:217). There are two possible meanings for "the destruction of his flesh": 1) destroying his sinful lusts (Fee, Corinthians, pp. 210-3), and 2) destroying his physical flesh (death?; comp. 11:30 and Acts 5:1-10; Morris, Corinthians, pp. 88-9). In some way, both senses may be involved (Robertson and Plummer, Corinthians, p. 99).

When we do not appropriately forgive others, Satan is able to gain an advantage ("to defraud for the purpose of gaining what belongs to another", Hughes, Corinthians, p. 72, n. 22) over us. He does so by overwhelming both the offender with excessive sorrow (2:7), and us with unforgiving hearts. Plummer notes, "That Satan should take man by sin is proper for him, but that he should do so through man's repentance is too much, for repentance is our weapon, not his" (Plummer, Corinthians, p. 63). Paul was aware of Satan's schemes, and we must be also.

- i. Question: is this the same offender? Historically, the answer has been yes. More recently, however, the opinion has shifted to a resounding "No" (see Hughes commentary for the arguments). Though I tend to think it is the same offender (in part because no viable alternative has been proposed), the answer to this question is not critical for our main point, which concerns the need of forgiveness within the body of Christ.
  - ii. Paul was aware of Satan's schemes, and we must be also. When we refuse to forgive a repentant offender by not allowing him or her to resume fellowship with us, we are giving Satan an opportunity to defraud that person of his or her rightful participation in the body of Christ.
- b. Satan's tactics against the church (2 Cor. 11:2-15; 2 Thess. 2:7-11; 1 Tim. 4:1-4).
- i. Paul fears that Satan could utterly deceive his flock as he had utterly deceived Eve (2 Cor. 11:2-15).

Discussion on 2 Cor. 11:2-15 from Moreau, The World of the Spirits, pp. 51-2:

Satan, being crafty, attacks the *mind* by clever arguments through which he seeks to draw men away from the simple truth. The danger was not moral corruption but intellectual deception (see v. 4) leading to spiritual apostasy (Harris, "Corinthians", p. 10). His deception are false apostles, who preach another Jesus and a different gospel, in addition to bringing another (Holy) Spirit (parallel to another Christ), which is more likely a demonic spirit (Bernard, "Corinthians", p. 10). Hughes, Corinthians, p. 378). One of Satan's strategies (vv. 14-15) is to continually (Plummer, Corinthians, p. 30) "angel from [the kingdom of] light"; see Hughes, Corinthians, pp. 393-4, n. 57). He appears to be good and wholeheartedly following him, just as he did to Eve in the Garden of Eden. Further, he has ministers just as Christ does, mentioned in 2 Cor. 11:14-15. They masquerade ("change the outward form"; Lowery, "2 Corinthians", p. 579) as light (truth), but are nothing more than

- (1) Satan attacks the **mind** through mental schemes he devises. The chart below shows the uses of the Greek term for mind (*noema*) in the New Testament.
- (2) Most of spiritual conflict takes place in the mind. Satan's goal is to get us to think inappropriately, but God has supplied us with weapons powerful enough to tear down Satan's arguments. We are to be active in the process; God does not automatically tear down false thinking. Rather, he supplies us with what we need to do the tearing down ourselves.

*Noema in the NIV New Testament*

2 Corinthians 2:11: in order that Satan might not outwit us. For we are not unaware of his **schemes**.

2 Corinthians 3:14: But their **minds** were made dull, for to this day the same veil remains when the old covenant is read. It has not been removed, because only in Christ is it taken away.

2 Corinthians 4:4: The god of this age has blinded the **minds** of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

2 Corinthians 10:5: We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every **thought** to make it obedient to Christ.

2 Corinthians 11:3: But I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent's cunning, your **minds** may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ.

Philippians 4:7: And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your **minds** in Christ Jesus.

- ii. Demons develop doctrines through which they lead some astray (1 Tim. 4:1-4). It is futile to try to anticipate all such aberrations in advance. A better strategy is to be so immersed in the truth that false ideas jump out as counterfeit. Though propagated by people, the doctrines really are demonic in origin, and will have a common thrust of denial or rebellion against the order God has established in creation.

Discussion on 1 Tim. 4:1-4 from Moreau, The World of the Spirits, pp. 60-61 :

Some men fall away from the faith by "giving heed" (or devoting themselves to; Guthrie, Pastoral, p. 92) deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons. The latter are presented as "highly" spiritual (even biblical) truths, and may include abstaining from marriage and certain foods. It will be men who propagate these demonically-inspired doctrines (Litfin, "1 Timothy", p. 739). These men are hypocritical liars, and their consciences are "seared as with a branding iron"--either they have no feelings or remorse about what they do, or they are branded as being owned by Satan (see Kelly, Pastoral, p. 94). Whatever form they take, we are to avoid these teachings, as all things created by God are good and should be thankfully received.

- c. Paul's thorn in the flesh (2 Cor. 12:1-10)

Discussion on 2 Cor. 12:1-10 from Moreau, The World of the Spirits, p. 52:

Paul was "caught up" (i.e., raptured, see 1 Thess. 4:17) in a vision of the third heaven (the same as "Paradise" in v. 4; Hughes Corinthians, pp. 435-7). By "third heaven", he may simply mean "the most sublime condition that is conceivable" (Plummer, Corinthians, p. 343), or, more likely, he is referring to an actual level of heaven. Speculation on the number of heavens in Paul's day ranged from three to ten, three being commonly accepted (Black, Corinthians, p. 310). Bengel identified the first two heavens as the 1) the atmosphere and 2) the celestial sphere (the stars), but the evidence for this is weak (see Hughes, Corinthians, pp. 432-4). The fact that Paul was not permitted to speak further and that such things were incommunicable in human terms (Ibid., 439) shows that a more detailed knowledge is not of significant importance either to his argument or to the church as a whole (Black, Corinthians, p. 311).

