

Miracles of Jesus 13-02-03b

We pick up our study now, we're looking at Satan and the demons as the antithesis or as the opposite, not equal and opposite, but certainly in opposition to God. It's not a yin-yang kind of a thing. They like to say, well, there's good and bad, there's light and dark, and Satan would love us to believe that they're equal, but they're not.

Greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world. So you can congratulate yourself that you have chosen the right side to be on, because light overcomes darkness, and if God says let there be light, there's going to be light, and the darkness cannot comprehend it, cannot overtake it, cannot surround it, cannot quench it, and we are on the unquenchable side, not the losing team. We'll see who's on the losing side this afternoon when the Super Bowl is played, but we're on the winning side, and thanks be to God who gives us the victory through Jesus Christ our Lord.

That's our theme here. So even as we're looking at the losers, we're congratulating ourselves on not being among them. So I've already covered the first two points here, which is that demons are a part of the angelic creation, which preexisted the creation of the earth.

They were present for its creation. They were educated. They learned something about God as He created the universe, as He laid the foundations of the earth.

That's why they were watching, and that's part of why He did it, is for their edification, and when the morning stars sing and the sons of God shout for joy, it is because they have appreciated something about God that they did not previously see or know, and this is our same privilege. We can see and know, learn things about God, and this stimulates our songs of praise and appreciation, and that's the great thing is, because God is infinite, we will spend eternity learning new and great things about God, and composing new songs to celebrate how great He is and what He has done, beginning in our personal case with our own salvation. What a miracle that is.

Secondly, demons followed Satan in his rebellion against God. We saw this in Matthew 12, 24. He is the prince of demons.

We saw it in Revelation 12 with the one-third that followed Satan. And you can only imagine, there's going to be so much more detail about these events when we are promoted and have the capacity to understand them and to learn from them, and to appreciate even more about God's justice when we see it in its application to a civilization well beyond ours. What are the issues in the quote-unquote angelic conflict? I think much of it is beyond our scope.

You wouldn't try to address the nuances of a legal case to a second-grade class, except in very broad outline, and we are the second-grade class right now, but when we are

promoted, one of the things that we will have the capacity to enter into and understand is other testaments, other records, other portions of the Word of God and the sense of the history of God's dealing with His creation. We will have whole new things to learn. There will be eyewitnesses that can tell us what happened.

We will have Bible classes, perhaps, from angels who were there and can explain, this is what was said, this is what was done, this is how the transaction occurred, this is what God said and what God did, and here's the magnitude of His mercy and His grace, and here's where it was rejected and refused, here's where it was accepted and was the source of great blessing. There's an infinitude. People say, well, we're just going to strike a pose in the eternal future and sing some high note of joy.

There's a lot of activity and progress that we will make in our understanding, and from that, in our application and our service, we will be engaged. God is going to do new things. He is a creative God, and we will be involved in that creation just as, I think, the angels were involved in the first creation.

But we'll learn all about that. We'll get the nuances. You want to find out how the species got their backbones and evolved and separated on this earth? There's probably a detailed, there's going to be the book of Cambrian or something, and we'll get to go in there and find out how all of these design teams did their work, and it will all redound to the praise of the Lord.

Point three, where we pick up now, demons are part of Satan's kingdom. I've already mentioned that he is their prince, but there is a kingdom, and even in the fallen realm, there is a pale shadow. Satan recognizes that there must be organization, there must be discipline.

If you listen to the Bible records that I and my siblings heard as a child, it sounds like he's presiding over chaos, and you taught us to disobey, to rebel, to oppose all authority. Yes, I did, didn't I? Well, that's one way of looking at it, but in reality, there is a hierarchy, there is discipline, there is order, there is a plan, and there is very intelligent execution and refinement and deviousness in that plan, but it is a kingdom. Demons are a part of Satan's kingdom.

It is a kingdom opposed to God. Matthew 12.26, if Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then will his kingdom stand? Jesus acknowledges that Satan has a realm.

He has a group over which he presides. Fourthly, demons are therefore not only opposed to God, but to the people of God. They are opposed to the angels of God.

They are opposed to anyone who aligns with God. If you accept Christ as your Savior, you can expect opposition. There is a war, there is a contested issue between God and

Satan and between those who are aligned with God, those who belong to God and those who belong to Satan.

