

38a ACTS

This is June the 4th, 2004. We continue our study in the book of Acts. Picking up tonight in chapter 16, verse 16.

We are going to examine tonight something that we have seen in passing in many of our previous studies, but we have not often slowed down to look at it as a category. That we will do tonight. It is the doctrine of demons.

We are going to promulgate doctrine of demons tonight. But before we do, let's take a moment to go to the Lord in prayer. Father, thank you for the opportunity to study your word and to fellowship together and to seek to rightly divide it, to have it enter into our souls and equip us and conform us to the example and the thinking of the Lord Jesus Christ.

We ask that you would bless us as we study, give us not only understanding, but also memory and comprehension so that in the days ahead these truths will be a source of application and strength as we face the challenges and the opportunities that lie in the future. We ask these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

In Acts chapter 16, we saw that Paul and company have come to the house of Lydia, the seller of purple, who was from Thyatira, a worshiper of God. She opened her heart to respond to the things spoken by Paul. She and her household are baptized.

She says, if you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house and stay. She prevailed upon us. It happened, evidently, a few days later.

As they were going to the place of prayer, a slave girl having a spirit of divination met us who was bringing her master's much profit by fortune-telling. The reason she brought her master's much profit is that this fortune-telling worked. It succeeded.

Hard-to-obtain or mysterious information was paid for and obtained through this girl. And this was a valuable commodity, so her master's made quite a lot of money. However, she keeps crying out, saying, these men are bondservants of the Most High God, who are proclaiming to you the way of deliverance, the way of salvation.

She continued doing this for many days. Paul was greatly troubled, and eventually he turns and says to the spirit, I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And he came out that very hour.

So what we want to do tonight is take this opportunity to examine the nature and the activity of Satan's minions here on earth, the demons, spirits. It would be helpful for us if they are in fact in the world today and opposing us to know a little bit about them. So we begin.

You will notice first of all from this passage that they do have supernatural power. Why is that? Because they are higher than we are. They are in fact angels in the loose sense of the word, the created sentient race that preceded us in the universe that had a civilization, had a history, had uncounted multitudes of beings.

We don't know whether God created each one individually or if they in their original civilization had some sort of reproduction as we do. But in some way, shape, fashion or form, they came into existence. It would appear from the terminology of scripture that they were individually created.

The reason is the language of the Old Testament in two or three places that calls them the sons of God. They are never given anything but their pronomen such as Gabriel or Michael. When they are named, it's not Gabriel, Ben, something else.

We have no indication that they gave birth to one another. On the other hand, the fallen angels of Genesis 6 are able to procreate. Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew chides the Sadducees who try to trick him with a question about resurrection.

A woman under the Leveret Law is married to seven brothers. They all die. And in the resurrection, whose wife is she? And he says you do err not knowing the scriptures or the power of God.

Then he goes on to say that in the resurrection, people neither marry nor are given in marriage but are like the angels in heaven. Which tells us that the angels in heaven currently are not married or given in marriage. There is no further angelic reproduction going on.

That does not preclude it happening in the past. In the same way that in our resurrected and eternal state, there is no hint that we will procreate either. But it doesn't mean that we didn't originate from a procreation in this life.

Well, that's a long way around of saying we don't know where the angels came from. Did they give birth to one another? Was there a sort of Adamic angel and co-angel on the model similar to what happens on the earth? We just don't know. It's not important.

We were supposed to know the Bible would tell us. We do know that there are legions upon legions of angels that exist. They are in two categories.

The unfallen angels continue to exist and serve God in his dimension, in his realm. And then we have the minions of Satan who have fallen from heaven. Probably the one classic passage to learn about that is Luke 10, verse 17, where Jesus, after having sent the 70 missionaries forth, or what I would call them is the 70 revivalists, out to preach the good news of the kingdom to the believing nation of Israel, they return with joy saying, Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name.

Normally, it would seem that men, particularly those who pursue evil rather than good, seem to come under the sway of demons. But here, men who are pursuing a life of faith and obedience hold sway over the demons. And you get the idea that the closer you get to God, the greater the light is in which you dwell, the more power you have over the unseen fallen angelic hosts.