To keep Paul from becoming conceited over his vision, he was given a thorn in the flesh. Over the centuries many ideas have been proposed for the "thorn in the flesh" from human opponents to temptations to physical problems (see Hughes, Corinthians, pp. 442-446). Our supposition is that God purposely left it ambiguous because the ambiguity of Paul's problem makes it easier for us to relate our own "thorns" to it (Hughes, Corinthians, p. 443).

How was it a "messenger (lit. 'angel') of Satan?" "It need indicate no more, . . . than that this stake for the flesh was satanic in origin, attributable to demonic agency, though permitted by God and overruled by Him for His servant's good" (Ibid., p. 447). Whatever it was, Paul was not given victory over it, though he prayed three times for its removal. God's purpose was greater than mere removal of the thorn. Rather, He used it as *His* sovereign tool to shape Paul into a humble servant, totally dependent on God's grace in all he did.

d. Satan's ability to thwart Paul's desires (1 Thessalonians 2:17-18)

Discussion on 1 Thess. 2:17-18 from Moreau, The World of the Spirits, pp. 59-60:

Again and again (lit. "once and twice"; Marshall, Thessalonians, p. 86) Satan thwarted Paul from visiting the Thessalonians. The word "thwart" is used of military operations to indicate "to break up a road (by destroying bridges etc.) so as to render it impassable" (Lightfoot, Galatians, p. 205). The method used by Satan is not mentioned. Though Paul was himself hindered, it appears that Timothy and Silas were able to go, which may indicate a recurring physical problem of Paul's (2 Cor. 12:7?; see Marshall, Thessalonians, p. 86). Satan (who, can act only within the bounds of God's permission) wants to hinder the work of spreading the gospel, and can affect even a "spiritual giant" such as Paul.

e. The war in heaven (Revelation 12:7-17)

Discussion on Rev. 12:7-17 from Moreau, The World of the Spirits, pp. 73-74:

Michael and his army of angels wage war with Satan and his angels (comp. Dan. 12:1). The latter are defeated and cast down to earth. Whether this defeat occurs at the time of Christ's death on the cross (Burney, Revelation, p. 68; Caird, Revelation, p. 153) or at the end of the age (Mounce, Revelation, p. 240), it signifies the fact that Satan is a defeated foe (Ladd, Revelation, p. 172). His defeat is not the result of Michael's war. Rather, Michael's victory is solely due to Christ's triumph over Satan on the cross (vv. 10-12). The ground of our victory is **the blood of the Lamb**, which

. . . is not a kind of magic charm, a ritual that we import into sermon or prayer to attest to our orthodoxy or to secure supernatural results. It is not a formula to be credulously mumbled, nor is it a parroting of mystical words. It is the expression of an intelligent, active, vital faith in Christ, the Lamb of God, who by the shedding of His blood, bruised Satan's head and utterly defeated him. . . . So then, when in prayer we plead the blood of the Lamb, we are really saying that our faith is resting for victory over Satan and sin upon all that Christ achieved for us by His victorious death and victorious resurrection. (Sanders, No Myth, pp. 121-2)

We participate in Christ's victory when we witness to the saving power of the blood of Christ (our "word of testimony"; Ladd, Revelation, p. 172). Is the reference to the Word (i.e., the Bible) or to *our* word? Probably both are intended, "for any testimony that is not Bible-based is powerless to achieve spiritual results. Grounded in the Word of God, our testimony becomes a sword in the Spirit's hand" (Ibid., pp. 122-3).

Finally, because we share in Christ's victory, our lives are not as important to us as our continuing in love for Him. This attitude is also important in our experiencing victory over Satan. Satan's defeat brings rejoicing in heaven, but only woe on earth, because he knows that his time is short. Finding himself on Earth, he persecutes the woman (the "believing covenant-messianic community"; Johnson, "Revelation", p. 514), who flees. She escapes through the help of the earth. This does not mean that "nature" is on the side of the saints--it simply shows God's continuing protection of His own (Morris, Revelation, p. 164). Satan then turns to make war with her offspring.

### Themes

1. The lack of explicit (ritual) methodology of confronting demons:
  - a. The **results** of power displays in Acts can be fit into three categories (see also Hiebert, "Power Encounter and Folk Islam"):
    - i. The church grew in witness and/or numbers (2:5-41; 3:7-4:4; 4:29-31; 5:11, 14; 8:6-8, 27-38, 39-40; 9:3-19, 32-35, 36-42; 10:19-48; 11:21; 12:23-4; 13:1-4, 6-12; 16:9-10ff, 27-34; 23:11 with 28:30-1).
    - ii. The church grew in quality (people deepening their faith, and their commitment to each other as the body of Christ, etc.; 2:43-7; 4:34-5; 10:47-8; 11:27-30; 12:5-19; 15:32; 18:9-11; 19:11-20; 20:7-12; 21:4-13).
    - iii. The church faced persecution from the enemies of Christ, who responded to miracles and church growth with violence (3:7-4:4; 5:17-18; 19-42; 6:8-15; 7:57-60; 14:3-7, 8-20; 16:18-24). Though the initial response may be growth, eventually the enemy regrouped and launched a counter attack.
  - b. Why isn't there any emphasis on exorcism in the NT epistles? Reasons may include:
    - i. God wants our attention on Him rather than ability to exorcise demons.

- ii. Too much emphasis on demonic encounters opens the door for a type of demonomania in which Satan is seen as the source behind every problem.
- iii. Power and truth are inextricably intertwined (e.g., see Eph. 3:16-19; illustrated in Diagram 2). In the Gospels and Acts, power is shown more clearly. In the Epistles, truth is given greater emphasis.
- iv. Truth encounters empower Christians to believe appropriately on their own behalf, rather than relying on an "expert" to deliver them.