Ephesians 6.10, My brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to do what? Negotiate the slings and arrows of your life on earth? No, put on the armor of God that you may be able to stand against the cunning, the planning, the devious scheming, the wiles of the devil. We do not wrestle against flesh and blood.

Who's we? We brethren, we who belong to the Lord Jesus. We who are His body and will be His bride and will be united with Him in the eternal future. As I said, there are peoples, there are nations, there are kindreds, there are kinds, there are divisions in the angelic civilization.

There are kinds and kindreds and nations and peoples in the eternal future. You and I have the privilege of being in that unique cadre that is headed by the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. We belong to Him.

There will be others. There will be the Israel cadre. There will be the patriarchal cadre.

There will be different types and kinds and within those there will be hierarchies in the same way that you had the nation of Israel and then you had tribes and there is a tribe that is in charge. The tribe of Judah is given the scepter and the throne, the white teeth and the colt tied to the vine. There are different fates.

There are different assignments. There are different roles and functions for the different tribes within the nation of Israel, within the bride, within the body, within the cadre, within the people that belong to the Lord Jesus Christ. There will be types and kinds.

There will be levels of privilege, level of opportunity. If you are an overcomer, look at those letters in Revelation 2 and 3. The overcomers are going to have special privileges. This is not a selfish ambition.

Don't think, well, I want to have the eternal Rolls Royce. I want to have the eternal mansion with nine floors and an elevator. I want to have butlers and servants.

I want to be Downton Abbey in the eternal future. I want to live on the high mountain cliff of the New Jerusalem. That isn't it at all.

It is an opportunity to serve. What does it mean to attain rank or power in the human realm? In the best sense, you can make a much bigger difference. If you are a senator, if you are a congressman, if you are a governor, if you are someone who, if you are a colonel or a general, and if you are a good guy, you are in a position to do things that benefit generations, that make a huge difference.

Think about the Louisiana Purchase and what a great boom that was for this country. It wasn't so hot for the natives, but for the country as a whole, we grabbed huge amounts of land. Think about great decisions that have been made and great opportunities that have been opened up.

Look at George Washington. Several of us are going through his life. Look at what an opportunity God gave him.

Because he was in a position of influence, because he was the general of the armies, because he was the president of the United States, he was able to confer blessings on literally millions of people. Extraordinary. I would say if there was only one biography that everybody in the United States of America must read and must know, it would be his.

Because you talk about a direct blessing from God for this nation, there is nothing greater, grander, finer, better, or more influential than George Washington. Largely unappreciated, almost completely forgotten in our day. People, you say Washington, and they say, you're talking about the airport, you're talking about the capital with all of its insidious goings-on and boneheaded, colossal blundering and governmental malfeasance and insurmountable, unimaginable debt and confusion.

The general would hardly want his name associated with all that. Unfortunately, that's what it's come to represent. But this is why we want to press toward the mark of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

We press, we forget those things which are behind. We lay aside the weight and the sin that besets us, and we run with diligence, with patience, with energy, the race that is set before us. Why? Because we want to be those who can serve God and serve Him well and go as far as we can go and rise as high as we can rise to serve, to make a beneficial difference.

If nobody achieves, if nobody presses forward, where is the Lord going to find those who can serve as rulers, who can walk with the Lord in white, who can understand His plans and purposes in the eternal future? Somebody needs to be there that the Lord can turn to, like the Apostle John, and say, Behold your mother. Somebody's got to be there. Somebody's got to love the Lord.

Somebody has to be faithful and be available to serve and be wise enough and not have their wisdom corrupted by their own glory, so that God can delegate and assign and trust opportunities and privileges and blessings. We want to be those people, and there's not a reason in the world why we can't be. The only impediment is our apathy, our indifference, our lack of appreciation for the Lord Jesus, our lack of grasp of what a great thing has been made available to us.

Who has the opportunities that we have? Who has the availability of the understanding of Scripture that we've had in history? From Adam forward, who has had the availability and the insight and the opportunity and the resources that we have? Nobody. From those to whom much is given, much is required, much is expected, and that's us. We oppose a kingdom, and we want to be a part of and a contributing beneficial presence in God's kingdom, now and in the millennium and in the kingdom of the Father.