The further you move in the direction of darkness and in the direction of evil, you cultivate it, you seek it, you court it, it can come in and have dominion over human beings. So the 70 who are the best and brightest in the nation of Israel in this generation come back and say, in your name we have power over the demons. And Jesus replies in verse 18 of Luke 10, I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven.

Very cryptic statement. Is this past, present, or future? In what sense, upon hearing of the success of the 70, would Jesus say, I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven? If this is a historic event to which he refers, why does he say it now? They say, in your name the demons are subject to us. This would seem to be a statement that applies to the success of men over demons.

Why is that? Because never before in history have they had the name of Jesus to invoke and apply against demons. Can you think of a single example in the Old Testament? Does Elijah, or Elisha, or Jeremiah, or any other of the prophets conduct a casting out of demons? We know that there are familiar spirits. We know that there are in Gostrom, Uthos, demons, and all other kinds of evil spirits functioning in the Old Testament age.

But do you ever have an example of one being purged and driven out? You don't. Does Samuel turn around to the witch of Endor and say, by the way, get thee hence familiar spirit, before he wraps up and leaves Saul and the witch? He doesn't. Why? Because the power to exorcise them is not yet present on the earth until Jesus comes.

This is a harbinger of good things to come in the kingdom. It is a foreshadowing of Jesus' power not only over sin and over evil and those who practice it, but over death itself. And so I think when they come back and say they're astonished of all of the things that they've done, of the miracles that they have performed, the diseases that they have cured, the things that have happened, what is the one that stands out the most? They say the height of it is the demons are subject to us in your name.

And Jesus says this is typical. This represents the true fall of Satan like lightning from heaven. I don't think, for reasons that will become clear later, that this is the third heaven.

I think this is Satan falling from the power of the air. This is Satan falling from his high place. More about that later.

But that's Luke 10, 18. I saw Satan fall like lightning. Where does lightning come from,

by the way? Clouds in our firmament, right? Clouds in our what you would call the sky.

And you could just as well say I saw Satan fall like lightning from the sky. This is one of his titles, one of his attributes, one of his names is the prince of the power of the air. We'll see more about that as we go through.

So, demons. Spirits who seem to have some sort of sway, some sort of hold, impart some sort of power by their presence in the midst of human beings. Particularly and notably in the New Testament period.

So, that's our first point. Demons are in fact minions of Satan. They are his representatives.

They work for him. They push his policy. They are accomplishing his objectives.

And that's Luke 10, 17 through 20. Jesus goes on to say, I give you the authority to trample on serpents. Who is the serpent of old? Satan.

The archetype in the garden. He says, I give you, right after he says, I saw Satan fall like lightning from the sky. He says, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions.

They are kindred assaulters of the feet. Scorpions and snakes bite the heel. They bite the ankle.

They're at your feet. I give you authority over all the power of the enemy, he says. And nothing shall by any means hurt you.

Nevertheless, this should not be the cause of your rejoicing. This should not be the cause of your joy. Do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you.

But rather, rejoice because your names are written in heaven. What is Jesus talking about here? Don't rejoice because the demons are subject to you. You can drive them out in my name, he says.

Rejoice that your names are written in heaven. Why? Because the presence of demons and their sway and their influence and their manifestations in this life are just that. This is what happens under Solomon's son.

This is a temporary earthly victory. He says the real victory, when your name is written in heaven, that is your eternal weight of glory. That is your eternal life inheritance.

And when your name is written in the books for inheritance, this is a far more long-lasting thing to rejoice over. So don't get excited about a temporary victory on this earth. Get excited about a permanent victory and the spoils thereof that go into eternity.

Point two. The leader of the demons, the leader of the fallen angels, is, of course, Satan. Also known as Lucifer.

The old King James calls him the son of the morning. We have studied this passage in Isaiah chapter 14, and we know him better as the son of darkness. Lucifer, son of darkness.