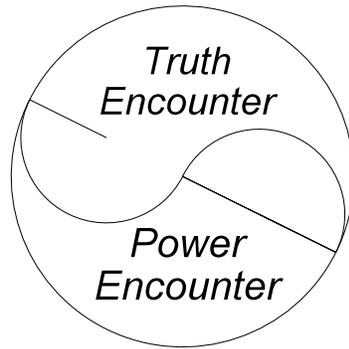


Diagram 2: Power and Truth Encounter

c. Kraft describes three types of encounters:

Type of Encounter	Definition	Concern	Vehicle
Power	Visible, practical demonstrations that Jesus Christ is more powerful than the spirits, powers, or false gods	Freedom: exercise of power and authority to freedom from emotional bondage	Spiritual warfare
Commitment (Allegiance)	To rescue people from wrong commitments and bring them into relationship with Christ	Relationship: exercise of will in commitment and obedience to Jesus	Witness
Truth	To counter error and to bring people to correct understandings about Jesus Christ	Understanding: exercise mind and challenge will	Teaching

I accept the foundational idea of different encounters, but agree with Kraft that they need to be seen as parts of the same process and not as isolated from each other (Diagram 3).

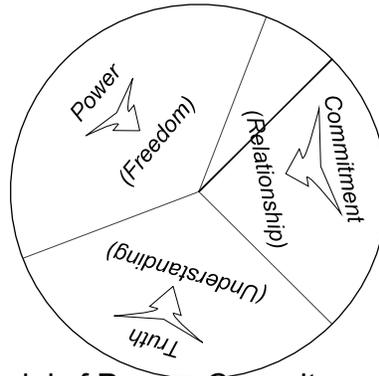


Diagram 3: Kraft's Model of Power, Commitment, and Truth Encounter

2. Other metaphors in spiritual conflict: The controlling metaphor for spiritual conflict is that of the Kingdom of God. We are members of that kingdom, which is opposed by the dominion of darkness. However, this is not the only metaphor used. We see several pictures that help fill out the total picture of spiritual conflict.
  - a. Metaphors of identity: Of foundational consideration in spiritual conflict is our identity in Christ. Anderson has explored this area extensively (see especially Living Free in Christ, a collection of devotions on the fact and significance of identity).
    - i. **Citizenship** (Eph. 2:19; Phil. 3:20): God declares us to be citizens of His heavenly kingdom.
    - ii. **Household** (Eph. 2:19; 1 Tim. 3:15, Heb. 3:6; 1 Pet. 2:5): We are members of God's house.
    - iii. **Children of God** (John 1:12; Rom. 8:16, 21; 9:8; Gal. 3:26; Phil. 2:15; 1 John 3:1-2, 10; 5:19): We are not just called God's children--we actually ARE!
  - b. Metaphors of transformation: We are new creatures in Christ, and are in the process of being renewed or transformed more and more into His image. Two metaphors carry this idea:
    - i. **Clothing** (Gal. 3:27; Eph. 4:22-29; Col. 3:9-12; 1 Pet. 5:5): We are to strip off our old clothing, and joyfully put on new clothing, which is sometimes identified as Christ himself (Rom. 13:14).
    - ii. **Metamorphosis** (transformation or renewal; Rom. 12:1-2; 2 Cor. 3:18; 4:16; 5:17; Phil. 3:21; Col. 3:10; Titus 3:5): Our "old" has gone, and the "new" has come (and is still coming), and we are to live in light of the reality of God's transforming work being carried out in our lives.

- c. Metaphors of growth:
  - i. **Walk** (John 8:12; 12:35; Rom. 4:12; Col. 2:6; 3:7; 1 John 1:6-7; 2:6; 2 John 4-6; 3 John 3): We are called to walk in the light—to walk in obedience to Christ's commands.
  - ii. **Discipline/Training** (1 Cor. 9:25; 1 Tim. 4:7-8; Heb. 5:14): We are to discipline ourselves as athletes training for competition.
- d. Metaphor of reproduction: **Bearing fruit** (Matt. 12:33; Mark 4:8; John 15; Rom. 7:4; Gal. 5:22; Phil. 1:11; Col. 1:10): We are to bear fruit both in the lives we lead (character qualities, the fruit of the Spirit) and in the way we multiply our efforts through the lives of others.
- e. Metaphors of engagement:
  - i. **Stand** (Luke 2:19; 1 Cor. 10:12-13; 15:1, 58; 16:13; 2 Cor. 1:21, 24; Gal. 5:1; Eph. 6:11-14; Phil. 4:1; Col. 4:12; 1 Thess. 3:8; 2 Thess. 2:15; Jas. 5:8; 1 Pet. 5:8-9): We are to stand firm in our faith against the enemies of God, whether human or demonic. The standing firm reminds us that we will be attacked!
  - ii. **Struggle** (Rom. 15:30; Eph. 6:12; Col. 1:29; 2:1; Heb. 12:4): We struggle against the enemy and against sin as well as struggling on behalf of others in prayer.
  - iii. **Fight, battle, war** (1 Cor. 9:26; 14:8; 2 Cor. 10:3-4; 1 Tim. 1:18; 6:12; 2 Tim. 4:7; Jas. 4:1; 1 Pet. 2:11; Rev. 12:7-11; 12:17; 13:7): We fight the good fight, struggling both against the desires that come from within us and the enemies who attack from without. The weapons that we use, however, are not earthly weapons, but heavenly ones (of God's kingdom).

### 3. Believer's identity and purpose

Being a Christian is not just *getting something*, it is *being someone*. . . . What you *have* isn't the point, it's who you *are*. It is not what the Christian does that determines identity, it is who we are, and how we perceive ourselves that determines what we do.

Neil Anderson, Resolving Personal Conflicts

- a. Eph. 1:18-2:10: We have been saved with a purpose in mind!

Discussion on Eph. 1:18-2:10 from Moreau, The World of the Spirits, pp. 53:

Christ is seated at God's right hand in the heavenly places, far above any power (e.g., spiritual being(s), magical ability, etc.) that we can imagine. Robinson writes that the heavenly sphere "is the sphere of spiritual activities: that immaterial region, the 'unseen universe', which lies behind the world of sense" (Robinson, Ephesians, p. 21).