It's us. It's we, and there's not a reason why we can't be those people, except that we just foolishly get divided. You want to know why people are going to weep and wail and gnash their teeth? They're going to look back and say, what kind of three-fold idiot was I, wandering around, bumping into stuff, worrying about what to buy and where to put it? What was the matter with me in that earthly life when God handed me on a plate everything I needed to be a functioning, beneficial, useful person to reflect His glory and to serve Him, now that I'm in the eternal future? What was I thinking? Well, let's have that thought now.

Let's not wait for chagrin to educate us on the potential. We're alive now. We have the Word of God now.

We have the Holy Spirit of God now. We can put on the full armor of God now. Put on the whole armor of God, Ephesians 6. We do not wrestle against flesh and blood, its principalities, powers, rulers of the darkness of this age, spiritual hosts of wickedness in heavenly places.

Therefore, take up the whole armor of God. Notice it doesn't say go to the forge and manufacture the armor of God. Pick up your hammer and some raw metal and beat it into a breastplate, beat some piece of it into a sword, beat some of it into some greaves for your shins and your feet, and spend three or four weeks making yourself a helmet, see if you can put a face guard on it.

What does it say? Take it up. The armor is already made. It's already there.

It fits. It has been custom made for you and me. All you have to do is take it up.

That's the grace of God. It is all of grace. We don't have to make our own armor.

It's laying there. Just pick it up and put it on. Put on the whole armor of God that you may be able to withstand in the evil day and having done all to stand.

Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace, above all, taking the shield of faith, with which you will be able to quench every fiery dart from the wicked one. All the fiery darts. They're fiery.

You quench them. Take the helmet of salvation. Take the sword of the Spirit, which is the

Word of God, praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit.

Praying. Praying. This is appeal.

This is petition. This is thanksgiving. This is expression of appreciation.

This is thankfulness. This is us talking to our Father in Heaven because of the privilege we've been given by the Lord Jesus Christ in the power of the Spirit. Praying with prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful, diligent, attentive.

Now, here's something. Here's a test that I will fail and probably many of you will fail. Look back over this past week.

How watchful, how attentive, how diligent have we been in prayer? Not just any old prayer. Being watchful to this end. To what end? Taking up the armor of God.

Being prepared to stand in the evil day and having done all to stand. Be prayerful with prayer and supplication and be watchful to this end. The phrase isn't there accidentally.

We pray about this. Lord, help me to remember to be sensitive to the battle. You see depictions of World War I and these guys in the trenches and I saw a story where a guy didn't want to be at the front anymore so he lit a lighter and stuck his hand up above the trench knowing that some sniper would blow a hole in his hand and he would be sent away.

And you think, what if somebody just forgot there was a war going on and decided to wander out of the trench? Decided to go out there without any plan, without any purpose, without any covering fire, without any artillery barrage. Well, you know, it's cold and damp down here. I want to get up and walk around a little bit.

You just start walking around the battlefield forgetting how long are you going to last. It doesn't matter if you forget it or remember it. There is a warfare and if you don't remember you are going to be picked off.

Any part of you that is exposed is going to be shot at. That's how it is in the spiritual war. So being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints.

We pray for ourselves and then we look around and we pray for our fellow soldiers. They say, you know, people don't fight for mom and apple pie when they get into a protracted war. They fight for each other.

There is camaraderie in the unit and, you know, I am basically fighting because I don't want Bill and Tom and Ted and now Alice and Mary to get shot. So we are a band of brothers. We are fighting for each other.

We are trying to keep each other alive and your world narrows down to those that are at

your right hand and at your left and you don't have abstract thoughts of patriotism and the Constitution and so on. You are the Americans and you are trying to stay alive. They say this is what happens in a protracted war.

Well, it happens that way in the spiritual war and we look to our right and we look to our left and we are in a unit and we are fighting in a localized version of this heavenly conflict and we are persevering, we are consistent, we are patient, we are ongoing in our supplication for one another. Others are getting shot at as well and we don't just myopically say, oh Lord, please don't let any of my armor fall off. We pray for each other and isn't it great to know that others are praying for you and the more the merrier.

That's what I say. So praying always, being watchful to this end with perseverance and supplication for all the set apart ones, all the ones on our side, but especially those that we know about and can pray the most effectively about. Point five, demons work through doctrines of deceit, through setting up false objects of worship.