This is Isaiah 14, 12, and 13. How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of darkness. If your Bible says son of the morning, cross it out.

It is wrong. It is wrong. It is wrong.

I can give you an extensive 14-page paper I wrote on this one time going through every place in the Old Testament where this word is used. The word is darkness. The reason they translate it morning is because most of the places in the Old Testament where you find it, it says, in English, it says, as dawn was breaking.

Jacob wrestled, and as dawn was breaking, he said, let me go, I will not let you go until you bless me, and so on. But in Hebrew, this is as the darkness was lifting. Not as dawn was lifting, but as the darkness was lifting.

What do you get when you lift the darkness? You get light. It is a misunderstanding on the part of the lexicographers. There are other places where that meaning of dawn just will not work.

It is darkness. It is used for hair that is jet black, and so on. Just trust me on this.

Lucifer, son of darkness. He is the son of darkness, but isn't it great how he has managed to appropriate one of the Lord Jesus' titles? Because Jesus is the bright and morning star. And the order of the morning star is one of the rewards that Jesus promises to the overcomers.

In Revelation 2 and 3, he says to him who overcomes, I will give the morning star, which is an award that has Jesus' own name on it. This is like the Congressional Medal of Honor. It has Congress' name on it.

And Satan has appropriated the morning star title to himself by twisting things and getting people to fall for it. So, countless Bibles, and Satan has to chuckle to himself about how many millions of Bibles have been printed that accord to him the title that belongs to the Lord Jesus. So, we can fix our copies.

How you are cut to the ground, you who weaken the nations. Why? You have said in your heart, and then we have the five I wills. What is the nature of the fall of Satan and the fall of the third of the angelic hosts who followed him? Number one, I will ascend in heaven.

I will raise up. Number two, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God. The stars are the angelic hosts.

You get this from Job 38, where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth? The stars of heaven sang, and the sons of God shouted for joy. I am paraphrasing loosely. Stars of God, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God.

I will rule the angelic hosts. Number three, I will sit on the mount of the congregation. This is the seat of government in the angelic civilization.

The mount is the high place, and the congregation is like, we call it Congress. Why do we call it Congress? Because they congregate, they assemble. No different than parliament, or the legislature, or any of the rest of that.

People come together to make decisions that affect everybody. I will sit on top of the mount of the congregation, on the farthest sides of the north. The sides of the north, this is the place where God is represented as ruling.

I will, number four, ascend above the heights of the clouds. The multitudes, I will ascend above them. I will be like the Most High.

Notice that this is all in relation to his fellow angels. He doesn't say, I will become the creator. He doesn't say, I will crank up a new universe.

He doesn't say, I will bring things into being, ex nihilo. I used to wonder, if Satan is trying to be another God, like the Chinese, is it the Chinese that have yin and yang? I think it is. This implies that good and evil are equal and opposite.

Satan has no hope. He is a created being. He doesn't come anywhere near being sovereign, or omniscient, or omnipotent, or omnipresent.

He is a creature. A super creature, but a creature. He doesn't say, I will be God.

I will take God's place. I will push God out of the universe, and I will be God instead. He has no hope of doing that.

He is a creature. But what can he do? He can be God when it comes to administration, when it comes to policy, when it comes to rulership. What do the demons do in the world today? What has ever been their agenda? The same thing in human history.

Let's get a government going. Let's get an idea stream going. Let's get a philosophy, let's get a cult or a religion going, that takes the place of God's agenda.

We won't create you anew. We won't give you a new birth. We can't resurrect you.

We can't, but we'll simulate it. We'll counterfeit it. We'll give you an alternative that

seems to hit the same marks.

It will explain how you got here. It will explain why you are here. And it will give you an answer to where you will go when you die.

This is the doctrine of demons spoken of in the New Testament. It is an alternative. Satan says, I will take the place of God.

The answers that God gives you, I'll give you different answers. But they will solve the same problems and supply the need of those questions. Of course, the prediction there in verse 15 and following, Yet you shall be brought down to Sheol, to the lowest depths of the pit.