As in Romans 8:38-9, Paul is more interested in noting that no angelic or demonic powers are excluded than in giving a ranked list of them (Barth, Ephesians, p. 171). The sense is, "It matters not by what title they are called, or whether real or imaginary, Christ is elevated above them all" (Abbott, Ephesians and Colossians, p. 33). In addition to terms discussed elsewhere (see Rom. 8:38-39, 1 Cor. 15:24-26, Col. 2:15, and 1 Pet. 3:22), he lists "dominion", which means "power or position as lord" (Foerster, "*Kurios*", TDNT Abridged), and possibly refers to those angels (whether good or evil) in charge of earthly kingdoms (for further information, see Turner, Christian Words, pp. 115-6).

To ensure that nothing is omitted, Paul says that Christ is above "any name that can be named". His name is pre-eminent (Phil. 2:9), just as He Himself is pre-eminent. Having all authority, He has been given as God's gift to the Church as its head (v. 22). Thus, the Church participates in the authority of Christ our Head. In emphasizing this, Paul is laying a foundation for the Ephesian believers to see how effective Christ's power is in them, and is preparing them for the challenge to engage in spiritual warfare given in 6:10-20 (see Arnold, Ephesians: Power and Magic, p. 56). This would be especially effective for an audience converted from strong beliefs in magic, as the Ephesians may have been (see *Ibid.*, pp. 75-85).

**2:1-2** We previously walked according to "the course of the world" (lit. "age of this world"). This may refer to the era or time of Satanic control (see Arnold, Ephesians: Power and Magic, pp. 59-60), the climate of the world around us (Wink, Naming the Powers, p. 83), or to Satan himself (i.e., the "World-Age"; Barth, Ephesians, p. 21). He is the "prince of the power of the air", the "ruler of the atmosphere". "Air" should be taken literally, though the intended sense is probably the "heavenly realm" (see Eph. 6:12; Bruce, Colossians, Philemon, Ephesians, p. 282). This is either linked to Satan's ability to be anywhere ("the prince whose power is universal and inescapable"; Carr, Angels, p. 103), or it is tied to the notion present in Paul's day that spirits lived in the air (Robinson, Ephesians, p. 49; contra Wink Naming the Powers, pp. 83-4). Finally, a "spirit" is now working in the "sons of disobedience". The terminology shows that Satan copies, though in evil fashion, the work of the Holy Spirit in the believer (Wood, "Ephesians", p. 34). "Spirit" may be linked to "the power of the air", and mean the context in which we live (see Hoehner, "Ephesians", p. 622; the "tenor of the age"). On the other hand, it may be linked to "prince", (NIV) and indicate Satan as the spirit working in unbelievers. The thrust is that he is now working by using the conditions that prevail in the world to work his influence in those who are his captives.

**2:4-6** That we are seated (lit. "enthroned") with Christ at the right hand of God, far above all other powers (see Eph. 1:20-3), is not to be taken in a physical sense. Rather, it is a picture of our participation in His position, "denoting the privileges, honor, authority, and function given to the saints" (Barth, Ephesians, p. 238).

Throughout Ephesians Paul refers to who we are in, through, or with Christ. This is the foundation of his argument in the epistle in which he argues that we are able to live the Spirit-filled Christian life no matter what our circumstances. In 1:18-2:10, he argues that we were saved by grace with a purpose in mind--God has set up good works for us to discover and walk in. A summary of the basic discussion in this section is:

We who were dead in our sins (2:1-3) were saved by grace through faith (2:8-9), made alive in Christ (2:4-5), seated with Him (2:6), and delegated (1:18-19; 2:6) His matchless authority (1:19-23) in order that we might do the good works God prepared in advance for us to do (2:10).

*Ephesians 1:18-2:10*

- b. Col. 1:13: Our salvation was a kingdom transfer.

Discussion on Col 1:13 from Moreau, The World of the Spirits, p. 57:

Members of the Colossian church were involved in the worship of angels, including arguments over the rankings of various angelic powers, assignments of responsibilities, etc. (see Lightfoot, Colossians, pp. 152-4). Paul fights this by asserting the superiority of Christ over all other beings. He does not deny the existence of "thrones", etc.--he simply shows that they are the created, Christ is the Creator, and they have no power apart from Him (Hendriksen, Colossians, p. 73; O'Brien, Colossians, pp. 46-7). Why worship created beings when we can directly worship their (and our) Creator? The "thrones" Paul mentions may be angels of God's presence (Carr, Angels, p. 49), possibly either attended by (Turner, Christian Words, p. 448) or the same as (Abbot, Ephesians and Colossians, p. 216) the angelic "elders" of Rev. 4:6. Bruce notes of the angelic "lists" in the NT that "the variety of ways in which the terms are combined in the NT warns us against any attempt to reconstruct a fixed hierarchy from them" (Bruce, Colossians, Philemon, Ephesians, pp. 63-4).

We have been transferred from one kingdom to another—given new passports and new identities. We no longer need to live in light of our old identities.

- c. Note the comparisons of the old man with the new man which resulted from the kingdom transfer:

Old man		New man
In Adam (1 Cor. 15:22a)	by ancestry	In Christ (1 Cor. 15:22b)
Children of wrath (Ephesians 2:1-3)	by nature	Partaker of the divine nature (2 Peter 1:4)
In the flesh (Romans 8:8)	by birth	In the Spirit (Romans 8:9)
Members of the dominion of darkness (Col. 1:13)	by citizenship	Citizens of God's kingdom (Eph. 2:19)
Walk after the flesh	by choice	Walk after the Spirit (Gal. 5:16) or Walk after the flesh (Rom. 8:12, 13)