And what is worship? Worship sounds like some sort of formalized religious thing. If you worship a thing, it means that's what you think about. That's what defines your priorities.

What defines your priorities? What helps you decide what your goal is going to be? That's what you worship. You say, well, I really want to get plenty of money in the bank. Well, that's what you're worshipping.

You're serving mammon instead of serving God. You say, well, I just really want to be well thought of. I don't want anybody to think badly of me.

I don't want anybody's ill opinion. Well, you're worshipping the opinion of others. You say, well, I just want to be happy.

I don't want to feel bad. I don't want to wake up and feel bad. I don't want anybody reminding me of all my flaws and my failures.

I want to feel good. I want to feel good about myself. You know, the greatest love of all.

That's what you worship. Demons work through these doctrines. It's a deceit.

It's a deception. It's not real. It can't last.

And it's rife in our education system. It's rife in our entertainment. It's rife on the Internet.

It's rife in common parlance and common culture. Go down and sit in a barbershop or the beauty shop and listen to people talk. Doctrines of deceit.

We're flooded with them. We're inundated in them. We're in a septic tank full of them.

This is how they work. Revelation 9.20, the rest of mankind who were not killed by the plagues did not repent of the works of their hands that they should not worship demons and idols of gold, silver, brass, stone, and wood which can neither see nor hear nor walk. I think if John were writing this today, there would be one more element in there or two.

Plastic, silicon, PDA, phone, tablet, laptop, LCD, LED, RAM, hard drive, Internet, Internet, Internet. They did not repent of the works of their hands that they should not worship. There are people who are hooked on information.

I just want to know. I want to know what's going on. I want to see the YouTube video somebody shot in what you call it, square over in some country.

Something going on. There's something happening. They're news junkies, information junkies.

I want to know what my celebrity person is up to. I want to know what Miley Cyrus is doing. I want to know what John Lennon is doing.

Miley Cyrus is my idea of the perfect woman, and I want to know everything about what is she wearing today. Didn't have a lot of use for Billy Ray and his achy breaky, but Miley, she's there. Listen, there's people who can't get through the day if they don't find out what's going to happen on the next episode of their fictional television program.

And they're on a fan site, and they're blogging about, well, you know, I really don't think they should have done this, and is it ever going to come back, and I can't believe they're going to cancel it, and how dare they change out the actor. Now listen, you can be interested in these things. It's a hobby.

It's fine. We're not talking about hobbies. We're not talking about entertainment in its rightful place.

Nothing wrong with having an enthusiasm. Nothing wrong with enjoying something that is well done. This is obsessive.

This is where it takes over. This is where it displaces. All foods are good, but you can take any one food and become a glutton, right? We don't say, boo on gluttony, and we all stop eating.

We say food is in its rightful place. Entertainment is fine. Appreciating talent, appreciating good effort is fine.

Nothing wrong with it. Don't get me wrong. I'm saying when these things displace spiritual priorities, when these things occupy time that should be spent on things that we are commanded to do, such as love your family, spend time.

When you love someone, you spend time with them. You converse. You share tasks and

activities.

You fellowship. You have some spiritual quality time. Even when you share an entertainment experience, there is some element of impinging on who you are as a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Why is it good? Why is it bad? This story that is told, does it reflect anything about values or mores or things that we would say or do or understand differently because we are believers in the Lord Jesus Christ? We want to convert these things into something beyond themselves. Entertainment for its own sake is just letting sand run through your hourglass that you can't get back. Anything we do, we can convert.

And it doesn't mean you've got to find a verse for every single thing, but you know what I'm talking about. Who are we as we view these things? How do we react? What is our response? How do we judge these things in the light of the Word of God and who we are as believers and the timeless values that God gives us in His Word? We've still got our armor on. Don't let a chink appear.

Don't let a gap appear where Satan is going to start tossing fiery darts and people become inflamed with passion. They become unduly interested. They become unduly obsessed and it displaces the things of God.

This is deceit. It's deceptive. What's the thing about a deceit? You believe it.

You think it's true. It isn't a deception if you know it's false. It's only deception if it fools you and you think something false is true.

So we think it's okay. We think it's fine. We've got to analyze it.