In his pride, he says, I will ascend. I will be king of the mountain. Instead, you are going to be down there in the very bottom of the bottomless pit.

Ezekiel 28 is the other very well-known passage in this regard. I actually heard a guy try to say that these had nothing to do with Satan. He was a seminary president.

I don't know what he was thinking. The word of the Lord. He said, oh no, it was the literal Prince of Tyre.

And the people who originally got this would have only thought of the Prince of Tyre. So that's the only thing that it can mean. Well, that's like a self-imposed rule.

Well, I'm going to say that things can only mean what they meant to the first person who ever heard it. They can't mean anything beside that. Well, you can go sit in your playhouse and play that game.

But very obviously, this is a reflection of greater truths, as is much of the Bible. God says to the, quote, Prince of Tyre, Because your heart is lifted up and you say, I am God, I sit in the seat of God's in the midst of the seas, yet you are a man and not a God, though you set your heart as the heart of a God, and so on, with your wisdom and your understanding you gain riches for yourself, etc., etc., by your wisdom in commerce, in trafficking, in brokering power, and so on. Your heart has been lifted up because of your gains in that area.

Thus says the Lord God, because you have set your heart as the heart of a God, behold, I will bring strangers against you, the most terrible of the nations, and so on. This is, at its first blush and its first application, a true prophecy against Tyre and the Prince of Tyre, but it echoes and reflects heavenly truths. If you read the rest of this, beginning in verse 12, Son of man, take up a lamentation for the King of Tyre, and say to him, thus says the Lord God, You were the seal of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty.

You were in Eden, the garden of God. Every precious stone was your covering, sardius,

topaz, diamond, beryl, onyx, and jasper. Remember, we have many of these gemstones mentioned in the description of the cherubim.

In Ezekiel chapter 1 and over in Revelation. Sapphire, turquoise, emerald with gold, the workmanship of your timbrels and pipes were prepared for you on the day you were created. You were the anointed cherub who covers.

He is the Mashiach cherub. The word anointed here is Mashach. This is the same word we get Mashiach from.

I established you, you were on the holy mountain of God. Now, what prince of Tyre has ever been on the holy mountain of God? This is the mountain Satan talked about in Isaiah 14. I will ascend the mount of the congregation.

You walk back and forth in the midst of the fiery stones. Go back to Ezekiel 1. This is the throne room of God. The lightning and the fire and the shining and so on.

You were perfect in your ways from the day you were created until iniquity was found in you. By the abundance of your commerce, you became filled with violence within. Therefore, I cast you as a profane thing out of the mountain of God and I destroyed you, O covering cherub, from the midst of the fiery stones.

Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty. You corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendor. I cast you to the ground.

I laid you before kings. This is the casting out of Satan from the third heaven, from the throne room of God, limited in his access. He returns there from time to time to speak, but he doesn't dwell there.

He lost his job. He's not the guardian of the throne room any longer, etc. So, in addition to these titles, Satan, which means shaitan, means adversary, opposer, enemy.

It is even used that way. I noticed this in Arabic. I was talking to these guys over in Lebanon about artillery, one thing and another, and when they were talking about enemy positions, they were, you know, yibidi yabida, they were speaking Arabic and I can't understand it, but then I heard this shaitan, and I said, whoa, shaitan, they said, enemy.

Shaitan is enemy, even in Arabic. It's the opposer, the assaulter, the adversary. Lucifer, of course, is actually from Latin.

It's not a transliteration from Hebrew or Greek. Shining one is what we have in Hebrew and in Greek. You also will find the term Beelzebub used.

It's found in the New Testament. Jesus calls him that a time or two. This is actually Baal Zebul.

Baal means lord. Zebul, or Zebub, depending, is interesting in its derivation, and we have to try to track it down. Zebub, Z-E-B-U-B, in Hebrew means flies.

Hence, lord of the flies. Now, you would think, well, this is just some awful garbage pail swarm of flies. But actually, this goes back to ancient Canaanite religion, where the god of the summertime, flies were associated with warmth.