4. The extent of demonic control
  - a. Under the direction of Satan, demons seek to attack and harass Christians.  
Note:
    - (1) Satan is not bound today to use the same particular set of strategies that he used in the NT times, and
    - (2) His strategies can be expected to be tailored to his audience. The church is not the only organization which is able to "contextualize"!
  - b. How much influence can a demon have on a true believer? Discussion of this issue is found in Moreau, The World of the Spirits, pp. 91-94. In seeking to answer this question, we must keep in mind several basic principles:
    - i. Satan's power was broken on the cross (Col. 2:15).
    - ii. Scripture is not exhaustive on the subject of demons.
    - iii. Satan is able to influence a believer, or else there would be no reason for the many NT warnings to resist him. The question is not his *ability* to influence us, but the *extent* to which he is able to do so.
    - iv. Do not confuse spatial relations (the physical location of a demon) with spiritual ones. A genuine believer can allow a non-Christian person to control him--why not a demon? The issue is one of *control*, not *ownership*.
    - v. Once we become believers, we still face the lingering consequences of sin from our past.
    - vi. We must carefully define our terms. However we define the term in relation to demons and the Christian, in the final analysis all believers are *Christ's* possession, and nothing (angels, powers, and principalities) can change that. A person having a demon is not the same as the demon "having" him (i.e., controlling his eternal destiny). While the person may yield control to demonic forces through sin, he cannot yield his eternal status as a child of God, which Christ fully controls.
    - vii. What, then is our conclusion? We feel that, though demons can display a remarkable amount of control over the body and actions of a genuine Christian, nonetheless they cannot "possess" him in the sense of controlling his eternal destiny (see also 1 Jn. 5:18). The extent of the control given to any demon(s), however, is determined by the believer,

who has the authority to yield his own life to whomever he wishes (whether the Holy Spirit, evil spirits, or even human beings, including cult leaders; see Diagram 4).

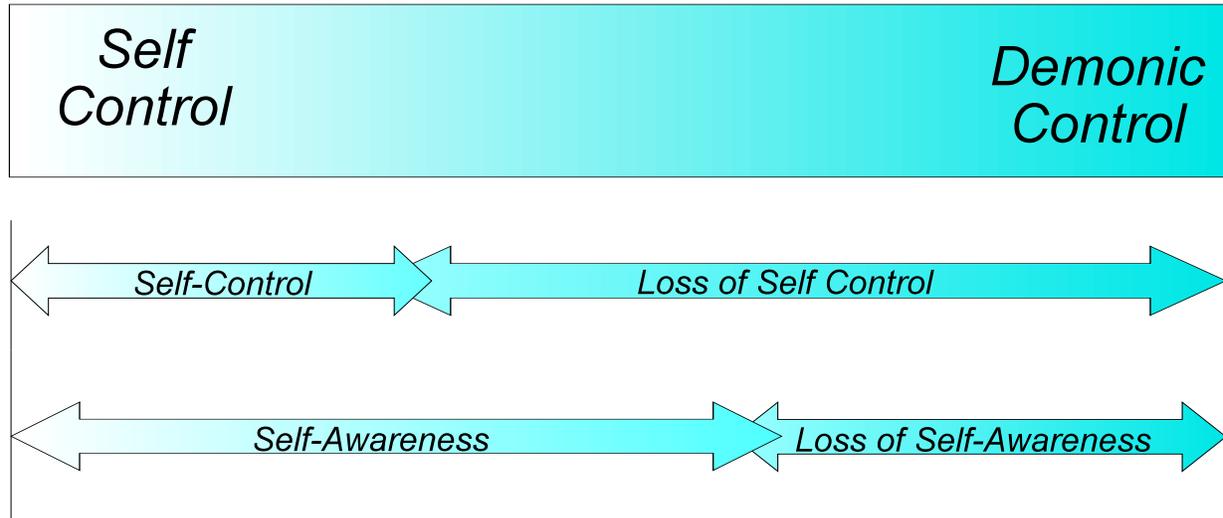


Diagram 4: The Spectrum of Demonic Influence

5. Weapons and means of engaging in conflict: We see a multitude of weapons for spiritual conflict in the epistles, built on a kingdom framework. We will explore these in the second section of the course. The foundation is that kingdom weapons move towards life, while Satan's weapons move towards death. The following charts give an overview of some of the basic ideas:

Then you will know the truth,  
and the truth shall set you free

*John 8:32 (NIV)*

Foundational Issues

<p>False Ideas about God</p> <p>God is a cosmic killjoy.          God is just like my father.          God could never use me.          God does not really want me.          God is distant and          unconcerned.          God enjoys punishing people.          . . . . .</p>	<p>False Views of Self</p> <p>I am a worm.          I am what I do.          I am the center of the          universe.          I could never. . . .          I hate myself.          I cannot stop. . . .          . . . . .</p>
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Don't be overcome by evil;  
 take the offensive and overcome evil with good.  
*Rom. 12:21 (Phillips)*

Relationships with Others

<p>Towards Death</p> <p>Bitterness/Anger/Hatred          Lies          Truth to hurt          Isolation          Rebellion          Pride</p>	<p>Towards Life</p> <p>Forgiveness          Truth          Truth in love          Fellowship          Mutual submission          Humility</p>
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## Act 6 in the Divine Drama: Freedom Fully Manifested through the Parousia (Revelation 19-22)

Overview of Act 6: Freedom Fully Manifested through the Parousia	
Events	Theme
1. Satan bound & defeated	1. God's sovereignty and glory and Christ's all-sufficient power
2. White throne judgment	2. Genuine "happily ever after" living!
3. The New Jerusalem	

### Events

1. Satan bound & defeated (Rev. 19:1-20:10)

#### Discussion on Rev. 20:1-10 from Moreau, The World of the Spirits, p. 77

Previously, Satan was cast out of heaven to the earth (12:9). Now, he is cast out of the earth to the abyss by a nameless angel. The angel comes with the key to the abyss (see 9:1) and a great chain in his hand. He seizes Satan and binds him in the abyss for 1,000 years so that he might not "deceive the nations any longer". What is the "binding" of Satan and when does it happen? Some say that Satan is bound right now (Morris, Revelation, p. 236). If this is the case, the binding may be 1) that Satan is unable to deceive the nations about the Gospel during this time (Hendriksen, Conquerors, p. 186-88), or 2) that he cannot disturb saints who have died but not yet received their resurrection bodies (see Johnson, "Revelation", p. 579, for examples), or 3) that he cannot yet bring the nations together against God in the final battle (Morris, Revelation, p. 236).