We've got to tap on it. Is this hollow or is it solid? Is this veneer or is it all the way through wood grain? What is this thing? What is this thing called love? A lot of deceit in love. A lot of people make protestations, oh, I love you, I love you, next thing you know something very untoward is happening.

That's not love. That is exploitation. That is deceit for the purpose of self-gratification.

And every young woman needs to keep that in the forefront of her mind any time she's dealing with any male anywhere near her own age. There is deceit for the purpose of self-gratification. But it seems real.

That's why it's true. It's a deceit. It sounds like the real thing.

I want it to be the real thing. I wish it were the real thing. I think it probably is the real thing.

That's a deceit. Pay attention because doctrine of demons is deceit. It doesn't wear a big

red fireman hat with a blinking light on it that says, hi there, big lie, big lie.

I think every guy between the age of about 17 and 25 ought to wear one of those hats. Don't trust anything I say. It's lies.

Notice these people believe the lie. They do not repent and they do not change their mind about their murders, their sorceries, their sexual immorality or their thefts. 1 Timothy chapter 4 verses 1 through 3, the Spirit expressly says, the Holy Spirit of God specifically states, hear me now, this is God the Holy Spirit being specific.

You say well it's just an impulse. It's kind of a feeling. He specifically states, in the latter times some will depart from the faith giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons.

Heeding, believing, acting on, thinking it's the truth. Doctrine of demons, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron. This is what scares me.

What if you lose the ability to tell the difference between a lie and the truth? What if you can't tell because it's scarred over? Now how does something get seared? How does something get insensate where it doesn't work anymore? It gets abused, doesn't it? It gets insulted. Something has happened to it. You lose sensation in the tips of your fingers.

If you play the guitar every day you start getting thick calluses and pretty soon you can't feel anything on the end of that finger. Why? Because by repeated use it has built up this protective layer. Your finger doesn't want to be sensitive when you're mashing it on steel strings that cut into it.

So it builds up resistance and it doesn't want to feel that pain and after a certain number of weeks, pretty soon you can't feel a thing. You can put a lit match on there and for a while you don't feel anything. It's calloused over, seared with a hot iron.

You don't want this to happen to your conscience. How does it happen? We engage in something, we're exposed to something that is wrong, that is harmful, and we do not acknowledge that it is so. We continue to expose ourselves and by repeated exposure it's less.

This by the way is one of the techniques of jamming by a minority that wants to get their views across. You're a minority of homosexuals and you want to get your views accepted as mainstream. What do you do? You start pushing homosexual characters into television shows.

You push homosexual language and references and euphemisms and so on into the mainstream and you keep pushing and pushing. Well the first time a family is sitting at home watching what they think is a comedy on TV and two men kiss, it's shocking and

letters are written and phone calls are made and oh there's a great uproar. Well they do it again and there's another wave of shock and letter writing but it's not quite as much.

What happens the 48th time two guys kiss on screen? Of course they'll always start with two women and then move to two men later. But what do they do? They keep pushing and pushing and pushing and pretty soon people are inured. I can't get as shocked the 67th time something happens as I was the first time it happened.

And what happens? The consciences of the people are seared over. I just don't care. One more.

That's so 2010. I mean they've been doing this now for years and yeah well isn't that a shame. Nobody's writing a letter.

Nobody's outraged. Nobody's in an uproar. Why? Repetition sears the conscience.

Yeah well I guess there's probably worse things. Seared with a hot iron. It is a deceit.

Forbidding to marry, 1 Timothy 4.3. You know what's going to happen to marriage now that they've cracked it open, now that they've shattered the foundation of it. They're going to say you know we're just going to not have marriage anymore. The tax breaks, just forget it.

We're just going to tax everybody individually. The institution itself, it's too much trouble. You can't tell, now that we've said that two people of the same gender can get married, well why not three people of the same gender? I mean what if all three of them want, what's the difference? There's no children at issue.

What if there's two gals and a guy or what if there's two guys and a gal or what if there's three gals or me and grandpa or you know because well you know the benefits of marriage. I mean you know what, incest laws, that's so old fashioned. I mean that's only, you don't want to have a genetically deficient child so why can't grandpa and I get married for the benefits? You know we live together, we're in a committed relationship, we love each other and the fact that he's my grandpa, why should that enter into it? It sounds ridiculous.