When it was warm and when crops were coming out and everything was prospering, you had the flies out. They are symbols of warmth of the sun. There was divination.

Flies were actually worshipped in some ancient cultures. In Babylon, they did divination by means of flies. They foretold the future.

You have the scarabs in ancient Egypt, which are sometimes fly-like. They also appear to be the dung beetle, which is a flying beetle. These scarabs are referred to by this same title, Zebul or Zebub.

These dung beetles, this gets into our second derivation of the word, which is Zebel, Z-E-B-E-L, which means dung. Zebul, Zebel, you get the dung, the dung beetle, the flies, they are all kind of associated together. We can't really tell which came first, the chicken or the egg, the dung or the flies.

But in the Targums, the ancient commentaries on Hebrew Scripture, Zebel is used a number of times to refer to dung. You find in 1 Kings 8.13 and also in Psalm 49.14, that Zebul means high or lofty, which would seem to be just the opposite. We say being lower than whale dung, so to speak, and then here is Zebul meaning high or lofty.

But 1 Kings 8.13 talks about a high dwelling place, and in Psalm 49.14 you get the same idea, building a high house. So Baal Zebul in the Canaanite world would have meant high lord, the lofty lord or the prince of the air, so to speak. You have this coming over in the New Testament, when Paul says the prince of the power of the air, this is kind of a New Testament rendering of Baal Zebul, the high and lofty lord or prince.

But the Hebrews, with their fondness for puns and word plays, called him Baal Zebub, lord of the flies, or Baal Zebul instead of Zebel, which is lord of dung. And so, in the same way that Mephibbaal, the son of Saul, was supposed to be, Baal in his name means lord, well, they call him Mephibosheth, which is foolishness. Anyway, there is a lot of word play that goes on in Hebrew.

But, interestingly, and I didn't know this until I was working on this study, it's amazing the things you can go on for just years and years and never learn. But, the idea of being high is found in some names in Scripture. Remember, in Genesis 30, in verse 20, when Leah has her sixth son, she names him Zebulun.

And she says, now that I have given my man, my husband, six sons, he will exalt me, he

will honor me, he will raise me up. And so she names her sixth son Zebulun. Zebel is in there, Zebulun, meaning raise up or high.

Jezebel, Zebel, Jezebel, that element is in her name as well. Over in Judges chapter 9, you have four or five references to a man named Zebul, who is the lieutenant for Abimelech. And he is a lofty one, he is a high guy in the cabinet for Abimelech.

So, remember I said earlier we get back to the fact that Jesus said, I saw Satan fall from heaven. I saw Beelzebub fall from his Zebel, his lofty eminence. Because here are the lowly men, His disciples, these fishermen from Galilee, are casting His demons out.

And Jesus laughs and He says, I saw Satan falling from the sky like lightning. Boom! Not just floating down like a dove. Boom! That fast.

As soon as one of these lowly humans casts out His demons in the name of Jesus, Satan hits the dirt. He is no longer Baal Zebul. So, the great thing is, if you think about the disciples in the Old Testament age invoking the name of Jesus, think about us.

Do we need to worry about demon oppression? We wrestle against these principalities of power. They are our practice dummies. We use them to build up our muscles because the Lord Jesus Christ has once and for all taken captivity captive.

He has defeated the prince of the power of the air. He has brought into subjection rulers and principalities and powers. He has triumphed over them at the cross.

We need to respect them. You think about over in Jude where it says even the angels of God don't get light and get flippant when they're talking about Satan and talking about the fallen angels. We don't want to do that, but we need have no fear.

God has not given us a spirit of fear. We don't have to worry about demon oppression. What do we need to do? Remember the power of the name of Christ.

Remember the power of the One in whom we live and have our being. The One who is our peace and is our righteousness. And when we are dwelling in Him, when we are walking in the light, we have nothing to fear from the forces of darkness.

We're going to pause here and take our break. When we come back, we're going to pick up. We've only done two points out of twelve on the doctrine of demons.