Others say that Satan will be bound in the future (Mounce, Revelation, p. 353). The binding will be complete (he is in chains in the abyss and it is sealed and shut). Though he may be active in the abyss, he will have absolutely no influence over the nations until he is released. This appears to fit the biblical and historical contexts the best, though there is room for debate.

Whether the 1,000 years is literal or symbolic of a long period of time is beyond our current discussion. At the end of that period, whatever it is, Satan will be freed for a short time. He will gather the nations together to do battle with God. They will be utterly destroyed when God sends fire down from heaven. As in 19:20, there is no war--only massacre. Satan joins the beast and the false prophet in the lake of fire, and all three are tormented there without rest eternally.

- a. The beast gathers the kings who follow him (19:19; "the satanic principalities of the world who ally themselves with the human puppets;" Johnson, "Revelation," p. 576) and assembles them to make war with Christ. There is no war, only slaughter. The beast and the false prophet are forcibly seized (Morris, Revelation, p. 232) and thrown into the lake of fire. While they are powerful for a season, they are hopeless before Christ and their final destruction is assured.

- b. Previously, Satan was cast out of heaven to the earth (12:9). Now, he is cast out of the earth to the abyss by a nameless angel.
    - i. The angel comes with the key to the abyss (see 9:1) and a great chain in his hand. He seizes Satan and binds him in the abyss for 1,000 years so that he might not "deceive the nations any longer."
    - ii. After the 1,000 years are over, Satan is released and again incites rebellion. This time, however, he meets his eternal destiny. As the saying goes, "When Satan reminds you of your past, you remind him of his future!"
  - c. Death and Hades are also destined to be cast into the lake of fire. Rather than seeing them as literal spirits, they should be viewed as representative of the fact that there will be no more death (Ladd, Revelation, p. 274).
2. The white throne judgment (20:11-15): We will all stand before God. As Christians, our works will be judged, though this judgment is focused on reward, not on salvation (which has already been secured).
  3. The new heaven and new earth (21:1-22:5)
    - a. A voice calls out of heaven declaring that God will now dwell among men (3-4). This is the fulfillment of one of the most extensive themes of the OT here come to pass. This will be a permanent dwelling, in contrast to the temple and Christ's earthly ministry (the three-fold emphasis of God "among them" highlights this). The benefits of God dwelling among us (all of these belonged to the first order, which will have passed away) include:
      - i. He will wipe away every tear.
      - ii. There shall be no more death (Isa. 25:8).
      - iii. There shall be no more mourning, crying, or pain.
    - b. The new created order (21:9-22:5).
      - i. There is no night in the new Jerusalem. There is no temple building in the city, for God and the Lamb are its temple. There is no need of sun or moon, for God's glory illuminates it and the Lamb is the lamp. Nations and kings will bring their glory (i.e., pay homage) into the city (24-26).
      - ii. The river and tree of life (22:1-5): Issuing from the throne is the river of life (God and the Lamb are the source). Compare this to Ezekiel's sacred river vision in Ezek. 47:1-12. On either side of the river is the

tree of life (the same as in Gen. 2:9 and 3:22?). Its leaves were for healing the nations. Why would the nations need healing? It may indicate the complete absence of need in the new creation by using terms from the old.

- iii. No more curses and no more night: All curses will be ended, because we will serve God, see His face directly, and His name will be on our foreheads. This shows the complete removal of the curse God gave to man in Gen. 3. There will be no more night (Isa. 60:19-20, Zech. 14:7), for God will illuminate everything.

### Themes

1. God's sovereignty and glory is displayed:
  - a. All that is required to bind Satan is an unnamed angel. There is no struggle and no war. The language is matter of fact--the angel, acting with God's authority, simply binds Satan and throws him into the abyss.
  - b. Additionally, Christ's all-sufficient power and sovereignty will be fully manifested.
2. Living happily ever after
  - a. This is the true framework of spiritual conflict! In Western culture, our fairy tales never expand on the theme of "living happily ever after," at least in part because we fear that it will be boring. The true picture is that the conflict we now face is only an instantaneous interlude in comparison to eternal enjoyment of God's presence.
  - b. We need not fear boredom! All too many people carry an image of heaven as just a long church service. No earthly picture can do heaven justice--that would be like two unborn children trying to imagine what life will be like outside of the womb. God's depths will never be fully fathomed by His creatures. We will have all eternity to grow in our knowledge, love, and understanding of the new created order and the One who established it.

### Spiritual Conflict Themes from Acts and the Epistles

#### *The Characters of Spiritual Conflict*

1. **God** the Father is the compassionate, comforting (2 Cor. 1:3), patient (2 Pet. 3:9), faithful (1 John 1:9), loving (1 John 4:8), immortal, invisible, eternal King of Kings (1 Tim. 1:17; 6:14b-16) who is over all, in all, and through all (Eph. 4:6) and in

Whom all holds together (Col. 1:17). He created and governs the world (Acts 17:24-28) and gives generously to all He created (Jas. 1:5-8, 17). His plans for peace (1 Cor. 14:33a) cannot be thwarted; indeed, parts have even been put into effect by wicked men (Acts 2:23). His foolishness is greater than our wisdom; His weakness greater than our strength (1 Cor. 1:25).