I'm telling you, it's not just coming, it's here and it's been here and they're going to forbid to marry. Marriage is going to go away in this country, mark my words. I may not live to see it but you younger ones are going to see it.

Marriage for all practical purposes will be gone. It'll be sort of a little quaint tradition like you know muscle tough and stomp the thing and carry people around like they do in Judaism but it'll just be a quaint thing, have no legal standing whatsoever. They'll redefine it and if it exists at all it'll be some contractual partnership type of thing.

Forbidding to marry in the latter days, you are seeing it happen before your eyes. Doctrine of demons, it is hypocritical lies. 1 Timothy 4, forbidding to marry, commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth.

And there is no food on the earth that somebody hasn't said it's bad for you. That's one of my peeves. I say trust God, I mean obviously if something makes you break out don't eat that.

But people that are doing it in a preventative way and they say well you know nothing happens to me now when I eat it but they say you know it could shorten my life if my oxidants and my antioxidants and my little, well you know you can enter into that as much as you want. But forbidding to eat foods, look it's on your plate, say the blessing, all things are good for food according to the Bible if they are taken with thanksgiving. Now don't test the Lord and say well I'm diabetic and I'm going to eat this big Twinkie.

But you know we're wise, God will tell us if something is bad for us, you eat it and it gives you a horrible bellyache or you break out or it doesn't, well okay don't eat that. But that's God's mechanism. Some scientist says you know well coffee is good this year, coffee is bad next year, eggs are good this year, bad next year, strawberries are good this year, bad next year.

Look, unless you've got good reason to do otherwise, eat your food, thank God for it and march on. In some cases by trying to tiptoe and avoid all these things, God may have a beautiful death arranged for me where I'm going to be standing up here talking to you all, I'm going to finish, you all are going to leave, I'm going to be picking up my suitcase because I don't want to shock everybody by dropping right in front of you. Everybody leaves, I pick up my thing, I go home and I just go phew.

I go to take my Sunday afternoon nap and I just don't wake up. And the reason is because I did what God said. I trusted Him, I lived my life as under the Lord, I ate everything with thanksgiving and I didn't worry about it and maybe I could die next week in my sleep.

Praise God, that's a blessing. I could tiptoe around and eat seaweed and kelp and take fish oil and all that. And I might live losing my mind, staggering around, whittling away, amputated at the ankle, at the knee, at the thigh and going through a thousand yards of ground glass with some kinds of cancer.

I'm just saying, trust God. Be wise, don't be foolish, take the advice of your doctor. If you know you shouldn't eat things, don't eat them.

But do it for the right reasons. Do it because you trust God and you want to be a good steward of your body. Don't do it out of fear.

Don't do it because somebody somewhere has some false authority and they forbid foods. They tell you to abstain and you do it because you assign them some false legitimacy that they do not have. Do it for the right reasons.

Abstain if you want to abstain, but do it before the Lord. Do it as under the Lord. Do it in faith and do it in thanksgiving and say, Lord, thank you that you showed me that if I eat this it gives me a terrible bellyache and I can be better and serve you more if I stay away from this food.

That's a good reason to abstain. Don't do it because somebody forbade it and you say, well, you know, it's the Mayo Clinic. I always do what the Mayo Clinic says.

I don't care about the Mayo Clinic. I care about being here and serving God and being thankful for what He provides and walking in wisdom. So, do not succumb to hypocritical lies, commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth.

Don't go telling other people what they should or shouldn't eat. This is a decision we make for ourselves. I'm not telling you all to go vegan or to go eat a big steak.

It's your decision before the Lord and it's none of my business. All of us do this before the Lord. Every creature of God is good and nothing is to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving.

Do you think God couldn't have inspired the Apostle Paul to say, you know, you really ought to stay away from this and you really ought to not eat that? Pay attention to those pork restrictions in the Old Testament because that pork, those pigs, their digestion is not right. They don't filter it like the other animals. What does he say? Every creature of God is good.

You want to eat rattlesnake? Chow down. You want to eat kangaroo meat? Be my guest. Every creature of God is good.

Nothing is to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving for it is sanctified, it is set apart, it is made nutritious and good for you by the Word of God and prayer. Not just by prayer, by the Word of God. You decide what to eat based on the Word of God, based on your understanding of what God wants you to do.