2. God the Son, **Jesus**, is the reality of God's plan for people (Col. 2:17). Because He came as a humble, obedient servant, God has chosen to exalt Him above all other names (Phil. 2:6-11; Heb. 2:9). He is the Lamb of God slain before the foundation of the world (Rev. 13:8) who is now seated at the right hand of God (Eph. 1:20).
3. The **Holy Spirit** knows the intimate thoughts of God (1 Cor. 2:10) and gives life (2 Cor. 3:6).
4. **Satan** is still the deceiver (Rev. 12:9) and his forces were completely defeated at the cross (Col. 2:15-22). Though that total defeat has not yet been fully manifested (Heb. 2:8), it will in God's timing (1 Cor. 15:24-26). For a season Satan and his hosts are allowed to continue to exert authority here on earth (e.g., demons are the powers behind idols [1 Cor. 10:9-10]). However, nothing in all of creation can separate us from God's love (Rom. 8:38-39). He remains unoriginal; in Revelation in particular, we gain a picture of his counterfeit kingdom as a perversion of God's created order (e.g., Rev. 16:13).
5. **Demons** are organized in a hierarchy to do their leader's bidding (Eph. 6:12). It appears that one-third fell under Satan's sway and revolted with Him against the creator (Rev. 12:4); if this is a literal number, angels outnumber demons two to one! The vocabulary for demonic beings is rich, including principalities (Eph. 3:10), powers (Eph. 1:21), dominions (Eph. 1:21), thrones (Col. 1:16), names (Eph. 1:21), princes (1 Cor. 2:6), princes of this world (1 Cor. 2:8), lords (1 Cor. 8:5), gods (1 Cor. 8:5), angels (2 Pet. 2:4), demons (1 Cor. 10:20), spirits (1 Cor. 12:10), wicked spirits (Acts 5:16); seducing spirits (1 Tim. 4:1), and elemental spirits (Gal. 4:9).
6. **Angels** have some control over natural forces (under the direction of God). We see this in the four angels with power over the winds of the earth (Rev. 7:1), the angels with power over fire (Rev. 14:18) and water (Rev. 16:5), and the many end-time plagues which they will unleash (Rev. 6-18).
7. **People** are very clearly split into two camps, those alive in Christ and those dead in sins (Eph. 2:1-5). Those who are dead in sins are more clearly shown to be in direct rebellion against God (e.g., Rom. 1:18-32). Even among believers, there is a fleshly part of us that is against the Spirit of God (Rom. 7:14-25; Gal. 5:16-24).

*The Interrelationships among God, People, and Spirit Beings*

1. We have a loving (Rom. 5:8) **Daddy** (Rom. 8:15-16; Gal. 4:4-6) who exercises His sovereignty in several ways:
  - a. He is the One from whom all things come and for whom we live (1 Cor. 8:6); He has blessed us with every spiritual blessing (Eph. 1:3-10), sealing us with His Spirit (2 Cor. 1:21-22; 5:5) and effecting our rescue from Satan's domain (Col. 1:13-14).
  - b. He Himself does not tempt us (Jas. 1:13), and He moderates every temptation we experience (1 Cor. 10:13). He is able to keep us from falling (Jude 24-25), but, even when we do fall, He comforts us in our troubles (2 Cor. 1:3-4) and continues to work all things for our good (by conforming us to the image of Christ; Rom. 8:28-30).
  - c. He works in us (Phil. 2:12-13), enabling us to grow (1 Cor. 3:7) and to do the works He has already prepared for us (Eph. 2:8-10).
  - d. He is the One all nations will worship (Rev. 15:3-4)
2. **Jesus** is successful in His mission to destroy the works of Satan (1 John 3:8) and set people free from fear of the power of death (Heb. 2:14-15).
  - a. The path to victory came by following God's rules of engagement rather than Satan's. This is seen especially in the cross (Col. 2:15-19), where Jesus became a curse for us (Gal. 3:10-15). Rather than pursuing a violent destruction of Satan, Jesus submits himself to Satan's violence in order to deligitimize Satan by exposing his true nature (1 Cor. 2:8).
  - b. Jesus also demonstrates His power to snatch victory from the jaws of apparent defeat through the resurrection, God's final stamp of authenticity on His work on our behalf and the proof that we can find true life in Him (Rom. 1:4; 6:5; 1 Cor. 15).
  - c. "He appeared in a body, was vindicated by the Spirit, was seen by angels, was preached among the nations, was believed on in the world, and was taken up in glory." (1 Tim. 3:16)
3. Interwoven in all of **Satan's** strategies is his central character as the father of lies. He and his agents (both human and spiritual) utilize a multitude of strategies evolving from their nature of untruth, including

- a. Attacking our minds through clever arguments (2 Cor. 2:10-11; 11:2-4)
  - b. Masquerading as angels or ministers of light (2 Cor. 11:14-15) though presenting a different Jesus (2 Cor. 11:4) or doctrine (1 Tim. 4:1-4) and displaying counterfeit miracles, signs, and wonders (2 Thess. 2:7-11);
  - c. Tempting us to meet our needs outside of God's will (1 Thess. 3:5) so that Satan can disgrace us later through revealing our pitfalls (1 Tim. 3:6-7)
  - d. Frightening or intimidating us to keep us inactive while he goes about his business (1 Pet. 5:8);
  - e. Pitting us against each other to destroy the unity we share in Christ and discredit us with the world (2 Tim. 2:24-26)
  - f. Through their human agents, trying to secretly introduce destructive heresies, inventing stories to convince believers to follow them (2 Pet. 2:1-6).
  - g. Through false religious experiences, such as empowering idols which are worshipped as gods (1 Cor. 10:19-21) or false ecstatic experiences (1 Cor. 12:2-3)
4. **Angels** worship and praise God (Rev. 4:1-11, 5:8-14, and 7:11-12). This worship and praise will continue eternally. Unlike too many of us, they never grow weary of honoring our Creator! They have a ministry to the saints (Heb. 1:14), seen in many areas. For instance, they are able to rescue us from trouble (Acts 12:6-11). On special occasions, they surround the people of God and protect them (Rev. 7:1-4). They are sent by God to bring His messages to people (the Law; Acts 7:53 and Gal. 3:19) and to show what must take place, Rev. 22:6). They can interpret visions for us (when directed to do so by God, Rev. 17:7). They are in some way involved in bringing our prayers before God (Rev. 5:8, Rev. 8:1-5), and may carry us to heaven when we die (Jude 9). Finally, they continue to serve as God's guards/army. Angels will guard each of the twelve entrances to the new Jerusalem (Rev. 21:12).
5. **Christians**, having been declared a new creation (2 Cor. 5:17) who are God's children (Rom. 8:15-17; Eph. 1:4-5), and given Christ's authority (Col. 2:10), are called to engage in the kingdom conflict (Acts 26:18) in the power of the Holy Spirit (2 Cor. 10:3-5). We are to live in submission to God and resist Satan (James 4:4-9; 1 Pet. 5:5-9). Based on our submission, we are not to wage not just a defensive battle, but are to actively and offensively engage the enemy of our souls using God's rules of engagement, including overcoming evil with good (Rom. 12:21) and returning curses with blessings (1 Pet. 3:8-12). On the human level, we are to *gently* instruct those who oppose us (2 Tim. 2:24-26).