This is not just blind, oh God, I'm going to eat this, you know, spoiled three-day-old culture I found in the refrigerator because everything is good for food. It's not just by prayer, it's the Word of God and prayer. Be intelligent, be wise.

Don't take what I say and go run off and eat something that's not good for you. It's the Word of God and prayer. But what's the issue here? Authority, not the authority of demons, not the doctrine of demons.

It's the authority of the Word of God. It's the authority God has in our life and we acknowledge it and we recognize it in prayer and in the Word of God. That's how we decide what to eat and what not to eat.

And God bless you, eat or not eat whatever you want, but do it for the right reasons. Do it for the right reasons. Do not be deceived.

Don't let yourself be co-opted. Point six, false wisdom leading to bitter envy and self-seeking is another doctrine of demons. False wisdom, and this leads to jealousy, this leads to divisions, it leads to strife and finger-pointing and we know more than they do and they do it wrong and we seek ourselves.

This is James 3, 13-18. Point six, the ability to cast out demons was a supernatural power that the Lord Jesus exercised and that He passed on to the disciples. This was a sign operation.

It isn't a regular part of our life. Paul doesn't say put on the whole armor of God that you may be able to cast out demons, does he? This was a marker. It was something that designated those that had been given authority by God and if they had the authority to cast out demons, what other authority did they have? Communicate.

Communicators of the truth of God, specifically in the church age, specifically the Lord Jesus and His disciples, those who were commissioned to be His witnesses, Matthew 28, were given this power. Why? Because when you see that power, you say this person has been given authority by God and that marker says you can take their letters, you can take their preaching as authoritative because God has entrusted them with that authority. The sign of that authority is power over demons.

Jesus gave it to them in Matthew 10 when He called His twelve disciples to them. He didn't say when He appeared to 500 in one place, He said to them, go forth and cast out demons. This is the disciples.

Why? Because they are His witnesses. They are going to go forth and preach. He called the twelve.

He gave them power over unkinged spirits to cast them out and to heal all kinds of sicknesses and all kinds of disease. What does He say in Matthew 10.8? Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons, freely you have received, freely give. Don't charge.

Well, that will be 500 denarii to raise grandma that died yesterday. You don't do that. Or for a love gift of 39.95, you can be healed of your leprosy.

There is none of that. Freely you have received, freely give. This, by the way, is the model for all Christian ministry.

Freely you have received, freely give. Don't charge for the gospel. Don't charge for the teaching of the Word of God.

That's just what Scripture says. Do not make merchandise of the Word of God. Freely you have received, freely give.

God will provide. Do you think God needs His disciples to go charge? Do you say, go to every village and take up a collection and pass the hat and tell them it's a love gift, and once you've received a sufficient amount, then share with them the good news of Jesus Christ. It's a travesty.

But you look around at Christian ministry today and their businesses. They've got accountants and balance sheets. It's horrendous.

Freely you have received, freely give. This goes all the way down to the personal level. Don't hold people accountable and tit for tat.

Well, you know, I did this and I'm expecting you to do that. In Luke 10, 17, the 70 returned with joy, saying, Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name. And in 18, Jesus said to them, I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven.

Now He didn't say it happened while they were out preaching and casting out demons. He just says, I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. When did Jesus see that? They say, Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name.

And He says, well, you know why they're subject to you in your name? Because I was there when Satan was kicked out of heaven. That's why they're subject in my name. Because the same name that cast Satan out of heaven can certainly cast his little pathetic followers out of people that are oppressed.

Behold, I give you authority, Luke 10, 19, to trample on serpents and scorpions and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall stop you. That's the disciples. And that power that was explicit in healing and exorcisms and so on is implicit in the Word of God that is given to us.

Principalities and powers were disarmed at the cross. That's Colossians chapter 2 and verse 15. That is the ultimate defeat.

That is the punctuation mark at the end of their opposition to God. Everything now is just denouement. It's aftermath.

It's mop up. Demonism was the basis for capital punishment in Israel. Having truck with them, pursuing some sort of communication with them, Leviticus 20, 27.

Methods of this sort of interaction. You can get there by passive submission if you get your priorities screwed up and start worshiping false things. Idolatry, 1 Corinthians 10,

19 through 21.