6. The **unbelieving world** (or domination system) is under Satan's sway, being held captive to his schemes. He blinds them (2 Cor. 4:4); they are dead in their trespasses and sins (Eph. 2:1-3); they are slaves to his tactics and nature (Gal. 4:3, 9). Even when they use Jesus' name, they do so at their own peril (since they have no claim to His authority; Acts 19:11-20).

*Levels of Spiritual Conflict*

1. Several core aspects of spiritual conflict may be noted:
  - a. God is in complete control, and Satan's defeat is accomplished, though the full manifestation of that defeat has not yet been revealed;
  - b. Christians, individually and corporately, have been delegated the authority and power to live lives pleasing to God even in the midst of a world dominated by the Prince of the Power of the Air;
  - c. To experience the victory that is ours in Christ, we must be aware of the enemy's schemes and appropriate our resources in Christ through allowing Him to enable us to live disciplined lives which are pleasing to the King of Kings. In so doing, we refuse to engage in conflict by Satan's rules; rather, we overcome evil with good.
2. On the **personal level**, spiritual conflict is fought with spiritual weapons (2 Cor. 10:3-5). Of particular importance are the spiritual disciplines, including:
  - a. Believing the truth that God declares: we have been given a totally new nature (2 Cor. 5:16-17), transferred to a new kingdom (Col. 1:13), and seated with Christ in the heavenlies, far above all Satanic powers and principalities (Eph. 1:18-23; 2:4-6)
  - b. Standing firm against Satan's attacks, enabled (2 Cor. 1:21) and protected by God (2 Thess. 3:3) by putting on His armor with prayer (Eph. 6:10-18) and not counting our lives as important (Rev. 12:7-9).
  - c. Extending forgiveness to those who offend us (2 Cor. 2:10-11) and refusing to allow Satan to gain an advantage over us through anger or bitterness (Eph. 4:25-5:1)
  - d. Taking every thought captive to Christ (2 Cor. 10:3-6) and refusing to be captivated by hollow and deceptive philosophies (Col. 2:8) and thus avoiding being "friends with the world" (James 4:4-9)
  - e. Rejoicing in and living in the light of the fact that death has no hold over us (1

- Cor. 15:50-58), and we have nothing to fear from it (Heb. 2:14-15).
- f. Refusing to give in to Satan's intimidating tactics, secure in the knowledge that he has no hold on our destiny (1 John 5:18), that the One in us is greater than the one in the world (1 John 4:4), and that it is through the Church that Satan will be crushed (Rom. 16:20).
  - g. Being ever joyful, prayerful, and thankful (1 Thess. 5:16-18).
3. On the **corporate level**, it is God's intention that His wisdom be made known to spiritual powers through His church (Eph. 3:10). The church has been given the resources it needs to walk in victory in the battle (Eph. 3:14-21):
- a. The Holy Spirit, who empowers and enables us to live so as to please God (Gal. 5:22-23; Eph. 5:18-21)
  - b. Doctrinal standards to evaluate spiritual events (Gal. 1:8). Those standards are found in God's word, which contains and all that we need to know about spiritual conflict (1 Tim. 3:16-17)
  - c. Awareness of Satan's fruit and schemes, which enable us to know his tactics (2 Cor. 2:11; e.g., continued sin--1 John 5:18) and discern his agents (e.g., false teachers; 2 Pet. 2:1-6)
  - d. The total body of Christ with all of its giftedness (Eph. 4:7-11; Rom. 12:3-8; 1 Cor. 12-14; especially the gift of discerning spirits [1 Cor. 12:10]).
  - e. The freedom (and responsibility) to test the spirits (1 Thess. 5:19-21; 1 John 4:1-5)
  - f. The strength to withstand Satan (2 Thess. 3:3)
  - g. The authority and freedom from fear of death to come against Satan in Jesus' name (Acts 16:16-18; Rev. 12:10-11; Heb. 2:14-15).
  - h. Walking in the light (1 John 1:5-7), abstaining from evil (1 Thess. 5:19-22)
  - i. Refusing to submit to the judgment of this world and its standards (Col. 2:8; 15-22), which vary from culture to culture and time to time. In addition, rather than putting hope in the world and the riches it has to offer, we are to put our hope in God (1 Tim. 6:17).
4. On the **cosmic level**, all of creation groans, awaiting God's redemption (Rom. 8:18-22).

- a. We also see direct angelic/demonic engagements (Jude 9). The most massive is the battle between Michael and the angels and Satan and his angels (Rev. 12:7-9), which is won by Michael. The last direct engagement is when an unnamed angel binds Satan and casts him into the abyss for 1000 years (Rev. 20:1-3).
- b. More importantly, Satan is unwittingly used of God to accomplish His ultimate glory. Through many examples we see that, at every step, God lovingly and mercifully thwarts Satan's attempts to pervert God's ultimate control over the universe:
  - i. Satan, together with all of creation, owes his continued existence to the grace and mercy of God (Col. 1:17).
  - ii. The powers of this world crucified Jesus, which God used to effect our salvation (1 Cor. 2:6-8)
  - iii. He was allowed to send Paul a thorn in the flesh, which taught Paul to depend on God and kept him humble after incredible revelations (2 Cor. 12:7-9)
  - iv. Erring believers were given over to him for the preservation of their souls (1 Cor. 5:5; 1 Tim. 1:19-20).
- c. Angels will be directly involved in ushering in the end of the age. Their roles include, among other things, the heralding of the judgements of the seven seals (Rev. 6:1-17; 8:1), trumpets (Rev. 8:3-9; 12; 11:15-19), and bowls (Rev. 15:1; 16:1-17).