There are those who actively pursue spiritual mumbo-jumbo like your Hindus and your gurus and these that spend time hypnotizing themselves into susceptibility. And I say, if you're stupid enough to do that, you deserve everything you get. Drug addiction.

Drugs addle the mind and break down the natural barriers that God has given us. The normal resistance. This is like going into a room full of germs and taking your skin off to sit around and go into drugs and meditation.

The gods of the pagan nations in the Old Testament were demons. This is Psalm 96, 5. And this is one of the reasons God organized believers, had them be born in or near the patriarchs, in or near Israel, so that they would not be subject to this massive operation in the pagan realms. During the Exodus, when the Jews were liberated from Egypt, demons were judged.

This is Exodus 12, 12. And Isaiah 19, 3. The gods of Egypt were demons. All these people that want to wear an ankh and have Egyptian stuff around and say, oh, wasn't that great? It was a demon-infested nationality.

And Satan was hoping to exterminate. This is how he managed to get the boy babies under sentence of death. He thought he could wipe the line out before the Lord Jesus ever came, the seed of the woman.

And Exodus 12, 12, Isaiah 19, 3. Sacrificing demons was prohibited in Leviticus 17 and Deuteronomy 32. Human sacrifice is inspired by demons, Psalm 106, 37-39. Necromancy leads to judgment.

First Christ was born in Egypt. He was born in Leviticus 10, 13, and 14. Contact with necromancers and mediums was forbidden, Leviticus 19, 31.

We want to go the other way. We don't want to be walking in the direction of darkness. Contact with necromancers and mediums was judgeable, Leviticus 20, 6. They were to be in Israel apprehended and put to death by stoning.

That's also Leviticus 20. It was a capital punishment offense. The Canaanites were rife with this stuff, Deuteronomy 18, 9-12.

One of the reasons King Saul died, one of the reasons he was killed on Gilboa, not the only reason, but one of the reasons was that he went and consulted with the witch of Endor. It is named as one of the reasons he died. That's 1 Chronicles 10, 13.

King Manasseh, the standard of wickedness, we'll see that in our upcoming study. 2 Kings 21, 6, part of his condemnation was truck with necromancers and mediums, 2 Chronicles 33, 6. Josiah, one of the best of the latter kings, one of the last of the better

kings. 2 Kings 23, 24, he famously outlawed and tried to expunge demon contact in the land.

Isaiah warned Israel to consult the Word of God rather than mediums and necromancers. We saw this in Isaiah 8, 18-20. Finally, Judah finally went out and was destroyed as a nation on the basis of their toleration for this demonic activity.

That's Isaiah 29, 1-8. So that's the opposite. That is what we are wanting to be as far away from as possible.

The miracles that the Lord Jesus did, the ones that the apostles did through his commissioning and through his gifting were designed to authenticate and to verify and to identify those who were teaching accurately the Word of God. It is the Word of God that is alive and powerful. It is the Word of God that equips us for every good work.

It is the Word of God that comprises the armor of God that enables us to do what we should do and having done all to stand girded and ready for everything in this life and in the life to come. So when the Lord Jesus performed these miracles during his earthly ministry, what did it do? He said, if you don't believe me, believe the works for they witness, they testify of me. He was the living and incarnate Word of God.

That should have been the clue for the Pharisees and for the scribes and elders and all of those in Israel that he was from God and that his Word therefore was a message from God and should be the object of faith, should be believed. And it is the same today. It is no different for you and for me.

Do you want to believe science? Do you want to believe the media? Do you want to try to follow the ups and downs of the information age? Or do you want to go to the well of living water that the Lord Jesus has given us, Old Testament and new, that is timeless and that will prepare us for a timeless existence after this life is over? Not to mention blessing us and keeping us and comforting us and encouraging us and strengthening us in this life. So that's the conclusion of our study of the miracles of the Lord Jesus and we'll pick up with a new study next Sunday. Let's close here in a word of prayer.

Father, thank you for the truth of your Word. Thank you for the example of the Lord Jesus Christ who resisted Satan himself, who overcame all of the forces of darkness, who led captivity captive and has given gifts to us. We pray that as we live the remainder of our lives before you that God the Holy Spirit will bring these things to our minds and remind us of what our priorities should be, that this is a time of preparation, that this is a time of strengthening and equipping for service to you and reflection of your glory both now and in the ages to come.

We pray these things in Jesus' name.